“My Home is Your Home”

Indigenous Agency(?) and The Production of Tourist ‘Homestay’ in Batak Samosir Communities, Indonesia

by

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ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture

Title: "My Home is Your Home": Indigenous Agency(?) and The Production of Tourist 'Homestay' in Batak Samosir Communities, Indonesia

My dissertation investigates tourism developments in Indonesia during the post-authoritarian era (early 2000s – present). It focuses on the understudied discourse of Indigenous agency within the state's tourism program: the homestays. Homestays are a top-down project implemented in vernacular villages to transform houses into tourist homestays, by adding a tourist accommodation into existing local houses.

My study focuses on one of the most affected communities: the long-marginalized Batak people on Samosir Island. It investigates 1) how homestays are implemented, including stages, actors involved, and their roles; and 2) how the implementation impacts the local communities' vernacular settlements, ways of inhabiting their architecture, and social dynamics. As such, this is a study of the production of homestays, not of their consumption from the tourists' perspective.

This study combines textual and visual analyses of data collected from 1) architectural documentation of houses before and after homestays, including floor plans, sections, and elevations; 2) in-depth interviews; and 3) spatial and inhabitation observations of homestays. I visited 6 villages, documented and observed 17 homestays, and interviewed 18 participants, including local leaders, homeowners, and architects.

This study examines the transformation of vernacular houses and their spatial organization to accommodate tourist lodges within the existing local houses, the *jabus*, of the Batak people. Drawing on architectural and observational data, the design changes focus on preserving the traditional appearance of the vernacular village; however, internally, these changes affect the community's livelihood, particularly its home experience and social dynamics, making it more competitive and individualized.

This study further reveals the process of homestay formation and how the state operates to manufacture vernacular-built environments in Samosir *hutas*, including the stages, labor divisions, and the person in charge. More importantly, it highlights the power dynamics at play within the process of homestay production. It indicates how the state-led program works around local power without disrupting it, while, conversely, disintegrating social cohesion of the lower-class community, the commonness. Finally, considering the current realities of homestays, including financial benefits and responsibilities, damaging the character of the vernacular dwellings and settlements, extra homestay-related labor for families, lack of the state's maintenance support, and the social implications on local communities, indicates who actually benefits from the project, which are mainly the state and local elites.

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I could not have accomplished this work without them.

For mom,
ho do tondi ni jabu

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PROLOGUE

This research is about my interest in, care for, and hope for vernacular architecture. It is about its chance to be part of and integrated into contemporary architectural developments. It is about the voice of the vernacular community when the state comes in with a promise of economic relief and improvements to vernacular-built forms.

This study focuses on a revitalization project for vernacular architecture that integrates tourist accommodation, through homestays, into existing Batak houses on Samosir Island. It aims to contribute to this practice by highlighting the community-based intervention perspective. It offers some success stories and lessons learned, although perhaps the latter more dominantly.

This study also examines how the state engages with the peripheral community in Samosir and how it operates within the community through its vernacular architecture. It is about the state's ways of working, navigating, and embracing local power without disrupting it. It is, however, also about how such a strategy disrupts and disintegrates the social cohesion of lower-class communities, further marginalizing the already marginalized non-elite *huta* people.

Additionally, this study is about the commodification and manufacture of culture, homes, and community. It is about the romanticization of the vernacular-built form. More importantly, it is about how vernacular survives through a top-down mechanism while also embracing tourism opportunity, albeit with its social implications for the community. Furthermore, the study is also an architectural analysis and critique of the modifications required to convert a traditional home into a tourist homestay.

This dissertation consists of three main parts. The first part addresses the "Formation" of this research, including a literature review, the Indonesian context, and methodological considerations. The second focuses on "Design + Agency(?)", looking at the project implementation, the products of implementation, and the process and actors involved. The third part of this study discusses "Home + Community," which captures the nuances of the socio-economic dynamics experienced by local communities.

All in all, this dissertation is a story about vernacular *hutas* in Samosir and their dealings with tourism. This study examines their approach to navigating the state's preparation, production, and operation of homestays.

Rather than focusing on tourists and their consumption of homestays, this research is more about the production of homestays, designs, local people, their struggles, hopes, and attempts to gain some agency within the broader dynamics of tourism. It is also an architectural critique of the changes needed to make the homestay program viable. Yes, tourists are also a key component to the story of tourism in this topic, but for now, let's listen to the *huta* people's story.

Here is the story—

INTRODUCTION

The Background Story

The journey of this dissertation is all but linear. Lake Toba—believed to be the origin of the Indigenous Batak people—is where a part of my family comes from. One might think this was what led me to this journey. Although it is fair to say it did, to a degree, the selection of the location came much later. Instead, this dissertation journey was largely built on my interest in the topic, gradually growing from my previous journeys spanning more than a decade across the academic, professional, and non-profit sectors.

Another factor that has led me to this dissertation is undoubtedly my family background. I grew up in a bicultural home in a rural region of West Sumatra: my father is *Minang*, while my mother is *Mandailing*, a branch of the many Batak clans. Both are considered the major Indigenous groups in Indonesia, along with the Javanese and Sundanese (Statistics Indonesia, 2020). Despite their contradictory kindship systems, patrilineal *vs.* matrilineal, respectively, my parents brought the two cultures into my life. This bicultural background gives me great respect for and interest in culture, tradition, and different ways of life. This upbringing, admittedly, has shaped both my academic and professional interests to this point. They have always been shaped by and revolve around these: culture and tradition, their manifestations in the built environment, and the issues surrounding them.

My previous research ranges from a communal bathhouse in an agrarian *Mandailing* community to builders' networks and roles in reviving endangered traditional *Minangkabau* houses, to regionalism and cultural representation in contemporary designs, to the influence of modernization on preserved traditional villages in Indonesia. Reflecting on such journeys, the underlying theme of my interest lies at the intersection of vernacular cultures, their manifestations in built environments, and the contemporary issues shaping their development and existence. Scholarly works in the fields of vernacular architecture, cultural identity and representation, and Indonesian architecture and its modernization have significantly been the primary influence on my journey, such as Rudolfsky, 1965; Frampton, 1992; Oliver, 1997; Waterson, 1998; Schefold, 2003; Nas, 2004, 2007; Kusno, 2000; AlSayyad, 2004; Canizaro, 2007; and Prijotomo, 2017, among others.

In 2016, while completing my master's thesis at the Bandung Institute of Technology on cultural representations in design, I read an online article published by a local newspaper, the Republika, titled "Indonesia offering 10 'New Bali' to boost tourism industry." The article further

listed 10 destinations and explained the term "New Bali" as an idiomatic expression that suggests the new destinations will attract as many tourists as Bali Island (Marbun, 2016). At the time, this news did not catch my attention much. It was the developments in the following years that did. I began paying attention when the Indonesian Architects Association (IAI-Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia, in the local language) formulated and conducted several national design competitions that emphasized local architecture, either formally or symbolically, and when the state projected this program as a future of tourism development. The competitions, later published in a book series showcasing the winners' design proposals, involved designing villages (Akmal, 2014), airports (Akmal & Anggita, 2015), homestays (Akmal et al., 2016), and souvenir and culinary centers (Akmal, 2019). Some of the winning projects and honorable mentions are as follows:



Figure 0. 1. Some of the winning projects across the competitions. Images taken from Akmal's published books.

Following these design initiatives, the government continued the Tourist Village program further to incorporate more villages in rural regions across the country, aiming to provide homestays to accommodate targeted tourists in the coming years (Aditya, 2021; CNN Indonesia, 2017). News media such as the Jakarta Post (2017), Kompas (2017), the Republik (2016), CNN Indonesia (2017) have consistently covered this story, resonating with the message of a promising future from related governments' websites, including the Ministry of Tourism, Creative Industry, and the Public Works and Housing. In other words, for a while after the launch of the programs, news about homestay projects was dominated by such optimistic dreams, supported by ambitious numbers and statistics, projecting the big dream of the state's financial investment and the long-overdue equal development in remote, peripheral, and isolated regions across the country.

In these publications, homestay advertisements were in the light of pro-local designs (Yahya, 2017), promoting local culture (Editorial Porospro, 2019), pro-local economy (CNN Indonesia, 2017), and the large scale of the project, aiming to reach 20 thousand homestays in villages and rural regions (*Ibid*). While the state sold the idea of homestays as promising, ambitious, and profit-oriented, almost nothing explains how they actually work on-site in the so-called 'village' communities. In line with

this idea, reports from the operating team, published by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, mainly emphasized the large number and a detailed list of homestay units claimed to have been successfully built within two years of the program, 2020-2021. Findings from the report for each year are in Figure 0.1.

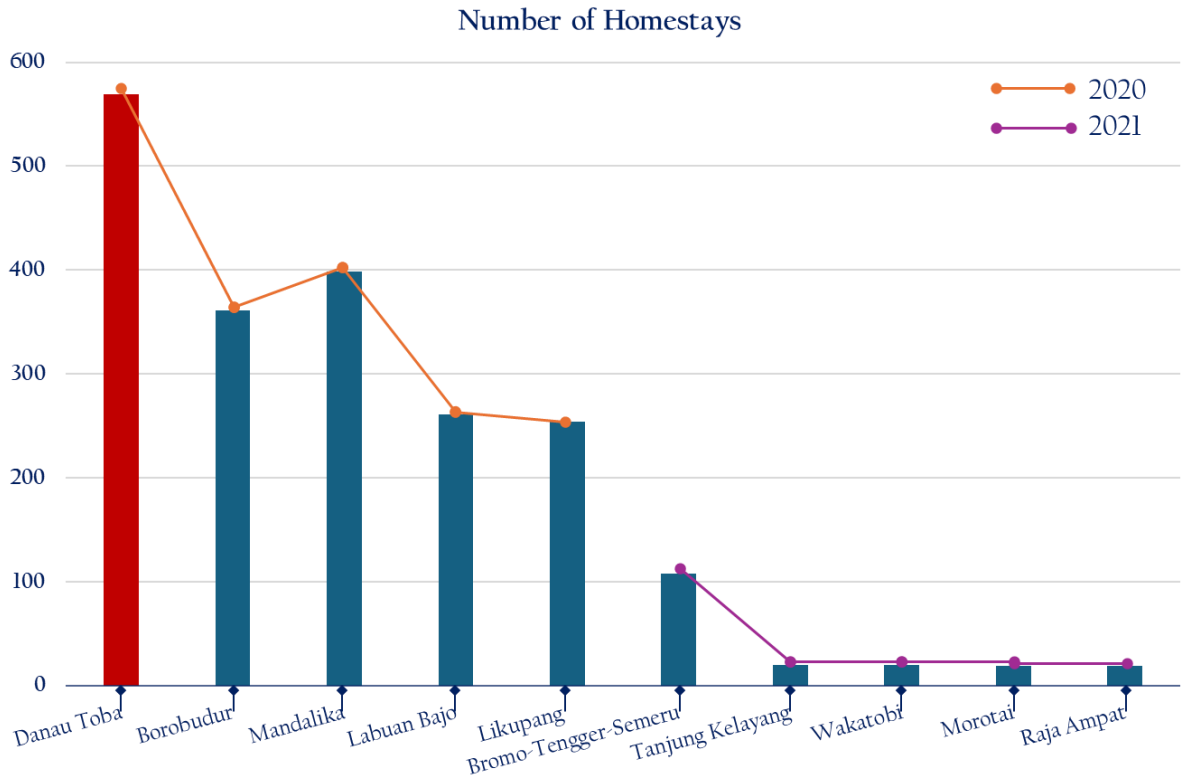


Figure 0. 2. Homestay achievements in 2020 and 2021. Data from the Ministry of Public Works and Housing annual reports on homestay implementations. Graphic created by the author.

During this stage of my exploration, and based on the initial findings, I argued that the overuse and overselling of such large numbers of units across various media and publications began to feel distant and insensitive to recipient communities. The lack, if not absence, of academic manuscripts[1] formulated to draft such national projects raises questions, especially when targeting the rural, isolated, and 'poor' Indigenous communities in the peripheries. The big idea of the program—to 'enter' and intervene in the existing homes of thousands of people in simultaneously villages and rural communities across regions, tribes, cultures, and ethnicities in the country—within one fiscal year, in my opinion, strongly hints at characteristics of a rushed, top-down, centrally controlled approach. This was my initial impression of learning about the homestay program. Here, I argue that such an approach pays very little attention to and perhaps lack of respects to the lives and values of the recipients: the Indigenous communities.

[1] A public lecture by Myra P. Gunawan, PhD., a professor and expert team on tourism development in Indonesia, titled "Nusantaran Tourism: Literacy and Numeracy". The lecture was held at Bandung Institute of Technology (BTI) on Tuesday, 23 Mei 2023, a collaboration between *neracaruang.com* and the School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development, BTI.

Having these initial premises in mind, a public lecture held at Bandung Institute of Technology on September 20th, 2019, by the Homestay Development Acceleration's Task Force, further piqued my curiosity about how the voices of local communities were heard and facilitated in the process. Additionally, overcapitalizing on the idea of local communities as "original culture for a selling point" for tourism purposes raises questions about the roles and engagement of local communities in maintaining their values, knowledge, and ways of life over generations. My research departs from this perspective and aims to delve further into the lives and values of the recipient communities that the government enters to set up homestay programs. I am interested in epistemological questions on how the government approaches the lives of Indigenous people in implementing the state-sponsored homestay program.

Research Question

Aims and Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation and implications of decentralized tourism development in Indonesia (from the early 2000s to the present) from the perspective of peripheral areas. It particularly looks at the implementation of the homestay program in Indigenous vernacular communities that historically have suffered from isolation and marginalization (Haug et al. 2017). In this study, the periphery is simultaneously a disadvantaged location and community, which in this case are the recipients of homestay programs—the low-income agrarian families living in the Indigenous lands of Samosir. I focus this study on one of the most affected communities by the program: the long-marginalized Batak people in Samosir Island, North Sumatra Province (Haug et al., 2017; Annual Report PUPR[2], 2020).

Seeing the homestay program as a contact zone, where centers meet peripheries, I am especially interested in examining agency and its dynamics among the actors involved in setting up this program in the communities. Central to my project is locating the marginalized voices of Indigenous communities in the implementation of the state's prioritized homestay programs.

Research Question

I began formulating the research with a fascination for understanding how domestic and mundane settings transform and accommodate tourism. The anticipated end goal is to see the impact of tourism on the livelihoods of local communities as they navigate the marriage of their personal spaces to the public realm.

At the same time, my interests in this research, since the very beginning of its development, have always centered on an inclusive approach to producing homestay architecture in vernacular Indigenous communities. I use these two as the frame for my research: local communities' involvement/agency, and the impacts of homestays.

[2] PUPR is an abbreviation of the Indonesian version of the Ministry of Public Work and Housing, which is 'Pekerjaan Umum dan Perumahan Rakyat'.

Accordingly, I focus my study on the relationships between the two. I narrow down and delineate the communities' *livelihoods* into aspects that directly correlate with their roles or *involvement* during the implementation of the homestay projects. In other words, I look at the locals' involvement, or the absence of it, during homestay implementation processes and map its direct impacts manifested on the existing realities of the communities.

In addition, as mentioned previously, I focused this study on the Batak people of Samosir, one of the most impacted communities by this project.

Finally, with these frameworks and limitations in mind, I designed my research in two stages with two sequential questions, as follows:

Question 1: How did the government position/involve the Indigenous Batak community in Samsoir in implementing the homestay program?

Question 1: How did the degree of their involvement during homestay production impact their lives, especially their architecture, their experience of home, and social cohesion?

Question one is an exploratory stage, to set a basis of investigation for question two. The first question encompasses two aspects of homestay implementation, including 1) stages of implementation and 2) people involved in the process and in what form or roles. The purpose of this part of the research is twofold. First, to reconstruct the actual procedure of setting up homestays from the perspective of recipients. Second, to map actors' involvement in the process. From here, I then locate the positions of local communities across the stages of implementation and how they negotiate/communicate with other stakeholders/actors. Based on these findings, I then began to identify the degree/significance of local community involvement, which led to Question 2.

Building on findings from previous exploration, question two aims to understand how the conditions of production—the presence or absence of local communities across the implementation stages—affect outcomes. The outcomes that have direct correlations to the locals' involvement, and I am particularly interested in, include: 1) the physical realities of the homestay architecture, 2) the inhabitation experience of homes, and 3) the social cohesion within the communities after the homestay.

Therefore, I limit this study to these three, mainly considering the main phases of implementation and the most dynamic relations among the actors involved in decision-making across the stages. In other words, this study focuses on the production side of homestays, not their consumption, which limits the research from exploring tourists' perspectives and roles.

Contribution & Limitation

By analyzing homestay implementation and its impacts on one of the most affected ethnic groups, the Batak community in Samosir Island in western Indonesia, I show how these homestays become the contact zone of power between the center and peripheries; marginalized communities

and the state; and the mundane-ordinary life of locals and attractive-exotic images presented for tourists' eyes.

This study addresses the gap in theories of ethnic tourism that are heavily profit-centered and undermine the agency of host communities (Hollinshead, 1998; Amoamo, 2011; AlSayyad, 2001; Khan, 2016; Karyadi & Irawati, 2021). It contributes to discussions on decentering the figure of the architect, making design practice a collective endeavor by acknowledging the agency of Indigenous people in deciding how to capitalize on, reimagine, and reproduce their space, tradition, and identity for tourism purposes.

My dissertation challenges design practice and approach by positioning marginalized communities and their decreasing traditional architecture at the center of the developmental framework. Additionally, as a scholarship on ethnic architecture and global tourism, my dissertation tackles the sensitive issue of the marginalization of Indigenous people in Indonesia as they navigate the promised recognition of *Adat* rights and equality since decentralization. While the focus is on Indonesia, the implications of this research are highly topical and relevant to other geographical contexts dealing with indigenous groups and the tourism industry. It calls for a more comprehensive, collaborative, and ethical development framework. More importantly, it seeks to move away from the current trends that treat people and communities as sites for foreign engagement and tourism.

Likewise, this study offers insights into how the state operates in relation to vernacular architecture and communities. It highlights the state's behavior in commodifying and manufacturing vernacular-built form for tourism and economic purposes, through the homestay project. By understanding the process of homestay formation, this study reveals the state's strategies in many aspects, ranging from spatial reorganization of vernacular houses to accommodating tourists; power relations, especially on navigating and penetrating local power in the Batak communities; and, more importantly, their implications on the social cohesion and the livelihood of the locals.

This study examines homestay formation as a contact zone, where actors who were initially not in contact begin to communicate, negotiate, and often confront one another. However, it limits its exploration of the contact zone to almost managerial levels within the homestays, as no contact occurs between the host and the tourist, contrary to what one might expect given the concept of the contact zone.[3] However, further exploration of why no such host-tourist contact zone surfaces is a potential future research project.

Additionally, as previously narrowed down in the Research Question, the homestay's impact on the community's livelihoods covers only domestic spatial organization, its inhabitation, and social cohesion. However, it does not delve deeper into other aspects of livelihood, such as gender relations,

[3] During fieldwork, I did not find any intentionally designed contacts that occurred between locals and tourists in the villages. All contacts are mostly incidental, either in the yard or in the houses. The development of these villages as tourist villages still focuses on the accommodation component, not yet extending to social interactions through organized traditional performances or local events designed specifically for tourists. My hypothesis here is either due to its early stage of homestay operations or to some form of resistance in dealing with homestays, which is already challenging for the owners, as they still need to do farming and manage their everyday routines.

the impacts of house visits on children, and tourism and religion in Samosir, which are open to further exploration.

Conceptual Foundation

This study stands on two foundational theories: vernacular architecture and globalization. Relations between the two embrace discussions on global tourism, conservation and sustainability, and the politics of representation. The theoretical body of my dissertation, Chapter 1: Theoretical Background, will follow this logic, comprising four short chapters.

The first chapter, "Vernacular Architecture: Where It All Began," will provide an understanding of vernacular architecture as an academic discipline and describe the field's principal intellectual and historical advances to date. This chapter positions Indigenous designs within the broad context of vernacular and traditional architecture. It provides a framework for understanding how recent work in architecture and social sustainability has impacted the field. Further, it discusses how changes in the perception of vernacular architecture have led indigenous architecture, especially in the global South, to participate in the global economic system. This chapter ends with a discussion of the emerging incorporation of vernacular architecture into the global tourism industry, which hints at a topic for the following part.

The second chapter, on the intersections of culture, tourism, and policy, "Culture, Tourism, Policies: A Pathway to Sustainable Development," explores how culture and its components of both the people and architecture play significant roles in tourism progress. It discusses the potential and threats of such phenomena. Further, it synthesizes key policies on global heritage and sustainable tourism developed by prominent organizations over the decades, including the United Nations, International Council on Monuments and Sites, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization. This discussion asserts the urgency of incorporating host communities, which I later refer to as 'local agency,' into tourism programs as the key to maintaining and reinforcing the sustainability of heritage sites.

Following up on the local agency, the next chapter covers the critical yet undermined aspect of ethnic tourism. It criticizes the current trends and practices that primarily use the Indigenous communities as a mere site for tourists. Drawing on key scholars in the field of Indigenous tourism, such as Buzinde, Chambers, Aitchison, and Robinson, among others, I highlight the concept of 'multiagency' as a collaborative framework for investigating the structural analysis of power and inequality in the ethnic tourism industry. This chapter further underscores the ambivalence of indigenous tourism practices as a critical driving force behind the demarginalization and emergence of indigenous groups and the decentralization Titled "Multiagency: The Ambivalence of Ethnic Tourism," this chapter asserts the sense of control and agency the indigenous communities own over their land and home, both as a group and as individuals, that should be sustained and respected in any nation's programs and agenda.

The last part of the theoretical discussions introduces the context of Indonesia as the case study. It covers topics in the history of indigenous peoples and their relations with the state. Under the title "Indigenous Indonesian: From Marginality to Opportunity," this chapter interrogates the position of indigenous peoples within Indonesian state's socio-political environments. It confirms that the intensification of marginalization happened among indigenous people because of unequal power between central governments and peripheral indigenous people.

This chapter also discusses how decentralization has heightened the importance of cultural identity, leading to the incorporation of indigenous culture into the national economic agenda through the Homestay projects. Here, I argue that when a state sees the indigenous as a new site of opportunity, it is necessary to challenge the established unequal power relations within the system, which recalls the concept of 'multiagency' that has previously been proven critical to this study.

Positionality

I come to this dissertation as a researcher, a member of the ethnic group, and an architect. In the background story I wrote at the beginning of this introduction chapter, I identify myself as a partial member of the Batak group. Although not fully, I have sufficient understanding of the customs and kinship systems, which proved very helpful during my fieldwork. I also speak Mandailing, a closely related language to Batak. Understanding the participants' language is significant to my fieldwork for two reasons. First, it eased communication with the participants, especially those who do not speak Bahasa Indonesia fluently. Second, it helped build trust and connection with them when I talked to them in their mother tongue.

Besides being a researcher, I also came to these villages as a tourist. I rented a room at a homestay during my stay in the villages to collect data. I acted as a participant observer to be a part of the homestay programs and experience them firsthand. Considering my positionality as an architect, I see the potential of Batak architecture to serve as an identity-maker for the state's tourism image. I see how much designers care about conserving and promoting the endangered architecture and its community. However, I also see design forces and production that degrade the quality of space, physically and socially.

On the other hand, as part of the community, I understand how this project is seen as the answer to financial struggles, while also perceived as a threat to the authenticity and sacredness of culture and tradition. Seeing these contradictions from different perspectives, I believe it benefits me to capture their dynamics and present them in this dissertation. I see room for improvement and an opportunity to deepen understanding of how design influences the social, cultural, and economic sustainability of people. I hope this research advances that conversation.

PART I

FORMULATION

CHAPTER 1
CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE: WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

As an academic discipline, the study of vernacular architecture has undergone significant change and maturation over the last hundred years. Many have attempted to define it over the years, yet the debate continues. Carter and Herman argue that such debates emerge because "at any given time and in any given place almost any kind of building can be included within the boundaries of [...] vernacular architecture" (1991:1). In contrast, going back to one of the earliest attempts to categorize the field, Pevsner's famous statement comes to mind: "a bicycle shed is a building; Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture" (1948:xix). For Pevsner, architecture does not encompass any domestic, ordinary, or small buildings that are worth mentioning. This definition diminishes vernacular structures and excludes them from the field of architecture.

Reflecting on my experience, I find that such debates left a significant mark on my conception of the field. Studying architecture in a country with one of the most diverse cultures in the world, I witness debates over the choice of terms to represent its architecture. Terms such as 'vernacular', 'traditional', 'locals', 'Indonesian', or simply 'architecture' spark interesting, and sometimes heated, discussions among scholars and practitioners. For example, one of Indonesia's notable scholars and historians, Josef Prijotomo, strongly rejected the use of 'vernacular architecture' to refer to community buildings in the regions. Instead, he preferred 'Nusantara'[4] (Prijotomo, 2008).

The rejection lies mainly in the etymological definitions of the term 'vernacular'. Although ideas surrounding it have developed over time, the impression of being low culture, primitive, and uncivilized that it conveys remains. I will take this opportunity to further elaborate on its etymological definition as an early introduction to vernacular architecture, followed by a discussion of more recently emerging ideas.

[4] *Nusantara* refers to the Indonesian archipelago and was first proposed by Dowes Dekker to describe the Indonesian regions. The term originates from the Old Javanese Sanskrit word 'Nusa' (island) and 'Antara' (in between), which convey the idea of a 'whole' archipelago under the influence of the Majapahit Empire.

Defining Vernacular

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines vernacular as a language or dialect native to a region or country, as opposed to literary, cultured, or foreign language. The word is originally from Latin: *verna* (slave born in the household) and *-āculus* (diminutive suffix), which together mean "belonging to the household, domestic, native". Additionally, in its early development in the 1880s, the study of vernacular architecture mainly referred to buildings and structures found in non-Western countries, advocated by travelers, explorers, and anthropologists—mostly European—who described "the vernacular" as "barbaric", "inferior", "ugly", "ill", and "to be despised and ignored" (Aysan & Teymur, 1990:308). Practicing architects also viewed vernacular designs as primitive and underdeveloped, "to be despised and ignored," and argued that architects should not draw on them for inspiration; instead, they should distinguish their work from that of those who built without appropriate education and degrees (*Ibid.*; Mazumdar, 1995:129).

Only in the 1970s did such perceptions begin to shift. It was due to a general turn to ethnic identity in architecture in some parts of the world. In contrast to the "despising view" of vernacular architecture, as categorized by Mazumdar (1995), the 1970s saw the emergence of "the admiring view." It looks to vernacular architecture for inspiration in the creative use of locally available materials, ingenious structural design, innovative yet simple technology, the captivating beauty of form, and responsiveness to surroundings. This change in attitudes, according to Kusno (2020), was tied to the intense economic growth in the West following WWII, which led to the emergence of a mass-consumption society. The growing trend in industrialization and globalization started to raise concerns about the encroachment of universal civilization, as expressed by Ricoeur as "to some extent, and in varying ways, everyone experiences the tension between the necessity for the free access to progress and, on the other hand, the exigency of safeguarding our heritage" (2006:43). Throughout much of his work, Ricoeur focused on the formation of cultural and individual identity in relation to history and culture. For him, relations to specific places, experiences, and situatedness within a social situation constitute the 'self'.

The dynamics of universal vs. locally rooted identity gave meaning to Bernard Rudofsky's 1964 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Kusno, among others, views this as an attempt to challenge the International Style's standardization of architectural forms (Kusno, 2020). Rudofsky (1964) introduced vernacular architecture through a photo exhibition of unfamiliar, non-pedigreed architecture from numerous third countries around the globe. Rudofsky referred to these ordinary structures as "architecture without architect," emphasizing the absence of architects or specialist designers. Besides its collection of unfamiliar, ordinary, and anonymous structures from around the world, the exhibition's location in a prestigious institution for the modern art movement, the Museum of Modern Art, was itself a statement. It strengthened Rudolfsky's contribution to the architecture field, which "break[s] down our narrow concept of the art of building" and challenges the writing of architectural history which mainstreamly is, "skipping the first fifty centuries … [and

presenting] us with a full-dress pageant of "formal" architecture" (1964:2). It became the celebration of the nativeness and the ingenious aspects of the buildings.

Another notable work that solidified the field of vernacular architecture is Henry Glassie's work as a a folklorist. Rather than seeing vernacular architecture as an inspiration and with the eyes of admiration, Glassie offered a different view, which Mazumdar referred to as "the indifferent view … vernacular architecture as a vehicle, as an artifact, a record of a civilization or people which could be used for understanding something else" (1995: 129). Glassie believes that what is crucial is to analyze it, as quoted here:

> *"A building may enhance the landscape, but it remains a heap of old wood and stone until it is analyzed. The analysis leads away from a concern with the fabric itself toward the ideas that were the cause of the fabric's existence" (1986: 395-396).*

In Folk Housing in Middle Virginia (1975), Glassie further demonstrates that folk buildings are the products of deliberate, often complex design processes that possess linguistic analogies and are strategically situated texts within vast, complex, and fluid discursive contexts. Some argue that this work has guided the field, increasingly engaged in the discovery of "mind and meaning" in architecture and architectural systems, thereby prompting us to recognize the complexity and significance of vernacular buildings (Carter & Herman, 1991).

In the years that followed, these earlier works helped shape the field of vernacular architecture. An example of this is the growing interest in social and natural contexts of vernacular buildings, as posed by Schefold et al. (2003), among others. Another scholar dedicated to this idea is Paul Oliver. Oliver (1997) pursues this new direction and continues to popularize vernacular architecture. He traveled the world in the 1980s—Including to Indonesia—to find contributors for his multi-volume studies of vernacular architecture. At the end of the 20th century, in 1997, Oliver published his work titled "The Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World." The work is divided into three volumes and comprises 750 contributors from 80 countries.

Drawing on Rudofsky's view of vernacular architecture as the absence of specialized knowledge, Oliver proposes a more anthropological definition that also includes the "know-how" of the buildings: the passing down of techniques and construction skills through generations. Oliver offers a complete definition of vernacular architecture in his first volume, as stated below:

> *"Vernacular architecture comprises the dwellings and all other buildings of the people. Related to their environmental contexts and available resources, they are customarily owner- or community-built, utilizing traditional technologies. All forms of vernacular architecture are built to meet specific needs, accommodating the values, economies, and ways of living of the culture that produce them." (Oliver 1997, Vol 1, p. 23)*

Following this definition, Oliver advances an understanding of the intricate relationships among architecture, society, and culture in vernacular architecture, thereby clarifying why architecture takes the form it does. This perspective challenges the perception of seeing vernacular architecture as artifacts, the products of the past. It instead pushes it as a living culture, nurtured and inhabited by certain groups of people and therefore, "[t]he buildings of and by the people" (Oliver, 2006: xxiii). Vellinga (2017), among others, argues that Oliver's main intention was to increase architects' awareness of architecture's cultural embodiment. Concurrently, attention is turning to the symbolic aspects of how architectural structures express relationships within the social and cosmic universe, providing a strong foundation for a new approach to architecture (Schefold et al., 2003). It thus opens a new anthropological direction for understanding architecture, as scholars such as Vellinga and Yimsrual have named it, "architectural anthropology" (2005; 2012). This view has later embraced the study of relationships among people, ideas about the world, and philosophical and symbolic values expressed in vernacular settlements. Studies on vernacular buildings focused on documenting and classifying traditional house forms and their decorations, with the ultimate aim of reconstructing the historical spread of building types.

In his extensive study, Oliver further discusses the cultural characteristics and attributes of vernacular architecture, ranging from everyday aspects to social structure, gender, meaning, language, belief systems, symbolism, and how these influence the special arrangements of the house and its surroundings (1997). These attributes serve as a conceptual framework for identifying, classifying, and comparing cultural phenomena across vernacular communities—drawing on the diffusionist school of thought. In this sense, according to Schefold et al (2003), Oliver's contribution to the field of vernacular architecture is to treat cultural attributes as research topics on their own and allow "comparative perspectives on the topics". Similarly, Vellinga further promotes this position and argues that as architectural expressions of the societies and cultures that produced them, "these buildings therefore deserved as much recognition as any palace, cathedral, or mansion designed by an architect for an elite" (2017:13).

Another advocate of vernacular architecture, Rapoport (1969), proposes a continuum classification. Rapoport categorizes building traditions into four significant categories: primitive, vernacular, popular, and high-style architecture. Such classifications distinguish vernacular architecture as a folk building tradition, emphasizing direct relationships with its users: "vernacular architecture grows directly out of the needs, means and natural order of users" (1969:). Additionally, Rapoport presents a critical view of vernacular architecture, arguing that the "house form is not simply the result of physical forces or any single causal factors but is the consequence of a whole range of socio-cultural factors seen in their broadest terms". He furthermore puts a base for a more balanced view on relations between the house form and both culture and environment, that after giving enough evidence on the influence of culture in determining house form, he submits that "it is a characteristic of primitive and vernacular buildings that they typically respond to climate very well."

I believe that at least Rapoport's work (1969) provides two important perspectives. Firstly, it emphasizes the close association between natural attributes and building form, as well as the tradition of vernacular architecture. It includes local climates, locally available materials, and building techniques shared by community members. Secondly, it engages the field with the idea of shared authorship of building techniques, in which everyone in society—whether owners or merchants—knows the building type and even how to build it. This idea, although it resonates with Rudofsky's "architecture without architect" and Oliver's "building of and by people," signals that there are degrees to authorship of the building skills and techniques among community members.

Overall, during the second half of the 20th century, the foundation for vernacular architecture paved the way for new ideas and developments in the field. Oliver (1997), Rapoport (1969), and Glassie (1986), among others, have simultaneously addressed and situated architecture within cultures and cultural practices. They resonated with broader scholarly and public audiences, leading to increased attention and advancing knowledge.

Furthering Vernacular

The late twentieth century marked a significant turn in the development of ideas about vernacular architecture. During this period, various international conferences were held in the northern hemisphere discussing intellectual and historical advances in vernacular architecture. It highlighted the growing interest, debates, and concerns about the future of vernacular architecture. I dedicate this part to revisiting emerging ideas following the first shift of foundational publications on vernacular architecture.

One of the earliest responses to the complex and stimulating qualities of the subject was the Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF), a North American organization established in 1980 to promote the study of vernacular buildings through multiple approaches. Its starting point was that "vernacular architecture today is a mildly unstable and semantically indefensible mixture of evidence, method, and theory" (Wells, 1986:4). The works published in the forum represents various contributions to architecture studies, according to Wells categorization, they include: descriptions and comparisons between buildings (presented by Ken Breisch and David Moore); the process of recording buildings using graphic systems of representing the complex information (by Edward Chappel, Tom Hubka, Joe Wood); questions on the common assumptions of relationships between culture and built form (Bill More, Arlene Horvath); and limits on the type of structure, domestic or public, that are more appropriate for vernacular studies (Mark Wenger and Dell Upton).

Similarly, almost two decades later, in 1999, ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) contributed to defining and advancing the field. The ICOMOS' 12th General Assembly, "Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage," in Mexico in October 1999, posed a definition of vernacular architecture as "the traditional and natural way by which communities house themselves… [and] is a continuing process including necessary changes and continuous adaptation as a response to social and environmental constraints" (ICOMOS, 1999:1). This definition implies the progressing

nature of vernacular architecture that entangles in the current social and environmental situations. Additionally, it indicates the growing concerns toward the continuity of vernacular architecture, as "the survival of this tradition is threatened worldwide by the forces of economic, cultural and architectural homogenization" (*Ibid*). Here, the discourse engages with issues of change and continuity and confronts the dynamics of the contemporary world.

Likewise, Davis (1999) grounds his definition of vernacular architecture in the idea that buildings continually adapt and change. Around his three points of definition, he emphasized "the ability to change" as one of the most accepted definitions of vernacular architecture. Furthermore, he added that in a context of building culture, which I believe is where vernacular architecture belongs, the ability to change is an ingredient for a healthy building culture: "that stability is tempered by the ability to change when necessary," which is inevitable in this contemporary world (1999:132). It implies that the rules governing the form of the built world as a dynamic system can change over time and promote the greatest fit between form and the culture or place in which it exists. A similar view positioning vernacular architecture in the context of changes comes from AlSayyad & Tomlinson (n.d), pointing out that "tradition [is] not so much an instrument preventing change, but one that incorporates change to sustain itself through space and time." More views reflecting this understanding are from Memmott & Ting (2020), Schefold et al. (2003), and Vellinga (2006). While Memmott & Ting (2020) emphasize the need to change the perception of vernacular architecture as static, resistant to change and lacking modern relevance, Schefold et al. (2003) and Vellinga (2006) raise concerns about the eroding culture and traditional architecture in most parts of the world, which beg a quick response particularly to its adaptations and reinterpretation to the present time.

In response to vernacular architecture's adaptability and resistance to the changing nature of the contemporary world, these dynamics inherently embody a concept of sustainability. Sustainability is multifaceted and challenging to grasp, largely because of the complexity of the terms themselves. Holling (2001) attempts to address it by examining the interrelationships among economic, ecological, and social systems. He proposes a concept of 'Panarchy' for sustainable development, emphasizing the balance between change and persistence, and between the predictable and the unpredictable, within a system. Therefore, regarding the relationship between vernacular architecture and sustainability, I revisit three aspects of their intersections. First is in relation to material culture, the existence of artifacts; second, the culture and society within which the building exists, and lastly, its environmental aspects amid the fast-growing concerns of climate change and the roles of architecture in it.

Sustaining the Artefacts

In the late twentieth century, ICOMOS expressed concerns about the vulnerability of vernacular structures worldwide (1999). As concerns about the rapid loss of vernacular buildings grew, protection and preservation became international joint efforts (Joffroy, 2012). It drew significant attention to the documentation of vernacular structures and their building traditions

(Vellinga, 2006). In fact, ICOMOS (1999) emphasizes the importance of documentation for a full analysis of vernacular forms and structures as a guideline for conservation. ICOMOS further argued that it is the first step of conservation strategies: documentation, material adaptation, training, and conservation.

Moreover, preserving vernacular structures ensures the continuity of traditional building systems and craft skills, as ICOMOS argued that they are fundamental to vernacular expression and essential for the repair and restoration of these structures (1999). Besides using documentation, there is also an urgency to retain, record, and pass on the building traditions to new generations (ICOMOS, 1999; UNESCO, 2020a). Although ICOMOS actively advocates this goal, it was undeniable that many vernacular communities face various challenges in achieving it. In many regions, including Indonesia, significant declines in the number of vernacular buildings occurred (Vellinga, 2017). This decline is due to several factors, including modernization and globalization, which have transformed the dwelling cultures of communities. There is an increasing pattern of younger generations leaving agriculture-based livelihood for modern lives in big cities (Widiastuti & Kurniati, 2018); an industrial paradigm shaping modern production and consumption with a tendency to be more functional, economical, fast, and individual, instead of gradual and communal *(Ibid)*; and preference for modern buildings (usually identified by the use industrialized materials) as an image of being modern and civilized (Kurniati, et al; 2020). Consequently, gradual declines in the inhabitation and reconstruction of vernacular structures threaten their continuity.

As one of the core characteristics of vernacular architecture is the shared building skills and knowledge within the community, such declining phenomena raise concerns about how to conserve the structures. Reflecting on studies and practices dedicated to this focus, there are two emerging patterns: 1) active involvement from conservation organizations and professionals in the reconstruction of buildings (UNESCO, 2020a; Vellinga, 2005), and 2) a growing number of traditional built environments registered as heritage sites (Joffroy, 2012). In terms of the first, UNESCO significantly assists countries and communities worldwide in preserving and conserving their cultural heritage.

As it becomes more difficult to train and transmit knowledge to younger generations of master craftsmen and builders, conservation associations view this as an opportunity to assist the process (UNESCO, 2020a). Assistance offered by these organizations can take the form of financial support, documentation of buildings and knowledge, training, workshops, and the reconstruction of buildings to pass on skills and document the process for conservation purposes (ICOMOS, 1999; Oliver, 2006). On a regional scale, in Indonesia, for example, conservation organizations work with the private sector and non-profit organizations to support communities facing challenges in preserving their vernacular architecture. The key figures actively engaged in this program, at least in the last few decades, are philanthropic groups such as "Rumah Asuh" and "Gunawan Tjahjono Foundation," and a paint manufacturing company, "PROPAN" (Kurniati et al. 2020).

Meanwhile, as the number of heritage sites grew, various vernacular-built and natural environments gained attention. They were either designated as living cultural heritage sites, conserved in situ, or dismantled and re-erected in open-air museums (Oliver, 2006). Although having such titles can be an honor and a source of prestige, many communities in Indonesia often cannot escape the long-standing disadvantages of being vernacular communities, such as poverty, limited infrastructure, and limited access to resources (Cole, 2018). As communities heavily relied on external support, economic dependency began to shift when their endangered environments became a focus of the cultural tourism industry.

In this regard, many scholars argue that tourism plays a major role in the preservation and development of small towns and villages in heritage sites, which, in turn, helps preserve these sites and sustain the landscapes, collective memory, and local and national identity (Ricci & Valentino, 2010). In addition, Gao and Wu (2017) and Latter (1999) argue that rural tourism, with its distinctive vernacular structures and traditions, has been recognized as a key approach to rural sustainability and poverty alleviation. Similarly, Latter (1999) demonstrates how cultural tourism catalyzes local economic development, enlivens communities' livelihoods, and ensures their sustainability amid the pressing challenges of globalization.

Finally, from the perspective of sustaining the artifacts of vernacular cultures and traditions, I argue that significant disciplinary developments help refine the field's understanding. I will start with the idea that documentation was the first means of recognizing the importance of building culture and traditions for vernacular communities (Vellinga 2006, 2017). Although the degree of retention of vernacular form and structure varies, the influence it has brought to vernacular knowledge and building techniques is invaluable. In addition, collaborative training and workshops between professional architects and un-institutionalized local builders have become more prevalent and have attracted greater attention to the heritage (UNESCO 2020a, 1999). While the increase in training and workshops brings a growing recognition of traditional building skills, it also gradually creates a specialization in ownership of traditional building knowledge and techniques within the community, which were previously communal intellectual property. Therefore, an increasing distinction between the terms 'owner' and 'builder' eventuates, as fewer and fewer people learn the art of building; thus, "it [art of building vernacular] has become a specialist practice" (Kurniati et al., 2020: 98).

Adapting to Social and Cultural Changes

The last few decades have brought attention to the study of more contemporary developments of vernacular architecture. This phenomenon pushed studies beyond the idea of a static monument and toward more dynamic vernacular architecture (Vellinga, 2006). Although in most parts of the world, traditional social patterns and cultural systems are eroding, scholars do not view this trend solely as the cost of remaining static and resistant. Instead, early 21st-century historians

and theorists consider this pattern a sign of progress and thus approach the study by questioning the binary opposition of tradition vs. modernity (Memmott & Ting, 2020).

A critique of the mushrooming practice of documenting vernacular structures lies in the tendency to only document buildings with idealized forms or high-culture traditions (Vellinga, 2005). This tendency leads to a focused documentation of preserved historical buildings, frozen in time; a lack of representation of recent realities; and an ignoring of their active reuse, reinterpretation, and adaptation in the present (Upton, 1993; Vellinga, 2006). Therefore, for the future of vernacular architecture, Vellinga further argues that studies in this field need to use a more "dynamic approach … that acknowledges the dynamic and dialectic nature of vernacular traditions by explicitly attempting to understand how such traditions, through human agency, change and adapt to the cultural and environmental circumstances and challenges of not just the past, but of the present and the future (2006: 117).

Seeing vernacular architecture as a living organism, instead of a static legacy from the past, resonates with the movement that many historians have attempted to progress in decolonizing history by bringing the human agency—the ordinary vernacular communities, the poor and marginalized cultural groups—into the discussion (Carter & Herman, 1991). Here, vernacular architecture offers historians an opportunity to adopt a methodological approach to rewriting the history of architecture (Ibid., Upton, 1983). Resonating with this idea, Carson stated that "[an] all-aboard view of society is fundamental to the New History perspective" (1978).

Additionally, studies on the cultural and social aspects of vernacular architecture have led scholars to view these structures as a medium for understanding a more complex cultural phenomenon (Mazumdar, 2008; Vellinga, 2006). When anthropology integrates into the field, symbolism was one of the popular topics (Upton, 1983). Knapp, for example, studies Chinese rural houses and argues that those structures "do not only communicate folk beliefs but also express the conjoined cosmological and technical practices of China's imperial tradition seen in palaces, temples, and even grave sites" (1989:2). Another extensive study on the symbology of vernacular buildings comes from an anthropologist, Roxana Waterson, who conducted research across Southeast Asian vernacular houses. Waterson argues that the buildings are the manifestation and crystallization of the people's cosmology and worldview, represented in the spatial organization and configuration, the shape of the buildings, and the system of inhabiting the house (1998).

In recent works, scholars address symbolism in different ways. While vernacular culture is decreasing globally, symbolism is practiced and reproduced, and it remains a design inspiration to this day. Mazumdar (1995) makes an interesting observation on this phenomenon and points out that recent practices use some aspects of a culture as symbolic of the whole society. The author further argues that this allows borrowing, rereading, and reuse of the symbolic meanings and representations of vernacular architecture, usually fragmented, to connect to the roots of modern society. After the independence movement, such practices were prevalent in countries of the global South, mainly to

cultivate a visual semblance of vernaculars in search of a collective identity (Steele, 1997). I argue that this phenomenon remains highly prevalent today, especially in Indonesia.

In 2016, I conducted research on this case, examining the design and architect's creative process in producing a provincial mosque in West Sumatra, Indonesia (Kurniati, 2016). This study shows that the architect approached the design by reflecting on and reinterpreting a worldview shared by the community, and by translating it into spatial movements and the building's organization. Other examples, perhaps more recently, are architectural competitions held by the Indonesian central government to design tourism facilities across the country, highlighting the use and incorporation of vernacular architecture, traditions, wisdom, and worldviews as design inspirations and references (Akmal 2017, 2019).

Overall, I argue that this approach and contemporary symbolism have two sides. On one hand, some see symbolism as a new interpretation and adaptation of vernacular tradition in the contemporary world, and that symbolism in architecture becomes "a place where culture can be appropriated, translated and read anew" (Purwaningrum, 2021:29). In this sense, what sustains the past and progresses to continue is not the structures and belief systems, but rather their ideas, images, and memories that often remind people of specific visuals and physical experiences. In other words, sustaining the image or creating a visual resemblance that derives from what is believed to be the manifestation of a culture's values and wisdom, in such an abstract, innovative way, contributes to situating vernacular architecture in the present. Similarly, the positive responses of Canizaro (2007) and Salama (2014) that the visual resemblance of vernaculars in contemporary building offers an opportunity to enrich our understanding of tradition and culture, initially as a static legacy of the past, can become a dynamic project open to reinterpretation. On the other hand, such phenomena become a selective accentuation of local ethnic peculiarities. In these practices, the use of visual expression to re-contextualize vernacular architecture in the modern world is often conspicuous. Although practices of reusing distinct traditional visual expressions produce buildings under the guise of still being 'traditional' and therefore contend for the pride of a group identity, such practices impart a special weight to "brand-new" buildings. Hobsbawm (1983) called these practices the "invented traditions," and in my previous study, I argued that such visual approaches promote oversimplifications in cultural readings and exaggerated assertions of identity (Kurniati, 2020).

Environmental Adaptation

Contemporary processes of globalization, rapid development, and construction in rural and urban areas have caused serious environmental problems, including climate change, population growth, high energy consumption, resource depletion, and migration, among others (MacAndrews 1994). Additionally, countries and regions whose economies rely on globalization, such as the tourism industry, have become increasingly concerned about the environment, and therefore, sustainable tourism is increasingly essential (Neto, 2003; UNWTO, 2020).

Alternatively, Oliver (2006) and Susetyarto (2012) claim that vernacular-built environments are among those least affected by rapid development and globalization. Moreover, Oliver expressed his frustration that environmental issues "are largely the outcome of the neglect or ignorance of the impoverished rural regions of the world" and, therefore, learning from the vernaculars, as he defined it as a "sustained architecture," became inevitable (2006:419-420). Similar to this line of view, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2020) argues that a major challenge in understanding the impacts of tourism on the environment is 1) the lack of environmental data, such as land use and flows of ecosystem services, and 2) methodological guidance to analyze them. From 10 pilot studies conducted by UNWTO in 2020 across different countries worldwide, the issue lies primarily in the poor accumulation of environmental data over time, thereby limiting data on environmental change.

In addition, the pressure to employ the concept of 'sustainability' in vernacular architecture stemmed from UNESCO's post-disaster reflections (2020b). The report showed that buildings constructed with modern materials and techniques are much more affected by cyclones than those built with local materials and traditional building skills. An earlier study on the building science aspects of vernacular buildings by Bahadori (1978) examined passive cooling, shading, and climate control.

Such positive attitudes towards environmentally friendly elements of vernacular architecture resonate with many other recent studies, including Bhardwaj & Singh (2020), Liu (2018), and Chowdhooree & Das (2022). Bhardwaj & Singh (2020) demonstrated, through computational modeling, that traditional buildings in Uttarkashi, India, can withstand earthquakes. Liu took an interest in examining damaged historic buildings in China and showed that damages are primarily related to the combination of building materials and the construction method, as quoted, "wood and brick combination withstood the seismic forces better than those of wood and mud" (2008:9). Meanwhile, Chowdhooree & Das (2022) used a historical approach to illustrate how historic mud architecture in Bangladesh has survived multiple natural hazards. Another study favoring the environmental sustainability aspects of vernacular structures is by Susetyarno et al. (2012), which used building performance assessment to show that vernacular buildings are more sustainable, in terms of energy use and CO2 emissions, than contemporary buildings.

Furthermore, these studies have paved the way for advances in the study of vernaculars. As discussed above, they show a significant contribution from vernacular architecture to the advancement of sustainable materials, building performance, and techniques that help fine-tune an understanding of sustainable architecture in the present. Moreover, experiments conducted on vernacular buildings using the latest technology have further aligned building traditions with contemporary global needs. Finally, I conclude this chapter by stating that vernacular architecture, as a discipline, along with its developments to date, has served as a contact zone for philosophical-cultural dialogues, the refinement of building practices across the globe, and participation in earth-saving.

EMBRACING GLOBAL-NEOLIBERAL WORLD: THE INFLUENCE ON VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

This chapter aims to build an understanding of how vernacular architecture has responded to, positioned itself within, and embraced global forces such as globalization, neoliberalism, and tourism. I will divide this chapter into four parts, each dealing with a specific topic, as follows: 1) neoliberalism, globalization, and tradition, 2) vernacular architecture in the context of tourism, 3) culture, tourism, and policy as a pathway to sustainability, and 4) ethnic tourism: the ambivalence of human agency.

Neoliberalism, Globalization, and Tradition

I will begin this section with a brief review of the definition of globalization and neoliberalism. The purpose is to provide a clearer understanding of what the terms entail, as despite their popular use, their meanings may be unclear. Further, I will follow up on this part by intersecting these global phenomena with vernacular architecture and examining when and how it becomes relevant to the discussion.

Britannica (2023) offers a general definition of neoliberalism as an ideology and policy model that emphasizes the value of free-market competition. A more progressive definition is from Spencer, defining it as an "ideology of no ideology," which I argue resonates with the spirit of the free market as stated by previous source (2016:4). In principle, neoliberalism believes in sustained economic growth, the free market and maximizing the profits of capitalists are the are the best means to achieve human progress (Britannica, 2023; Spenser, 2016). Additionally, it is necessary to review Foucault's work on this subject. In response to the development of neoliberal thought, Foucault (2011) argues that neoliberalism is a governing system in which the world is governed and controlled by a market economy. He further argues that it is a form of governmentality to follow and accord to the forms and forces of the market, either progressively or evolutionarily. With this perspective, it is difficult to see tradition without considering its economic uses; it is treated as a financial resource and pursued for its potential to generate profits. The profits are then the defining factor of humankind's progress and flourishing (Spencer, 2016).

Given current economic developments, especially those related to vernacular architecture, it is also critical to discuss globalization as a driving force. Globalization occurred in the late 1980s, following two main events: the spread of new transportation and communication technologies beginning in the late 19th century and the adoption of an international monetary system in the mid-20th century. According to Britannica (2023), the neoliberal model guides and shapes globalization. Litonjua (2008) voices similar ideas, and more, that neoliberalism is the main driver of globalization and that it can itself be both the effect of and the move towards global neoliberalism.

Appadurai (2000), a leading figure in globalization studies, argues that globalization fundamentally relies on objects in motion, including ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images

and messages, technologies, and techniques. Further, he argues that globalization challenges the view "trait geographies"—assuming values, languages, material practices, and traditions are tied to specific localities, regions, and traditions; and instead embraces "process geographies"—underscoring action, interaction, and motion of exchange, manifested through movements such as trade, pilgrimage, invasion, exploration, or colonization. Here, concepts of "locality" in spatial means have become broader, if not merged, as King stated that "everyone's 'local' [is] becoming someone else's 'global' "(20006:73). Similarly, Song et al. (2018) summarizes a definition that globalization emphasizes a process or a set of processes that involves the compression of space and time and the intensification of economic, social, political, and cultural interdependence on a global scale.

Delving deeper into the impacts of globalization on spatiality and locality, Jacobs (2004) argues that it is important to understand how it relates to the practices of traditions in maintaining such localities. As traditions move intergenerationally, they also move through space; they accompany people as they journey from old homes to new homes. Specific to vernacular traditions, people moved from the ancestral house to a new house, from a family village to a newly established clan. Although it initially occurred regionally, I would argue that the movement is the seed of broader, globalized practices of transregional and transnational movement and transformation. Thus, it is necessary to delve into transformations in specific localities that have been altered or produced by globalization. One specific example of this type of transformation is the process of historic built environment conservation which Jacobs reads as "making tradition, salvaging tradition, or activating tradition anew (inventing tradition)" (2004:33). Here is I would argue where my project fit in this theoretical discussion, looking at it as a transformation of one tradition—Batak culture in Samosir—as a result of globalization movements and neoliberal thoughts.

Following this discussion, the intersection of globalization and tradition results in processes of reinvention, rereading, and the reproduction of the past. Many scholars, such as AlSayyad (1995), Williams & Morrissey (2000), Jacob (2004), and Spector (2011), among others, address a debate on the authenticity of such processes. Upton (2001) articulates that the debate on the traditional-modern or authentic-inauthentic binaries is the product of modernity and that "tradition did not exist until it was imagined as the defining complement of modernity" (2001:298). Furthermore, focusing on the dichotomous pair of authentic and inauthentic, Upton claims that tradition has served as a mirror for the anxiety that "arises from the fear that modern life is by its nature inauthentic, [and…] the defense of tradition and authenticity against modernity and artificiality" *(Ibid)*. In a similar vein, AlSayyad (2001) problematizes the concept of tradition as an authentic legacy from the past, arguing instead that tradition is a process of invention that will continue to transform and adapt to the needs of the contemporary world. Through global tourism, built environments are often packaged and sold within the global economy of image consumption, which has been pervaded by neoliberalism, consumer culture, and commodification (AlSayyad, 2001; Wearing et al., 2019; Robinson, 2001). It is especially relevant as to enter the global economy, many explore the unique and

distinct characters and traditions to satisfy the eyes of tourists "in search of an authenticity they do not find in their lives" (William & Morrisey, 2000: 162).

These arguments underscore the economic potential of traditions, which align with the goals of neoliberalism and globalization to improve humankind through economic progress (William & Morrisey, 2000). While it inarguably brings many benefits to communities, I cannot help but think about the extent of the processes of "repackaging" and "reimagining" the tradition for a wider audience. I base my research on these contradictions. I position it within these theoretical dynamics to capture preexisting conjunctions across globalization, vernacular tradition, neoliberal policies/spatial politics, and the tactics of resistance against them, especially from communities with rooted cultural and communal practices.

Vernacular Architecture in the Tourism Context

The era of globalization has opened the door to worldwide travel, the exchange of ideas, and the experience of different cultures. The ever-increasing flow of tourists has brought unprecedented opportunities for countries with cultural richness, including those in the global South, to participate in the global economic system, which they were not initially part of (Roy, 2001).

Regarding vernacular architecture, the tourism industry has given it global exposure, which, in turn, helps reactivate and improve the lives of communities and their endangered built environments (Gao & Wu, 2017). On one hand, integrating tourism into vernacular environments brings out a lot of benefits, including economic advantages to the communities that suffered from long and intense poverty (Cole, 2018; Gao & Wu, 2017), and construction in previously isolated rural areas (Kuntjoro-Jakti, 1997; Kurniati & Davis, 2022). On the other hand, it also causes issues for communities: social, cultural, and environmental (Robinson, 2001; Poudel et al., 2016).

This section will discuss the impacts of interactions between tourism activities and vernacular traditions, including their structures and communities. Building on the existing scholarship on the impacts of tourism on endangered vernacular traditions, I purposively organize this literature review into three parts, each addressing different elements of tourism. *First*, it will focus on tourism as the process of 'consuming' and 'repackaging' the traditions as attractions or objects for tourists. *Second*, it views tourism as an act of inhabiting the 'other' space, allowing tourists to experience and taste the lives and spaces of host communities. *Third*, it elaborates on tourism as a driving force in shaping heritage governance through policy developments.

Repackaging the Vernaculars

To embrace tourism in vernacular settings is to open the previously perceived as domestic, ordinary, and personal spaces to outsiders, strangers, and foreigners. While the process of opening up is complex, it often occurs with support and supervision from stakeholders outside the communities, such as the government, private investors, or NGOs. Therefore, inviting tourists to vernacular settlements helps initiate neighborhood improvement programs and brings capital resources to

relatively untouched places. The purpose of improvements is twofold. First, elevate the quality of the built environment and, hopefully, the lives of host communities; second, meet tourists' standards.

Regarding the latter, Williams & Morrissey (2000) argue that for tourism purposes, this repackaging process should ensure "an easily digestible depiction of traditions and the everyday life of the community." It is where the selection of what is perceived as 'consumable' and 'presentable' for the eyes of tourists lies. Roy (2001) criticizes this practice because it typically maintains the pristine condition of the buildings and hides the ordinary elements of the host community's everyday lives, which foreigners perceive as unpleasant and exotic. Roy further identifies a harmful pattern of mushrooming ways of dealing with globalization in the Global South that centers on the staged perfection of "the distilled and pure form of traditions," which is far from the truth (2001).

It is valid for vernacular communities that open their homes and neighborhoods to tourists, offering them a taste of local life. In cases like this, not only do host communities need to provide goods and services, but they also need to offer and demonstrate so-called 'authentic' experiences for tourists. Regarding this approach and drawing from Roy's (2001) and William & Morrisey's (2000) insights, I argue that in practices like this, the packaging process encompasses two contradicting concepts or goals—the need to be 'authentic' while the control to be 'consumable' in the eyes of others. The goal of this duality is to find an equilibrium where the tourist experience and the host's livelihood work hand in hand. Many scholars have addressed this ambivalence and offered insights or critiques of the practice, including Roy (2001, 2015), William & Morrisey (2000), and Smith & Robinson (2006). Their work centers on the question of whether to conserve or consume vernacular traditions in tourism.

Overall, conserving vernacular heritage is important for several reasons, not only for cultural sustainability and maintaining one's identity, but, more importantly, for the economic sustenance of its community (Chhabra et al., 2003). The increasing trend in repackaging vernacular environments for tourists' consumption inevitably impacts the tangible realities of host communities' dwelling spaces. It draws attention to the maintenance and preservation of architectural characteristics and authenticity, which serves as a driving force for other conservation projects (Gao & Wu, 2017).

One example can create a resonant effect in other communities and neighborhoods. In other words, successful stories of vernacular tradition-based tourism have inspired other communities to do the same for their own villages. Saraswati (2017), for example, conducted research in 6 areas in Eastern Indonesia and analyzed their local architecture. The analysis includes existing conditions, qualities, and distinctive characteristics of buildings. It lays out their potential using UNESCO's heritage criteria to support the argument for promoting these buildings as tourism attractions. This study illustrates that proving the tourism potential of these cases of dying vernacular architecture empowers a community to negotiate and secure financial assistance from local governments to conserve their buildings.

A similar study by Larrea Silva (2021) examines 20 vernacular houses in Loja, Ecuador. The investigation involves observing the quality of structures, the physical features of vernacular houses, the materials, and the basic elements of tourist accommodation in the building samples. The study aims to identify the potential use of houses for tourism and to examine the owners' preferences regarding using their houses for tourism. It shows that the owners are willing to use their vernacular houses and venture into the tourism industry.

Contrary to this view, Pabel and team (2017) investigate tourists' demand for indigenous tourism in Queensland. By administering surveys to 326 visitors, they examined levels of interest and participation in indigenous tourism. Results indicate that experiencing indigenous tourism, including culture and vernacular houses, was ranked by tourists as neither highly important nor unimportant: "not considered as a top priority by respondents" (2017: 149). Instead, what considered to be tourists' priority visiting the region was including other nature-based activities in the cultural attractions. Further, by correlating data on 'motivation for visiting' with preferences for destination types, this study argues that packaging indigenous experiences for tourists requires greater integration with other activities and attractions in the region, especially those focused on nature and sports, to attract more attention.

From these aforementioned studies—Saraswati(2017), Larrea Silva et al. (2021), and Pabel et al. (2017)—while regional, they show how such initiatives give a clear illustration of how the tourism industry enlivens conservation and progression of vernacular buildings and have helped sustain the landscape of vernacular architecture in various places. Specifically for Indonesia, Purwaningrum (2019) further elaborates on the influence of such local initiatives at the national level.

It all started in 2011 when Yori Antar, one of Indonesia's big-name architects, traveled to a remote location in Wae Rebo, East Nusa Tenggara Regency. There, he found *Mbaru Niang*, a group of traditional conical houses, with only four of the seven remaining in very bad condition. Upon witnessing this, Antar decided to preserve the remaining three (Figure 1.1, left).



Figure 1.1. Antar's preserved buildings. Left: Wae Rebo village, from Purwaningrum, 2019. Right: Tanah Datar, taken by the author, 2018.

Upon completion, this project accepted an award of *the 2012 Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation* (UNESCO, 2013) and a shortlist in *The Aga-Khan Award Shortlists Cycle 2011-2013* for "initiating and facilitating a community-led revival of traditional techniques enabling all the original houses to be rebuilt" (AKDN, n.d.). Further, this preservation project attracted tourists to Wae Rebo, and in 2016, the area saw 100 times as many visitors as before the preservation (Ibo, 2016).

Antar's achievement inspired many and spread to other parts of Indonesia, including Waetabula, Wainyapu, Ratenggaro, Komodo Island, Nias, Sintang, Suroba, Sumba, and Tanah Datar (Purwaningrum, 2019). In Tanah Datar Regency, one of the tourist villages in West Sumatra, Antar participated in the restoration and rebuilding of two traditional houses, Rumah Gadang, that were burnt down in previous years (Kurniati, 2020). The community came to Antar through a local architect—who was Antar's acquaintance—and asked for his assistance. Relying on architectural documentation prepared by local university students at the University of Bung Hatta and collaborating with local builders, Antar and his team rebuilt two houses (Figure 1.1, right). As agreed before the construction, the houses now serve as tourist accommodation. Most of these projects, if not all, "gave similar notable accomplishments in terms of becoming tourist destinations which then affect local economy revival" (Purwaningrum 2019: 6).

These success stories of injecting tourism into previously unexplored places have attracted the Indonesian government to adopt a similar approach for the country's tourism strategies. Therefore, the Ministry of Tourism invited Antar to help further the goal (*Ibid*). Following this invitation, Antar serves on the jury for every government-organized design competition, using local architecture to design tourism buildings. As a part of national tourism programs, Antar also participates in implementing the 'homestay' program in the 10 new Bali regions.

The discovery of the potential of these endangered and abandoned vernacular buildings nationwide has led the government to shift its development focus to rural areas. It significantly impacted the country's vernacular architecture, natural landscapes, and indigenous cultures, especially since the early 2000s, when tourism became the center of the country's economic plans (Ministry of Tourism, 2015). Although many raised questions regarding the sustainability of vernacular tourism, it is beyond doubt that this approach has helped sustain and preserve landscapes in harmony with their built and natural environments, as well as the communities.

Inhabiting the Vernaculars

As vernacular settlements prepare to welcome tourists, the spatial designation of their living spaces will inevitably change. This section elaborates on the spatial and architectural organization of living spaces in vernacular settlements when they are branded as tourist destinations. It focuses on the transformation of ways of living and inhabiting spaces previously perceived as domestic. Here, the transformations result from host communities' processes of accommodating, negotiating, or integrating tourists' needs and presence into their everyday settings.

Silva (2021), despite Pabel et al.'s findings (2017), argues that heritage houses are, in fact, among the main tourist attractions due to their historical importance, beauty, and originality. Here, human practices are commodities, as tourists seek exposure to cultural differences and variations, which, according to Smith & Robinson (2006), lead to differentiation and a revival of culture and ethnicity. In line with the idea of ethnic revival, the development of policies was necessary to ensure their sustainability amid mass tourism. For example, there is an increasing trend for UNESCO to promote diversification, away from economically developed countries and towards traditional cultures, as reflected in its selection of World Heritage Sites (UNESCO, 1994). Indonesia became a member of UNESCO in 1950 and currently has 5 cultural and 4 natural sites listed as World Heritage (UNESCO, 2023). Surprisingly, none of Indonesia's traditional settlements are on the World Heritage Sites list, despite their cultural richness. However, one traditional settlement is on the tentative list: the Tana Toraja Traditional Settlement, located in the Province of South Sulawesi (Figure 1.2).



Figure 1. 2. Ke'te Ket'su traditional settlement in Tana Toraja with its Tongkonan architecture, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Photo taken by Annisarti Siregar, May 2018.

Kete Ketsu is one of the tourist attractions in the Toraja highland, in South Sulawesi Regency. It is a preserved village characterized by its traditional buildings, '*Tongkonan*'. During my visit in 2018, I found that the local families still live in the *Tongkonan* houses. Therefore, in *Kete Ketsu*, tourists are conditioned to focus their visit on the exterior spaces, moving between buildings and admiring the intricate details of *Tongkonan* architecture. In other words, the village does not offer tourists the opportunity to live in a *Tongkonan.* Based on my experience visiting the village on two different occasions—first during a funeral ceremony, and second without any events—the experiences were

very different: crowded, lively, and culturally vibrant vs. quiet, empty, and the polished beauty of its architecture.

Thinking about the real-world practice of similar tourism development in vernacular settlements, another example comes to mind: a revitalized village in Samosir, North Sumatra, where I conducted my fieldwork. It takes me back to Huta Siallagan, where I visited and spoke with one of the local leaders during my initial grand tour of the area, before data collection. Huta Siallagan is an open-air museum where tourists can explore the buildings and open spaces (Figure 1.3). Moving from Sillagan's specificities, generally, the creation of open-air museums in traditional settlements emphasizes the conservation and revival of the site's physical and cultural qualities and serves as a source of historical engagement for the public (Chappell, 1999).



Figure 1. 3. Situation of Huta Siallagan during the visit. Photo taken by author, 2023.

Although the idea of Siallagan's revitalization project was initially to present this site as a contact zone, where tourists can experience and interact with the local community (Revita et al., 2024), and where mundane beauty pleases visitors' eyes, my observation is that it has shifted into a sterilized space.[5] Traces of domestic objects, activities, and movements of the inhabitants are no longer visible in the location. No more kids playing football in the front yard, no more signs of life from the houses, no more doors or windows left open, signaling the presence of owners inside. All doors and windows are locked and fully closed to prevent tourists from entering and peeking into these houses. Locals now use only the back doors; they close the front door. The village has become so sterile, clean, and quiet, as if the owners were asleep, and tourists have taken over to explore and

[5] It is a part of my presentation on the "Use and abuse of beauty in tourism purposes: the case of Lake Toba," disseminated in the Beauty and the Built Landscape Congress in Viterbo, Italy, June 2025.

experience. This type of practice, I argue, although it is economically and physically beneficial, comes at the expense of othering the architecture it aims to promote.

Additionally, related to the concept of living the vernaculars, two other interesting insights from Zhang et al. (2006) and Estika et al. (2021) resonate well with the previous examples. I will use their fieldwork research projects to further elaborate on the impacts of tourism on host communities' spatial inhabitation. The two scholars based their observations on the physical/spatial adjustments and adaptations that communities made to their vernacular architecture to accommodate tourists.

The work of Zhang et al. (2006) proposes an "inside-out" framework as an alternative approach to tourism development in cultural heritage sites. This approach promotes consistency in the functioning of buildings that serve as homes for local people when they engage in tourism. They argue that the consistent inhabitation would satisfy both the demand of tourism and the needs of the local community. They base their study on an extensive investigation of the existing conditions of 140 vernacular buildings listed as Important Protected Vernacular Buildings (IPVB) in Ljiang, China. The study demonstrates how much the buildings have changed in response to tourism needs. As a result, they identify a causal relationship between inhabiting the house and the transformation that occurred. They conclude that "when the houses change their functions [from domestic to full commercial], they are more likely to experience great transformations in form, layout, and decoration styles", as compared to those still occupied by local people (Zhang et al., 2006:171-3).

The study further emphasizes that functional consistency is the key to physical conservation. It demonstrates that vernacular houses, those that still serve as homes for the community, do not exhibit significant changes in appearance, spatial organization, layout, materials, style, or decoration. On the contrary, houses transformed into a public building (hospital) or commercial purposes (hotels, restaurants) experienced a wide range of changes, starting from spatial configuration and layout (in restaurants as they need bigger kitchens), style (in bars with more simple and plain styles, without necessary relevance to traditional buildings), to restructuring the house (in a guest house or hotel to accommodate two-bedrooms, bathrooms and other tourism facilities in the house – hence, major changes). Reflecting on this study, tourists, although short- and temporary-stayers, create a demand trend that tourism stakeholders, including the local community, are likely to follow to attract and retain more visitors. It, in turn, influences decisions and treatments for vernacular buildings.

Another interesting perspective on dynamic entanglements between tourism and vernacular transformation comes from AlSayyad (2001), who argued that mass tourism should be seen as a cultural phenomenon, incorporated into a process of redefining traditions in the contemporary world. He further urges attention to the relationships between place and host communities. From here, I will draw on the work of Estika et al. (2021) to examine how tourism marks its arrival in the communities of Bena and Tololela, as manifested in the built environment.



Figure 1. 4. Aerial view of Tololela village and its surroundings. Photo taken by A. Saiful Latif, August 2019.

For context, the villages of Bena and Tololela are in the Ngada Regency, Flores, in eastern Indonesia (Figure 1.4). Their architecture is known as '*Sao*' and houses the local agricultural families. Before tourism arrived in 2010, both villages were severely isolated, experiencing severe poverty and very limited access to government assistance and other services, such as clean water, electricity, health care, and education (Cole 2018). The community, along with governments and NGOs, worked together to prepare these villages to become tourism destinations to help ease poverty (Kurniati & Davis, 2022). With their unique architecture and the locals' cultural weaving techniques, the villages attracted tourists to experience life in the 'Sao.' Parts of the houses are for tourists, and hosts prepare local cuisine for tourists during their stay. In 2020, I experienced this hospitality firsthand during fieldwork for one of my early studies on the topic. In these villages, the *Saos* serve both tourist accommodation and housing for locals. They converted tourist rooms into houses; the governments and the initiating NGOs refer to this type of accommodation as "homestay."

In both Tololela and Bena, incorporating tourism activities into the communities' domestic spaces has changed various aspects of their everyday lives. It includes how they occupy houses and organize their neighborhoods. During the early developments of tourism programs in both places, Estika et al. state that initial adaptations included the domestication of their livestock, such as pigs, from previously being set free in the neighborhood to being domesticated in a pigsty at the back of the house, "for tourists' comfort" (2021:80).

As tourism grows in both villages, this study shows that the introduction of homestays also transforms the interior layout of the *Sao*. The common practice is to allocate one room, usually a corner of the living room, across the central or sacred room, called "*One*." With additional walls, a

room is inserted for tourists, with capacity for 1-2 people, when they decide to spend a night or two. When visitors are in a larger group, the host community usually assigns them to other houses.

Additionally, it is also common for the family to have the *Sao* expanded to the back. As opposed to the traditional wooden *Sao*, the extension is usually "a brick house, in local terms known as '*Rumah Sehat' or* Healthy House [...and is] equipped with modern electronic housewares," where the traditional ones not (Kurniati & Davis, 2022:16). The extension house usually has two units of bathroom; a parking spot for some cases, while others an open-air kitchen, serving as communal cooking area for locals to prepare home-made food for the tourists; and a concrete-paved pathway circulating the outer perimeter of the village (Figure 1.5).

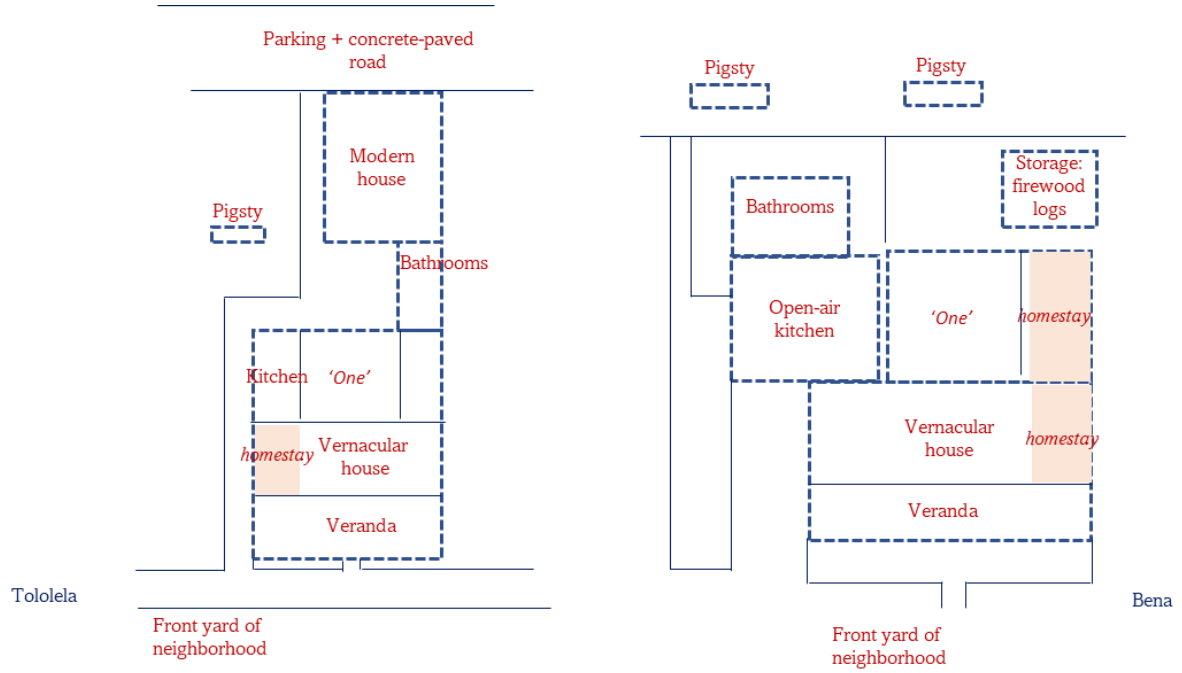


Figure 1. 5. *Sao*'s transformations in Bena (left) and Tololela (right) Villages. Graphic created by the author.

Meanwhile, the front parts of the houses face the front yard, which leads to the center of the village, marked by megalithic statues and a large, open, unpaved space with very few signs of modernization. This case shows that incorporating tourism into traditional livelihood has become a contact zone where traditionality and modernity meet, negotiate, and intertwine in everyday life. In this intertwining, there is a clear division between traditional and modern parts of living. Spatially, this study shows the inner part of the village, which presents an authentic image of the communities, while the outer parts feature modern developments.

Similarly, the 10 New Bali projects in Indonesia resonate with these dualities: authentic yet consumable for a modern audience. The project is to extensively prepare and promote 10 regions to achieve tourism success on par with Bali's. Following the launch of this mega project, the governments adopted a structured strategy to introduce the "homestay" accommodation into various vernacular architectures across the country. It aims to meet the accommodation targets set by the

Ministry of Tourism, which are 20 thousand homestay units, and, according to the 2025 survey conducted by the Indonesian Homestay Association, there are now 10 thousand homestays across the country (Yahya, 2017; CNN Indonesia, 2017; Kusuma, 2025). According to guidelines issued by the Homestay Development Acceleration Task Force of the Ministry of Tourism, the government offers three types of transformations, along with a set budget (in IDR), for vernacular buildings to enable them to serve as homestays (Figure 1.6). The type of transformations selected for buildings depends on the team's assessment of their condition and quality (Homestay Development Acceleration Task Force, 2019).

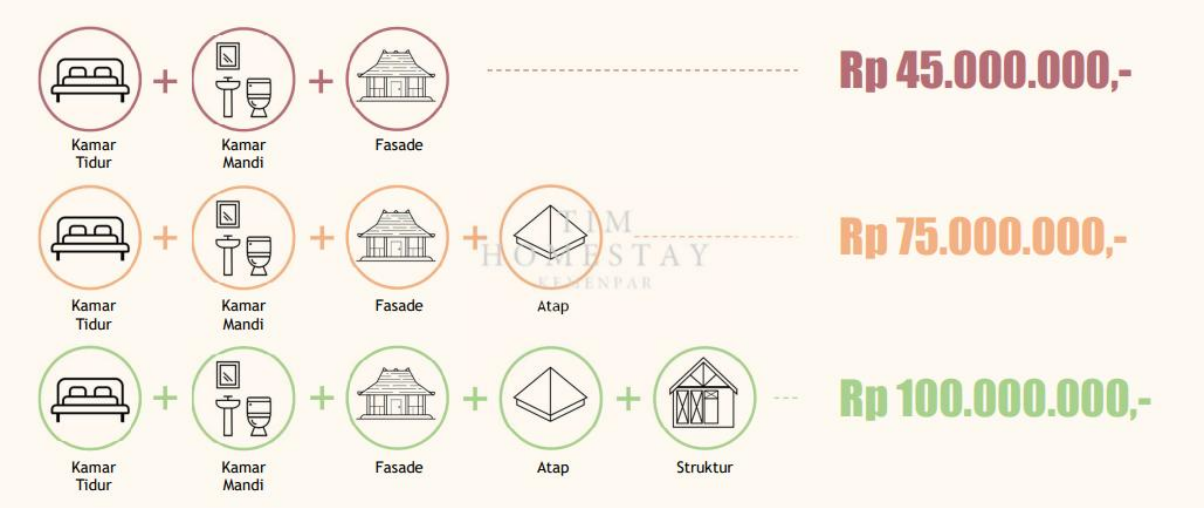


Figure 1. 6. Types of transformations offered by the Ministry of Tourism to vernacular houses to be a part of homestay programs. Image from presentation of the Homestay Development Acceleration Task Force, 2019.

Finally, reflecting on the specificities of the various practices discussed—Siallagan, Ke'te Ketsu, Ljiang, Bena and Tololela, and 10 New Bali—all point to the fact that the manifestations of authentic yet consumable traditions for tourism take many forms and are very specific to the place and the dynamics of local communities. Therefore, the physical impacts of tourists inhabiting vernacular neighborhoods are likely to differ, suggesting the need for a more comprehensive study. Looking at how the types of tourism programs shape the transformations of vernacular settlements, I return to William and Morrissey's intriguing view of tourism as "an art of performance, an agency of the transformation of culture into a consumable commodity" (2000:162). The dialogues between tradition as a legacy and as a commodity are at the center. Here, I argue that the dialogue between the two, which shapes the manifestations in traditional environments and affects their spatial inhabitation, is topical.

Culture, Tourism, Policies: A Pathway to Sustainability

As tourism becomes a global phenomenon, concerns and threats to traditional and heritage sites are global issues. Gao and Wu argue that, as cultural attractions are increasingly favorable to tourists and thus represent a very promising industry, it is important to involve the tourists in the protection process (2017). To help organize global efforts to address tourism issues, the UNWTO

(United Nations World Tourism Organization) participated. In its General Assembly in 2017, UNWTO categorized this type of tourism activity as 'Cultural Tourism', which means as follows:

> *"A type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries, and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs, and traditions."*

The definition promotes the use of diverse cultures, traditions, and built and natural environments worldwide to attract tourists and enhance their experience. Therefore, I argue that tourism activities such as these are growing and developing significantly in Indonesia. This is because tourism practices in Indonesia, which rely heavily on traditional and cultural products, fall under the UNWTO's definition of cultural tourism above. Therefore, I find it reasonable to refer to UNWTO's policies to better understand and situate the current tourism practices in Indonesia. Here, I examine the historical and conceptual development of cultural tourism within the UNWTO, as well as other global organizations such as ICOMOS and UNESCO.

Looking back at the early development of cultural tourism policies in the early 1970s, UNESCO issued a Convention on 'Concerning the Protection of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage' (UNESCO, 1972). The Convention inscribes sites, buildings, or places on the World Heritage List for their Outstanding Value. The list soon became a source of attractions and a favorite destination for tourists (Gowen et al., 2023). This convention marked the rise of tourist visits to cultural heritage sites.

On the other hand, the impacts of such a globalized tourism industry were particularly concerning for destinations. In response to these concerns, ICOMOS issued its first Charter on Cultural Tourism in Brussels in 1976. The Charter addresses the complexity of the extremely strong development of tourist activities on heritage sites, that besides "its motivations and the ensuing benefits, cultural tourism cannot be considered separately from the negative, despoiling or destructive effects which the massive and uncontrolled use of cultural heritage sites entails" (ICOMOS, 1976:3). Therefore, it sets an acceptable standard for the implementation of cultural tourism which is to maintain heritage "role as elements of touristic attraction and of cultural education" (*Ibid*).

However, no documents accompanied the Charter, focusing on supporting the protection and dissemination of heritage through education and public awareness. Only after 1978 did UNESCO issue the Recommendation for the Protection of Moveable Cultural Property as the main reference for guidelines and standard-setting documents. In the same year, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee developed selection criteria for inscribing properties on the World Heritage List,

supplemented by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.[6]

Moreover, 1994 marked the rise of a Global Strategy for managing the development of heritage tourism worldwide. Specifically, it addressed "the imbalances on the List between regions of the world, and the types of monuments and periods represented" (UNESCO, 1994). The list sparked debate, as Western sites dominated it compared to those in the Global South. It was during this period, amid such debates, that the NARA Document on Authenticity emerged as an important outcome of the Nara Conference on Authenticity, held in Nara, Japan, in November 1994.

Concerning authenticity, the NARA document aims to maintain cultural and heritage diversity. It touches upon the issue of identity that "in a world that is increasingly subject to the forces of globalization and homogenization, and in a world in which the search for cultural identity is sometimes pursued through aggressive nationalism and the suppression of the cultures of minorities, the essential contribution made by the consideration of authenticity in conservation practice is to clarify and illuminate the collective memory of humanity" (ICOMOS 1994:1).

It further states that the best way to ensure authenticity is to acknowledge diversity and variations that may link to "a great variety of sources of information … [including] form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors" (1994:3). This document is pertinent to the growing number of heritage sites, types, and variations from around the world as it promotes "diversification away from economically developed countries and towards traditional cultures" as listed in its choice of World Heritage Sites, which undoubtedly impact the flow of tourist visits globally (*Ibid)*.

Following the trend in tourist flows over the years, the UN World Tourism Organization issued a Charter on Sustainable Tourism in 1995 (UNWTO, 1995). It was built on the recognition of the dynamics of tourism impacts that although "it can contribute positively to socio-economic and cultural achievement, … it [also] can contribute to the degradation of the environment and the loss of local identity and should therefore be approached with a global methodology" (1995:1). The methodology aims to standardize tourism practices worldwide. It includes basing tourism development on the "criteria of sustainability, which means that it must be ecologically bearable in the long term, as well as economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities" (UNWTO, 1995:2).

The Charter further addresses the effects of tourism on traditional settlements, specifically those in developing countries. It emphasized the tourism impacts especially on "the cultural heritage and traditional elements, activities and dynamics of each local community" (1995:4). To address and prevent the projected negative impacts of tourism activities in traditional settlements, the Charter

[6] The details of this information are published on the official website of UNESCO: https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/. For a more complete timeline, please refer to the website.

offers strategies for tourism development, which includes a careful recognition of local factors, identity, culture and the interests of the local community and they must always play a central role in the formulation of tourism strategies for developing countries (*Ibid*). Accompanying this charter, Hampton published a note taken during the meeting, arguing that sustainable tourism also requires "local grassroots participation" (1995:367). From these developments and key points regarding human agency in tourism practice, it has come to my attention that the UNWTO 1995 Charter positions the involvement of host communities within the framework of sustainable tourism.

Pertinent to this development, the 12th General Assembly of ICOMOS, held in Mexico in 1999, adopted a Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage. It draws attention to the preservation of vernacular architecture and, in turn, promotes principles that integrate community, their settlements, and cultural landscapes into conservation solutions to sustain this architecture (ICOMOS, 1999a).

In the same period, ICOMOS also issued the International Cultural Tourism Charter: Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance (1999b). It addresses the primary objective for managing heritage for tourism: "to communicate its significance and need for its conservation to the host community and visitors" (1999b:1). The charter highlights the dynamic interaction between tourism and the site. On the one hand, tourism "can capture the economic characteristics of the heritage and harness these for conservation by generating funding, educating the community and influencing policy" (*Ibid*). On the other hand, it also presents many challenges, especially in "the involvement and co-operation of local and indigenous community representatives," and other stakeholders such as conservationists, tourism operators, property owners, policymakers, and site managers, to achieve a sustainable tourism industry and enhance the protection of heritage resources (1999b:2). In addition, of the six principles this charter developed, there are three main focuses, and the last one foregrounds "the active involvement of the host community." I argue that this document becomes an essential reference for managing tourism in the built vernacular settlements.

Still focusing on the human agency of the tourism industry, I continue to the World Heritage Committee document issued in 2007. Here, the committee amended the 2002 document and expanded the 4Cs Strategic Objectives of "Credibility", "Conservation", "Capacity", and "Communication" by adding a fifth C: Community (WHC, 2007). This addition highlights the importance of local community roles in preserving heritage in tourism activities (*Ibid*).

Another development in this respect is from the 34th session of the World Heritage Committee workshops in Brasilia in 2010. The workshop focuses on the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. In this session, the World Committee adopted the policy orientation which defines the relationship between World Heritage and sustainable tourism" (World Heritage Committee, 2010).

Finally, as the meaning and scope of sustainable tourism evolve, the development of policies to safeguard heritage gradually matures, becoming more comprehensive and contextual. In the case of

built vernacular heritage, global tourism policies are moving confidently towards recognizing local communities and their involvement, in collaboration with other tourism actors, as the key approach to achieving a sustainable cultural tourism industry.

From here, I will further establish the importance of host communities in navigating tourism activities in vernacular settlements. To better address the focus of my case studies, I direct this discussion especially to the practice of ethnic tourism. Hence, the following section will focus on agency in indigenous tourism, delving into the dynamics of tourism as a contact zone connecting diverse people, needs, and roles.

Ethnic Tourism: The Ambivalence of Human Agency

From the evolution of policies that surveil the use of vernacular heritage in the mass tourism industry, as described in the previous part, the expectation of benefits from vernacular heritage has always resulted in concerns about the degradation of cultures, identities, and the environment. The trend in policies responding to tourism impacts includes documents from UNESCO (1972), ICOMOS (1976), UNESCO (1978), and ICOMOS (1994), among others, which gradually converge on sustainability. The UNWTO defined sustainability in cultural tourism in 1995 as the tourism industry's use of culture and communities for economic benefits, while ensuring that the practice's future is ecologically sustainable, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities in the long term. In their later developments, these sustainability policies show that a strategic approach to sustainable cultural tourism entails fostering collaboration among actors and agencies, with particular attention to the voices of local communities (UNWTO 1995; ICOMOS 1999a, 1999b).

Regarding human agency in the tourism industry, especially in vernacular built heritage, Robinson (2001) argues that it often leads to conflicts among these actors. For example, cultural conflicts often occur between individual tourists and representatives of the host culture, between and within host cultures, and between the tourism industry and host communities. Likewise, other scholars take a similar view, focusing more on issues between guests and hosts, such as Shen et al. (2008) and Urry (1992).

In response to the dynamics of human agencies in tourism, McComb and Boyd (2017) examine the structural organization of rural tourist sites in Northern Ireland. The study examines collaboration among stakeholders in the development and management of rural tourism. Based on interviews with various actors, the study develops a collaborative framework and maps each agency's involvement. However, it begins by acknowledging the roles and aspirations of local community members—by identifying the issues they face—the proposed framework pays very little attention to the host communities. Instead, it mainly captures aspirations from governments, architects, and planners. A very small portion of the framework represents the local community participation.

Delving deeper into ethnic tourism, sometimes also referred to as Indigenous tourism, an interesting perspective is offered by Buzinde et al (2006). They argue that in the case of Indigenous

tourism, ethnic groups as the host communities are often perceived as passive actors and deemed as only having entertainment roles. This resonates well with Robinson (1999) that despite its vital roles, the practices of ethnic tourism remain excluding the indigenous/local representation. Furthermore, it is argued that the absence of indigenous/local representation control in tourism management may lead to commodification, acculturation, and even exploitation of cultures and communities.

Moreover, many scholars have criticized the tourism practice of positioning ethnic host communities as a source of mere attraction. For example, Chambers and Buzinde (2015) discuss the practice in the global South, where host communities often serve as providers of exotic experiences. Similarly, Aitchison confronts that "cultural landscapes and the people within them cannot be seen merely as sites for tourists" (2001).

Meanwhile, reflecting on trends in academic research projects, Chambers and Buzinde (2015) also express concern that tourism studies have failed to elaborate on the problematic nature of researching oppressed and marginalized communities from a position of privilege. Additionally, they further emphasize the need to "engage with structural analyses of power and inequality in the tourism industry" (Chambers and Buzinde, 2015). In line with this, Cai et al.'s extensive study on 963 publications on ethnic tourism, from 1991 to 2023, reveals that the ethnic tourism scholarship lacks significant "qualitative insights into power relations and discourse" (2025:13). In this sense, it is beneficial to borrow Said's (1978) theoretical approach to challenge unequal authority distribution and provide a medium for people to express their aspirations. I argue that this is vital, especially given the tourism industry's progressive shift towards indigenous culture and community.

I find Buzinde et al.'s work, which scrutinizes agency within ethnic tourism practices, best captures the unequal power dynamics (2006). They argue that there is a need to emphasize the host community's role as an "active" agency and to challenge the common view of "entertaining roles". Drawing on Spivak's (2005) seminal work on unrecognized agencies, Buzinde et al. (2006) further highlight the importance of positioning indigenous communities as active agents, planners, and decision-makers, rather than as recipients and executors.

Correlating these dynamics with my study cases, I believe it is important to examine each agency involved and assess its level of 'activeness'. Therefore, I plan to delve into the roles and involvement of not only regional/local governments, architects, and contractors, who were granted direct authority by the central government, but also host communities, ranging from local leaders to individual homeowners.

Here, I promote the diversity of agencies and question their positions within the dynamics of cultural tourism progress. In other words, my research will depart from a multiple-agency perspective and proceed with an understanding of cultural tourism as a contact zone where different agencies and their respective powers and aspirations negotiate, control, influence, or even eliminate one another.

CONCLUSION

This research examines the transformation of these beautiful vernacular villages into "homestays," a state program that promotes vernacular architecture by accommodating tourists in the very homes of local people in Samosir. The homestay generates economic revenue for local communities; however, it also creates tension, bitterness, and disappointment, which is why this study is important. Therefore, the topic of my study lies at the intersection of three main concepts: vernacular architecture, tourism, and power dynamics within state intervention.

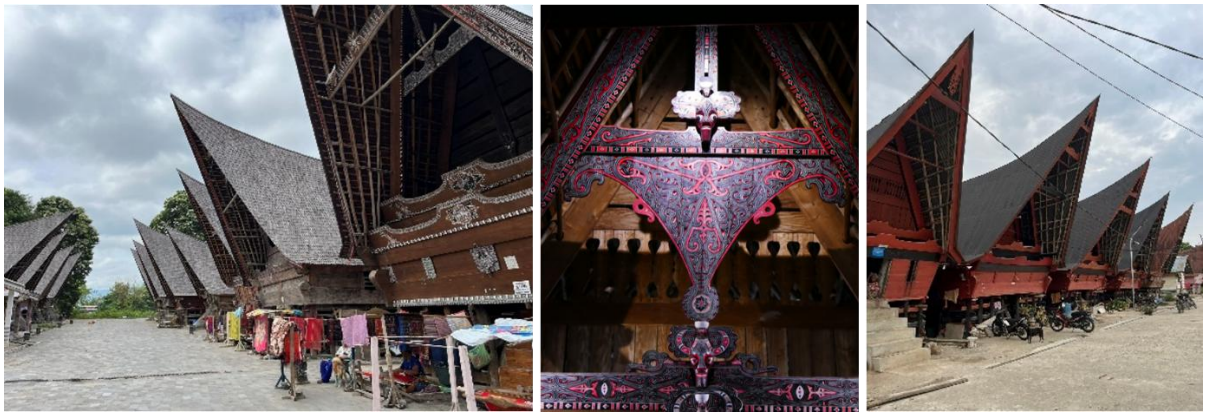


Figure 1. 7. The beauty of vernacular villages in Samosir. Photos taken by the author.

In this study, I primarily define vernacular architecture as "ordinary" and "everyday" structures in which the mundane lives of common Samosir people unfold, rather than focusing on location (urban vs. rural), its distinct form or type, or its natural relations. Further, I highlight how perceptions of vernacular architecture, once seen as uncivilized, have shifted toward sustainability and authenticity, qualities many people around the world seek to experience. This shift brings vernacular architecture into the global economic system: tourism. In other words, studying the principal intellectual and historical advances in vernacular architecture reveals the topical phenomenon of tourism's insertion into vernacular cultures.

Moreover, at the intersection of culture and tourism, this study shows how traditions, their people, and built form play significant roles in tourism programs. It also highlights the potential and threats of such global phenomena and synthesizes key policies on sustainable tourism developed over the decades by the UN, ICOMOS, UNESCO, and UNWTO. Although extensive studies and policies have addressed the potential and threats posed by such phenomena, what seems to be lacking, despite being critical to tourism development, is the involvement of host communities, which I later refer to as 'local agency,' as a key to reinforcing authenticity and sustainability.

In fact, current trends and practices in ethnic tourism often treat host communities as mere sites for tourists. Drawing on key scholars such as Buzinde, Chambers, Aitchison, and Robinson, among others, I highlight the concept of 'multiagency' as a collaborative framework for analyzing the structural dynamics of power and inequality embedded in the practice of ethnic tourism. Hence, I

advocate for the diversity of actors and their active engagement in tourism development, especially that of host communities.

This seems to be a direction in which further exploration of its significance is needed to build a body of awareness and knowledge to support policy improvements in ethnic-based tourism programs. My study will focus on the intersection of vernacular architecture, tourism, and the state in the context of Indonesia. The following chapter will situate this study.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEXT

This section aims to provide the study's contextual setting. The growing phenomenon of incorporating indigenous communities and their built environments into Indonesia's state tourism programs requires a closer look at the relationship between indigeneity and the state. The relationship between the state and the indigenous communities is especially critical when the state controls and centralizes the integration process of Indigenous culture and tradition into tourism. And this is the case for Indonesia's Indigenous homestay program. Therefore, I will dedicate this chapter to, **first,** briefly laying out the history of indigeneity in Indonesia and its position in relation to the state. **Second,** I aim to highlight the specific context of Samosir as the setting for the cases selected for this study, the land of the Batak people and traditions.

STATE & INDIGENEITY IN INDONESIA

The extensive structural integration of traditional cultures into the state's economic priority programs, such as village homestay programs across the country, does not occur without a long, problematic/complex historical background. This part of my study aims to capture key events of indigenous history within the nation's trajectory. I will begin with the evolutionary transformation of state perspectives on indigenous cultures and the growing integration of these cultures into national plans. Further, this part of the study follows a discussion about the impacts of the 1999 decentralization on the concept of indigeneity in Indonesia, from marginality to opportunity. And this section ends with a summary of recent government regulations and programs rooted in the land and traditions of the then-marginalized Indigenous.

A Brief History of Cultural Tourism in Indonesia: Early Initiatives

To describe the dynamics of Indigenous history in Indonesia, below is a timeline to compare key historical events at two scales: national and local. I imagine the national scale as the central government issuing regulations and making decisions that affect the lives of underrepresented communities nationwide. Meanwhile, the local level represents the indigenous communities and their actions to implement these imposed regulations. Figure 2.1 shows a brief timeline of the states' engagements with indigenous groups in developing a national economic focus across time. The

timeline further demonstrates that the relationship gradually leads to greater attention to incorporating indigenous culture into tourism as part of the national economic priority.

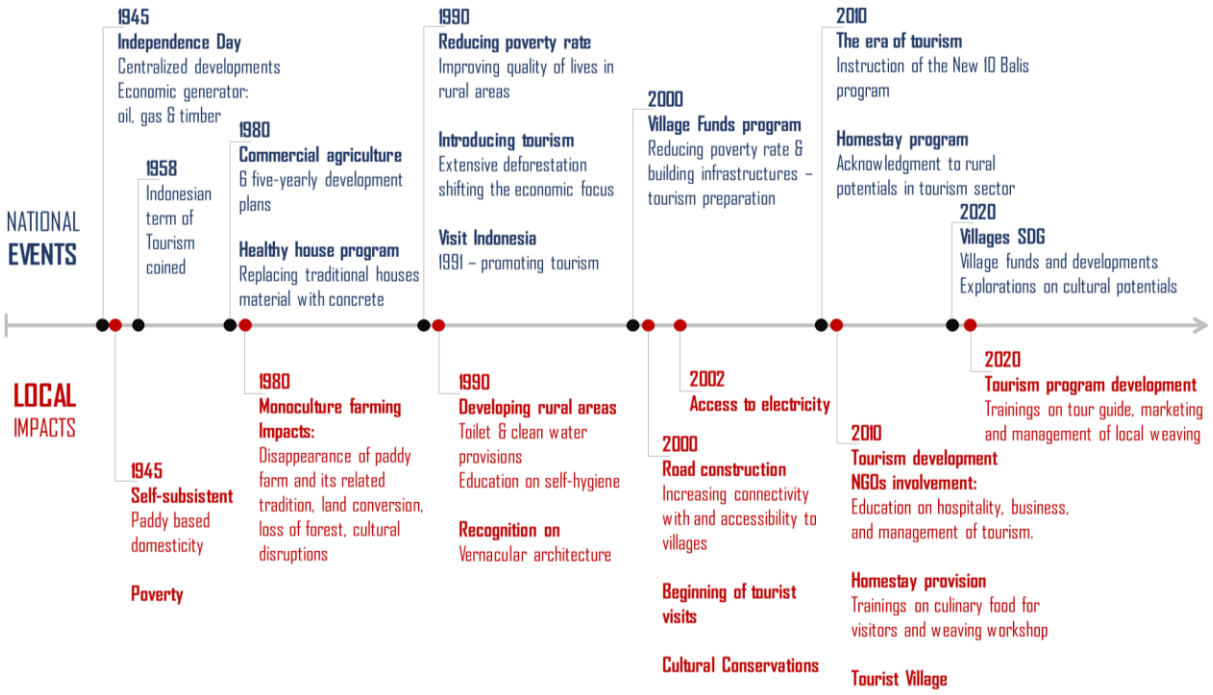


Figure 2. 1. Incorporation of culture and tourism into national economic plans. Graphic created by the author.

From a historical perspective, the country's economy began to rely more heavily on the tourism sector after the collapse of the oil and gas industry and the decline in agricultural production (Gunawan, 1997). In the late 1980s, under the Soeharto regime, numerous critiques and protests over agricultural programs began to threaten national stability, driven by widespread environmental degradation and natural resource extraction, including extensive land conversions, pollution, and concerns about future water availability (MacAndrews, 1994). In response, central governments shifted their economic focus to the country's natural and cultural assets. Suharto inaugurated an economic program called 'REPELITA' (Five-Year Development Plan), consisting of six REPELITA plans that began in 1969. In the last period of REPELITA, from 1994-1998, the emphasis on development was on regionalization and on reducing social inequalities in regions outside Java, focusing on areas of high poverty in rural areas (Kuntjoro-Jakti, 1997).

Around the same time, in the early 1990s, the government began shifting the economic focus from large-scale commercial agriculture to tourism. Many believe that tourism is the answer to the threat of environmental degradation and thus see it as a sustainable industry (MacAndrews, 1994). Governments embraced the global tourism opportunity and promoted Indonesia through the "Visit Indonesia Year" program in 1991, initiated by the Ministry of Tourism under Soesilo Soedarman's leadership. Visit Indonesia Year was partly a means of attracting tourists and partly a celebration of 45 years of independence for the Indonesian archipelago, with a slogan "Let's Go, Archipelago" (Schansman, 1991). During this time, tourist attractions mainly centered on Bali for leisure tourism,

Yogyakarta for its Sultanate heritage, the Bromo volcano in East Java, and Lake Toba in North Sumatra for its beautiful landscapes (*Ibid*).

Schansman (1991), as noted above, shows that Toba has been a tourist attraction since the very beginning of Indonesia's tourism development. An interesting point here is that, in selecting my study cases, the Lake Toba region, tourism activities occur mainly along the islands' east coast. This eastern concentration is due to the island's connectivity with and better access to the main cities on the mainland of North Sumatra. In contrast, on the west side of the region, there were very few traces of tourism activity in the decade leading up to the implementation of the island's homestay program. Further elaboration on this aspect is in the second part of this chapter: "Samosir on Focus."

Moving forward with Figure 2.1, the intersection of the early rise of tourism and the growing attention to regionalization cast a spotlight on rural tourism. The growing attention to rural areas was due to their potential attractions to tourists, such as the beauty of natural landscapes, distinctive architecture, and traditions untouched by modernity. Therefore, during this period, either by the government and/or tour operators, there were many discoveries of new potential destinations (Schansman, 1991). During this early rise in rural cultural tourism, Cole (2018) argues that the country expected the tourism sector to drive economic development, with an ambitious target of 11-13% annual growth.

Regulations and resources began to form around this goal. An example of this was the government's initiative, "Tourism with Cultural Attractions," created alongside the other 5 priorities, including marine, forestry, agriculture, mining, and trading and industry (Feraco, 2003). Here, indigenous groups, local architecture, and their natural landscapes began to gain recognition. In other words, culture as tourism potential gained significant visibility in national development plans. With greater traction towards indigenous communities, the government began allocating national resources to improve the development of physical and social infrastructure in these underrepresented communities (Kuntjoro-Jakti, 1997). Various construction projects then took place in villages, and the success was evident in improvements in quality of life, road infrastructure, and access to clean water, electricity, and toilet facilities across the country (Kurniati & Davis, 2022). Along the way, various underdeveloped regions in Indonesia gained more recognition from the state. This recognition of rural potential marked the initial stage of tourism preparation and cultural reconstruction in remote rural villages.

In addition, as more rural regions attracted tourists, NGOs began to participate in grassroots initiatives to improve the lives of rural people. Indigenous villages such as Bena and Tololela in Flores, as explained in Chapter 1, are the best examples of this practice. NGOs collaborated with local communities to preserve their unique cultures and architecture as part of tourists' experiences (Kurniati & Davis, 2022). NGOs and villagers collaborated to maintain the house's functional aspects as a domestic cultural unit while adding tourist services, such as homestays.

Although recognition of local architecture increased, appreciation of its cultural values and vernacular qualities remained low. The central governments viewed them as primitive buildings. They commanded the replacement of natural building materials with brick and concrete In the late 1990s, governments promoted a 'Healthy House' program, funding rural villagers to replace their housing materials, from wood, bamboo, and thatched roofs to modern materials such as concrete and zinc for the roof, while the buildings' form remained the same (Estika et al., 2021). This nationwide program, consequently, replaced the naturally available, locally sourced materials of many houses in rural Indonesia with 'modern' ones, transported to these remote villages, while keeping their physical form. This practice resonated with governmental decentralization initiatives in 1999, requiring newly constructed public buildings to adopt physical features of local architecture, such as pointed roofs, carving patterns, and other distinctive elements that emphasized local expression as a means of modernizing Indonesian architecture (Widyarta 2012).

Approaching the 2000s, Indonesia's socio-political environment underwent a significant change, with the end of the Soeharto regime in 1998 after 30 years of rule. After the fall of Soeharto, Abdurrahman Wahid 'Gusdur' took over (1999-2001) and continued promoting region-focused development. One of his main programs was 'Village Fund,' which assisted villages on and below the "low-income index," including funding for the conservation and preservation of vernacular architecture (see Figure 2.1). 'Village Fund' is named after the Republic of Indonesia's lowest organisational unit, the 'village.' Meanwhile, the funds come from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN), which is regulated in Government Regulation Number 60 of 2014 to help villages improve and grow (Yudhanti, 2021).

Overall, since their early incorporation into central government programs—either due to tourism discoveries, agricultural responsibilities, or extreme poverty that caused nationwide protests and frustration—rural communities across Indonesia have experienced different eras. The growing attention to rural areas resulted from the implementation of decentralization, which began to take shape in the early 2000s. Decentralization slowly shifted the government's focus to rural regions, helping to improve extremely underdeveloped remote villages across the country (Nas, 2007). Programs such as Healthy House, the Village Fund, the rural tourism initiative, and regionalization have laid a foundation for further development in rural communities. In fact, I argue that these periods mark a turning point in rural regions. This era marked the start of the tourism preparation phase and will continue to progress in the following decades.

Indigenous Indonesian: From Marginality to Opportunity

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic country, divided into three major island groups: the Greater Sunda Islands, the Lesser Sunda Islands, and the Maluku Islands, as well as Papua New Guinea. Greater Sunda comprises Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, while Lesser Sunda comprises Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Sumba, and Timor. Indonesian territory stretches from Sumatra to the western part of New Guinea in Oceania. The capital city is Jakarta, located on Java

Island. As a capital, Jakarta falls into the category of a great capital, where major political and economic activities are concentrated (Spate, 1942).

Since colonial rule, the island of Java has served as Indonesia's imagined center and a prime example of development, while the outer islands have been the state's underdeveloped peripheries (Haug et al. 2017). In fact, since Indonesian independence in 1945, Jakarta has always been the capital.[7] The dominance of Jakarta, which reached its peak during the New Order period (1966-1998), highlighted the imposition of an administrative model by center-based administrators, a top-down development approach, and a policy of economic extraction to benefit the development of the center region, that is, Java (Charras, 2005). It has kept Java as the 'center', leading to pressing issues of inequality and poverty in peripheral regions (Aji et al., 2021). Not only did this cause development disparities between the center and the peripheries, but it also led to various territorial disputes and ethnic conflicts due to a lack of power to control and empower the peripheries.

Over the past 50 years, under centralized governments, the marginalization of peripheral regions intensified, particularly of indigenous groups (Haug et al., 2017). Li (2005) argues that marginality is a social construction resulting from unequal power relations. Li further investigates the concept of marginality in Indonesia by examining relations between the state and indigenous people. According to Li, defining regions, peoples, and practices as marginal is not merely to describe the social world; it is to deploy a discourse of power.

The unequal power between the center and the margins under Indonesia's centralized government is evident in several policies and regulations. For example, regarding access to natural resources, the New Order government issued several sectoral laws on forestry, mining, oil and natural gas, irrigation, and fisheries, thereby increasing state control over natural resources and facilitating their exploitation by private interests (Lucas & Warren, 2000). On the other hand, these limited customary 'Adat' rights to land and forests, and millions of hectares of communal forests, uncultivated land, and forest gardens were granted to logging companies or converted for commercial agriculture (Haug et al., 2017). Many marginalized communities thereby lost the right to cultivate land that had traditionally been under indigenous land tenure. In terms of cultural structures, most local and customary leaders experienced a significant decline in their authority due to centrally based administrative regulations. Haug and team further argued that this decline destroyed local political institutions and traditional forms of leadership, and disintegrated indigenous systems from the national bureaucratic structure.

Moreover, the New Order regime portrayed indigenous communities as primitive, highlighted by Suharto's objective of modernizing the peripheries (Estika et al., 2021; Haug et al., 2017). Top-down programs occurred in indigenous communities to pursue the idea of civilized citizens, such as commercial agriculture instead of domestic-based cultivation, permanent settlement

[7] Except for short periods when other cities were pointed as the acting capital for the emergency government of the Republic of Indonesia during the Indonesian National Revolution 1946-1948.

units with industrialized materials instead of vernacular houses made of natural materials, and the replacement of indigenous belief systems with either of five religions acknowledged by the government as official religions, including Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (MacAndrews, 1994; Kuntjoro-Jakti, 1997; Estika et al., 2021,). Popular views during this period held that indigenous religions were mystical beliefs; therefore, expressions of belief systems became mere folklore, and all elements of belief were profoundly 'aesthetics,' a traditional art form due to their incongruity with religion and modernity (Rossler, 2000). Other studies also show that during almost a third of a century of authoritarian rule, communities and ethnic groups across Indonesia have publicly, vocally, and sometimes violently demanded the right to implement elements of *adat* or *hukum adat* (customary law) in their home territories, yet authorities ignored these demands (Davidson & Henley, 2007).

Additionally, during these 30 years of the New Era government, indigenous communities have suffered from marginalization, oppression, and poverty, which thus led to a nationwide trend of historical decline of ethnic culture (Rossler, 2000). The decline included the elimination of the traditional leadership system and the replacement with the national 'Village' system, with 'village' as the smallest administrative division below a district, regency, city, and province, under direct influence of the central government (World Bank, 2023). This elimination diminishes the control and power of the Indigenous figures over their lands, people, and traditions.

Following the fall of the New Order in 1998, Indonesia's sociopolitical environment changed significantly. In August 1999, the state passed the Regional Autonomy (*Otonomi Daerah*) legislation. The central element to this was the decentralization of various areas of government, including education, health, the environment, public works, natural resource management, tourism, and culture, to the regency/municipal level, along with a much larger share of revenue and the power to raise revenue (Jones, 2013). Along with these changes, many local elites used ethnic identity as a political means to gain power. Research from this period documents a growing politicization of ethnic identity in Indonesia (Davidson & Henley, 2007). This period also saw the revival of traditional *adat* institutions, and one of the significant organizations to remain to this day is AMAN *(Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara)*, the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago. With AMAN, formerly muted indigenous communities now have a powerful voice in the struggle for recognition and the reclaiming of their customary rights (Haug et al., 2017).

The growth of traditional organizations and stronger links to regional government indicate a weakening of central control, as reflected in debates and changes within national institutions such as the Directorate of Culture. Jones (2013) argues that a potential shift in cultural policy surfaced in 1999 with the restructuring of the Directorate of Culture, which linked culture to tourism rather than to education. It opened a new era for Indigenous cultures, inviting an integration of formerly marginalized cultures and traditions into the national agenda. As reflected in the national guiding policy document for the early Reform era—the Broad Outline of State Policy—the promotion of

tourism received high priority, which made it possible "to configure traditional arts and culture as a 'vehicle' for the development of national tourism and its promotion overseas" (Majelis Perwakilan Rakyat, 1999: 32).

An interesting observation on the relationship between decentralization and indigenous communities was made by Muur et al. (2019), who noted that changing sociopolitical dynamics between the centre and the margins led to the revival of *adat* (custom and tradition). During the first decade of *Reformasi* (1998-2010), this proliferated into a variety of interlinked '*adat* projects' as various actors mobilized, interpreted, codified, and contested *adat* in multiple ways in Indonesia (*Ibid)*. Further impacts, besides serving as an effective tool to challenge corporate and state power, also include more recent manifestations that are often invoked as assets in tourism development and as powerful tools in identity politics (*Ibid*; Feraco, 2003). Central governments began paying attention to peripheral regions and to formerly marginalized communities across the country through tourism programs and development initiatives.

Here, tourism becomes one potential catalyst for village development. Additionally, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (BEKRAF) expresses enthusiasm for promoting cultural villages as the primary source of foreign exchange, "the most accessible and cheapest contributor to GDP, foreign exchange and employment" (Akmal et al., 2017). In fact, among the nine government program priorities mentioned in the National Medium-Term Development Plan for 2010-2014, 'culture' is widely regarded as the platform for strengthening diversity, unity, and social reconstruction, and for developing the nation's contemporary identity through tourism. Since then, the state has launched many programs focusing on indigenous cultures and architecture, supporting the country's tourism goals. Referring to Figure 2.1, they range from programs such as 10 New *Balis* and Tourist Village to Homestay provisions.

Periphery as a Site of Opportunity: Recent Developments

As decentralization replaced the previous decentralization in Indonesia, the changes did not proceed as quickly as one might have expected. In terms of cultural tourism development, although the common expectation was that after decentralization the industry would be more active in the outer regions, in reality, both the central and local governments were busy with organizational restructuring of administration in line with decentralization, rather than with policies directly promoting or developing tourism (Judisseno, 2015). A more structured, national-scale tourism program in peripheral regions began to take shape during Jokowi's tenure in the 2010s.

Following the early-2000s initiatives, Figure 2.1 shows significant milestones in cultural tourism development after the first decade of the century. Tourism preparation programs expanded to encompass other aspects of hospitality, including tour guide services, village management, crafts, and local cuisine, and continued into Joko Widodo's era of tourism (2014-2024). Here, indigenous groups, local architecture, and their natural landscapes became centers of the economy. In other

words, culture as tourism gained significant visibility in national development plans, further emphasizing the vision and goals of decentralization.

Jokowi's administration seemed to treat inequality as a serious problem and sought to address it quickly. In *Nawacita*, one of the priorities of the Jokowi administration was "to develop Indonesia from the peripheral areas by reinforcing local governments and villages within a unitary state framework" (Hanafi, 2017). With such a priority agenda, Jokowi looks set to erase the image of Java-centrist development from previous administrations (*Ibid*).



Figure 2. 2. The distribution of the 10 New Balis. Data from PUPR's 2020-21 Reports. Graphic created by the author.

One of the major government-promoted programs following "Nawacita" was the 10 New Bali project. It was established in the first half of the 2010s and aimed to establish 10 regions to achieve the same level of attention Bali receives from tourists. They include Danau Toba, Tanjung Kelayang, Tanjung Lesung, Kepulauan Seribu, Borobudur, Bromo Tengger Semeru, Mandalika, Labuan Bajo, Wakatobi, and Morotai. Although the reasons behind this selection of locations remained unclear, as one expert member of the tourism development program team in Indonesia once criticized (Gunawan, 2023), one can only assume that Jokowi's goal of decentralizing development was reflected in the distribution of these 10 spots. The distribution shows that more destinations are located outside of Java. Figure 2.2 shows that three locations are in Java, scattered across West, Central, and East Java. At the same time, the other seven are distributed across Java Island and the western and eastern parts of Indonesia (Figure 2.2).

To support these ten regions, the Tourism and Creative Economy Agency also developed a program called 'Tourist Village.' The program selected and designated villages across the 10 new destinations to host tourists as a main attraction in Indonesian tourism. According to Purwaningrum (2019), the promotion of villages as destinations, especially those in indigenous traditional settlements, used Yori Antar's discovery of Wae Rebo village in East Nusa Tenggara as a precedent.

The success in attracting tourists to its unique architecture reinforces the government body's commitment to cultural tourism (*Ibid*). It encouraged the government to adopt a similar approach to the country's tourism strategies.

Accordingly, by 2021, the government noted that they have reached 1,836 tourist villages across the nation (Aditya, 2021). The 'Tourist Village' program aimed to increase accommodation options for the target tourists in these regions. The tourist village program uses rural villages, improving communities through physical and social infrastructure to host tourists and offer them unique, authentic experiences (Akmal, 2017). Similarly, according to the Ministerial Regulation on Culture and Tourism on the Guidance of the Program for Community Empowerment (PNPM), a tourist village is a unity of tourism accommodation, attractions, facilities, and infrastructure, integrated into community life and blending with prevailing traditions and culture. Through this program, the government selected and designated numerous villages to host tourists and provide them with location-specific cultural experiences.

Additionally, in 2017, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing and the Ministry of Tourism set a goal to develop 20,000 homestays in designated tourist villages to accelerate the provision of tourist accommodation (CNN Indonesia, 2017). Homestay, according to Oxford Dictionaries, describes a type of accommodation or "an arrangement that provides accommodation for tourists in the home of a family in exchange for payment" (2023). In Indonesian terms, 'homestay' is known as '*Pondok Wisata*,' highlighting the locally rooted, modest, and intimate qualities of accommodation and hospitality.

With the rise in budget travel and increased interest in cultural tourism, the government considered homestays, 'Pondok Wisata', as the best way to quickly increase the number of tourist accommodations for the targeted visitors in a short period (Yahya, 2017). However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, Indonesia suffered significantly at the beginning of its tourism boom, losing almost IDR 100 trillion (~USD 7.1 billion; Karyadi & Irawati, 2021). Consequently, the government established a National Economic Recovery program to help the economy recover.

In 2021, according to the official Twitter account of the Indonesian Directorate General of Budget of the Ministry of Finance, the ministry had allocated 14.2 trillion IDR (~928 million USD) for the tourism sector alone (@DitjenAnggaran, 2021). According to the Ministry of Public Works and Housing's reports (2020, 2021), the recovery plan consisted of two phases. First, in 2020, the focus was on the recovery of five Super Priority tourist destinations: Lake Toba in North Sumatra, Borobudur in Central Java, Mandalika on Lombok Island, Labuan Bajo on Flores Island, and Likupang. Second, in 2021, the other five continued to recover: Tanjung Kelayang, Tanjung Lesung, Bromo Tengger-Semeru, Wakatobi, and Morotai.

The division between the two recovery phases signifies the tourism potential of the locations in question. For example, among the first 5 Super Priority Destinations, Toba Caldera received the

highest funding for homestay provisions following its designation as one of UNESCO's Global Geoparks (UNESCO, 2020).

Accordingly, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing allocated 120 billion IDR to accelerate the Toba region's development and, for tourist accommodations, has successfully built 1,799 units. In contrast, Morotai in Maluku is the lowest recipient, receiving only around 6% of Toba's funding to build 90 homestays and shops. In total, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing's annual reports (2020, 2021) showed that in 2020, the government built 1,843 homestays and renovated 2,836 units, while in 2021, it built 186 homestays and renovated 711 units. The distribution of units and some expenditure by location (in billion IDR) is in Figure 2.2 above.



Figure 2. 3. Comparison between homestays in Borobudur (left) and Samosir (right) regions. Photos taken by the author, 2024.

Due to the urgency of the recovery effort, the implementation of this program was rather direct, with funding distributed and projects completed in the same year. Considering homestay projects, in which a new function of tourist accommodation is introduced into numerous local houses across the country, one could easily question this approach. This is due to the vast differences in the geographical, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds of the receiving communities, both among the 10 regions and within them.

For example, based on my visit to Borobudur and brief interactions with one of the homestays' owners, homestays in Borobudur are recreations of local architectural features added to existing modern houses, as opposed to the case in Samosir (Figure 2.3). Additionally, homestay hosts

in the Borobudur area and those in the Toba area have different levels of exposure and understanding of tourism and its systems. Similarly, within the Toba region itself, communities in the Balige area, a more established city to the south of Lake Toba, were very different from those living inland of Samosir.

Therefore, in the case of Samosir Island, given that it is mainly inhabited by the Indigenous Batak people with strong traditional leadership and property ownership systems, in contrast to those developed by the state, the 'Village' system, I am more convinced to look closer into the implementation of homestays in the communities and delve deeper into power relations between center, peripheries, and dynamics in between. This is where the discourse of power relations continues to carry a meaningful discussion on decentering the power of the 'center' in Indonesian history, especially when related to the lives of Indigenous people who historically suffered from isolation and marginalization.

TOURISM IN THE PERIPHERIES: PERSPECTIVE FROM SAMOSIR

This section provides an overview of the place, community, and tradition in which this study is conducted. Starting with Samosir in the context of a state's regency, this part follows a brief introduction to the Batak Indigenous culture and the building traditions and concludes by situating Samosir and its communities within the state's tourism programs, especially homestays.

Samosir: Now and Then



Figure 2. 4. Inhabitants of a Batak village in Samosir, taken circa 1880. Archives of KITLV Leiden University Libraries.

Samosir is an island in Lake Toba, in the highlands of North Sumatra. The lake is like a vast ocean, approximately 100 km by 30 km, and in the middle of it is the large island of Samosir (Indonesia-Tourism, 2010). The lake covers an area of about 440 square miles (1,140 km^2), excluding Samosir Island, which occupies a large part of the lake's center, about 30 miles (50 km) long and 10 miles (15 km) wide (Britannica Editors, 2025).

Due to such geographical conditions, Samosir experienced development relatively later than its surrounding Regencies in the North Sumatra Province. According to Britannica (2019), the groups lived in isolation for centuries in the highlands surrounding Lake Toba until population growth and the expansion of the timber industry took over large areas of the mountains (*Ibid*). Despite living in a geographically isolated region, the Batak have a long history of contact with the outside world, primarily through trade and religion, especially with missionaries. The latter had a significant impact on the Batak's religious beliefs, as most modern Batak adhere to Protestant Christianity (Lasky, 2024).

The twenty-first-century Batak and their traditional lands remain relatively unaffected by the encroachment of modern society. MacAndrews (1978) argues that the Indonesian government's transmigration program after independence in 1950, the '*transmigrasi*', did not impact the Batak as much as it did their Acehnese neighbors. As a result, and because their lands hold little in the way of oil or natural gas resources, the Batak territory has gone largely untouched by industrialization.

Lasky (2024) further argues that the Batak people's isolation also affected their traditions. For example, government policies often prohibited the use of the Batak languages in many aspects of public life, thereby diminishing their prominence. Additionally, government legislation also banned traditional farming methods of the Batak in the early 21st century, leading to undernourishment, which predisposed them to diseases like malaria and tuberculosis (*Ibid*).

The Lake Toba region, including Samosir Island, is home to the Batak people, an Indigenous group. A local legend held that Samosir was the birthplace of the Batak people. The first settlement was located in Pusuh Buhit, Sianjur Mula-Mula, in the northwest of the island, and later expanded to other parts of the island (Etania & Indiawati, 2023). As the origin of the Batak groups, Samosir has been the centre of their traditions, including woodcraft, traditional woven cloth called *ulos*, and traditional communal houses concentrated in villages called *huta* (Caglayan, 2004). Batak are one of the largest indigenous groups in Indonesia and are divided into six groups, comprising a total population of 8.5 million in 2010 (Lasky, 2024).

Currently, Samosir Island is officially part of the Samosir Regency, a newly established regency in North Sumatra. The Samosir Regency is a new regency, separated from the previously combined Toba-Samosir Regency and inaugurated on January 7, 2004. The expansion is based on Law Number 36 of 2003 concerning the Establishment of Samosir Regency and Serdang Bedagai Regency in North Sumatra Province (Pardosi, 2023). Samosir's capital is Pangururan City. It makes the city a significant node on the island. Pangururan is the centre of government affairs, housing all

regency government offices. Other new tourist attractions are also emerging in Pangururan, including the Waterfront, hotels, cafes, and restaurants.

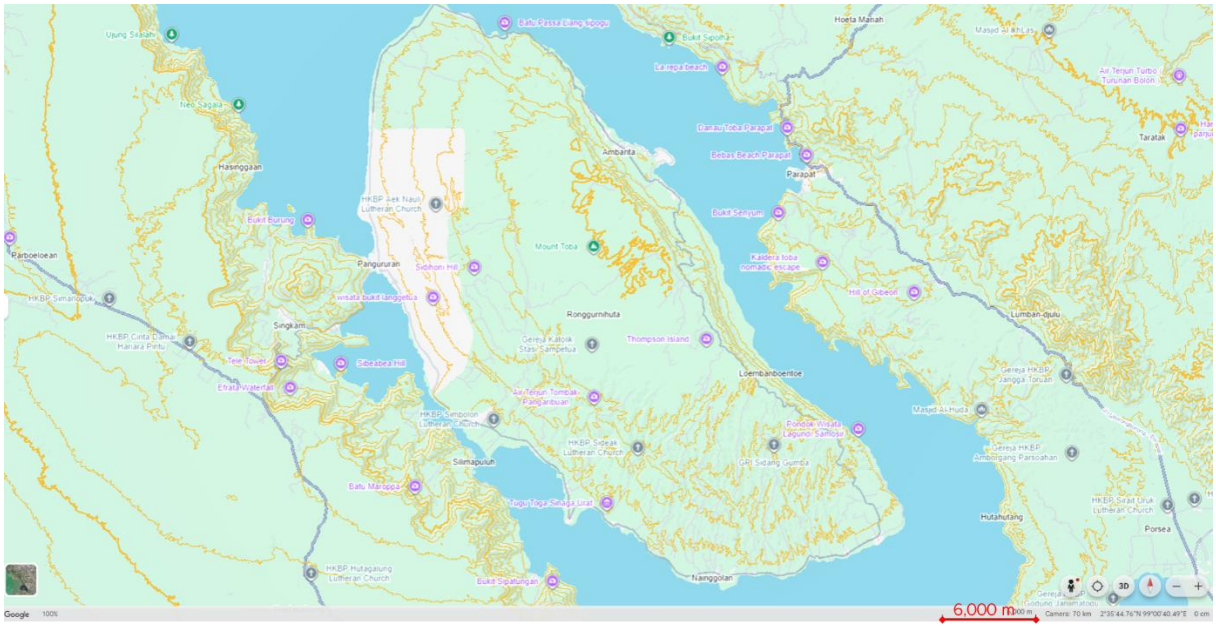


Figure 2. 5. Topography of Samosir. Image taken from Google Earth, with 40 m contour intervals.

Samosir Island is at an altitude of between 900m and 1738 m above sea level (Figure 2.5). The western part of the island has relatively gentle slopes, and elevation gradually increases towards the east, where the highest point exceeds 1700m. Such topography makes it almost impossible to cross the island from the interior. For this reason, the main street in the region runs around the perimeter of the island, connecting bigger cities—such as Pangururan, the capital of the regency, to Simanindo, Ambarita, Nainggolan, and finally Mogang Nainggolan in the south—before branching out to the interior of the island. During my visits, as I went deeper into the island, the streets became less accessible, unpaved, and sometimes reduced to gravel roads or even mere pathways. Relying on this main street, transportation to the island mainly uses minibuses, while locals use motorbikes and *bemo*, a carriage pulled by a motorbike, for everyday commutes. It remains the case until the recent development of tourism in the region.

For a long time, Samosir was a relatively remote place. Despite being a tourist destination since the 1980s, access to the island was relatively limited.[8] There were only two ways to reach the island from outside: by ship and land transportation. The ship from Ajibata to Tomok Port in Samosir has been the main means of transportation to the island for decades. Meanwhile, land access is via Tano Ponggol, which connects Pangururan City with the outer islands. Land access was in very poor condition, with poorly constructed roads and a small, old 20 m-long bridge, known as the Jembatan Gantung or 'hanging bridge', in Tano Ponggol, which caused numerous accidents among drivers unfamiliar with the route.

[8] Unless stated, sources or references of this paragraph were based on the interviews with the locals, especially the driver I used the service during my visits, and two owners of the homestays I stayed in.

It was also well known that the roads surrounding the lake were extremely unsafe: they had steep hills and many rocks on the sides, which led to frequent accidents. The famous accident spot was known as '*tikungan Sibea-Bea*' or Sibe-Bea's turn. One of the sources recalled, "*We often found riders/drivers in the village down there, below the hill of* Hariara Pohan. *It has taken a lot of victims.*" Its well-known danger had stopped tourists from visiting the region. Very few would come to this area; only those with local drivers who knew the region well would. Altogether, it had made Samosir very isolated, and the local people suffered from poverty and underdevelopment, despite their rich natural and cultural resources. It is why the Bataknese celebrated the post-2000s tourism programs taking place in their lands.

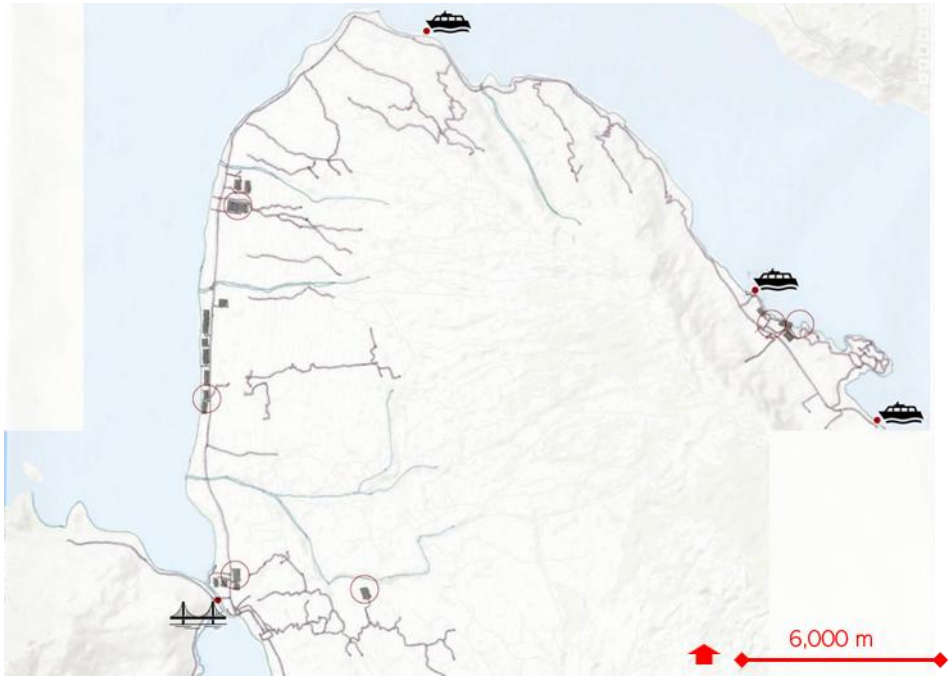


Figure 2. 6. New transportation modes to increase accessibility to Samosir Island, supporting tourism.

Due to safety and accessibility concerns, one of the main developments aimed at preparing Samosir as a priority destination was infrastructure improvement. It includes the Tano Ponggol bridge and the roads in Tele and Pangururan in 2018 as part of the region's tourism programs. During the same period, the expansion of Tano Ponggol and the construction of a new bridge also took place. The name Tano Ponggol refers to the physical condition of the land (tano) that is cut (ponggol), separating Samosir from the rest of the island of Sumatra.

The new bridge, 294 meters long (Figure 2.7), will support the development of Lake Toba as a Priority National Tourism Strategic Area (KSPN), serve as a landmark and icon for Samosir, and become a tourist attraction and center of economic growth on the coast of Lake Toba (Fauzian, 2020). Currently, this bridge is not only an icon but also a destination, as many visitors stop to enjoy its architectural beauty. Another significant impact of the bridge is that it allows visitors to reach the island in their own cars without needing to hire local drivers.



Figure 2. 7. The new bridge of 'Aek Tano Ponggol'. Photo of the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing.

The construction of this bridge led to a significant increase in tourist visits to the island (Fauzian, 2020). It makes trips with family and friends much easier, not only to reach the island but also to get around it. For instance, to get from the pasar (traditional market) in Pangururan to Simanindo sub-district, one needs to wait for an angkot, a local transportation service that runs hourly around the island. Another option, very prevalent in Indonesia, is a *becak motor* —a motorized becak—a small, lightweight three-wheeled vehicle for carrying people or goods. This option is quite popular with tourists, although not as much as renting a motorbike. Since the significant increase in tourists after the launch of the tourism program in Samosir, small businesses renting motorbikes to tourists have become increasingly prevalent. To rent a motorbike, one needs to leave their ID as a deposit and pay Rp 100.000, about 6 dollars per day. So far, based on my experience in Samosir, this has been the most economical option for backpackers and the best choice for those who value the freedom to travel and explore Samosir quickly and more independently. However, safety concerns for riders who are unfamiliar with the landscape and road conditions remain high, in my opinion. It is due to various, often unexpected situations, such as large old trees, stretches of road with no residential areas, or simply winding, steep roads.

In addition to a newly constructed bridge of Aek Tano Ponggol and the growing local business rentals in the island, the government also built two new ferry ports—Ambarita and Simanindo Ferry—to take tourists from and to Samosir to Ajibata, which adds up to four ports in the northern coast alone, including, in addition to Tomok port and harbor on the middle east part of the coast (Figure 2.6). The Ambarita and Simanindo Ferry ports began operating at the beginning of 2022, inaugurated by former president Joko Widodo. These ports serve as the main water transportation routes to and from Samosir Island and operate every hour. They are expected to increase connectivity to the island as a strategy to boost tourist visits to the region (Directorate General of Land Transportation, 2022). The trip is 45 minutes long, lovely, with beautiful views of Lake Toba and Samosir Island, and is often accompanied by Batak dance performances on board.

Regarding roads and accessibility on the island, settlements formed along the roadways. Figure 2.8 demonstrates a general pattern of land occupation in the region. With roads circling the island, the layout also demonstrates how houses and settlements were oriented toward the street and located close to the lake, a source of water and food and a hub for economic activities. Therefore, villages in Samosir, especially those along the roads, are within walking distance of the lake. The lake is a part of their daily lives. For example, the villages I visited, Village Sosor Nangka and Parsaoran I, are only a 10-minute walk to the lake. Local people often swim in the lake before sunset. Figure 2.9 demonstrates the scenery. For locals, the lake has been the main source of water for activities such as bathing, laundry, swimming with friends, and bathing buffaloes before they go home for the night. On the other hand, for tourism, the lake has been the main attraction, as it offers a breathtaking view, water sports and tours around the lake, in addition to its function as the main transportation to the region.

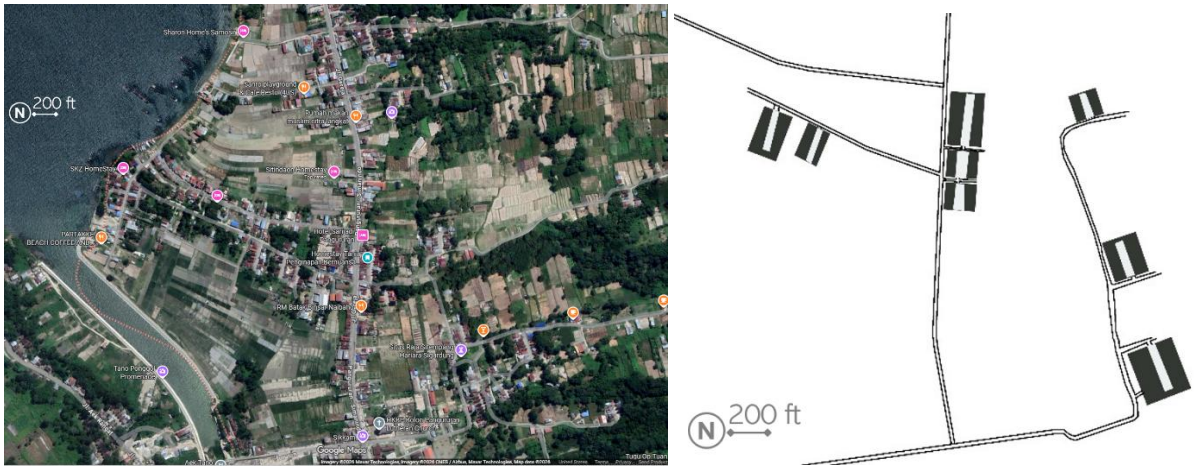


Figure 2. 8. Settlements formed along the main streets and branched out to both sides of the roads. Figures: right, created by the author; left, from Google Maps.

Referring to Figure 2.8 on the settlement pattern, Batak villages always orient their lengths parallel to the street rather than perpendicular to it. The figure-ground drawing (Figure 2.8, right) shows this arrangement, in which the village's length is in harmony with the road and the lake's shoreline. Therefore, the entrance to the village is always from the side; the main street branches into smaller alleys that lead to the side of the *huta*. These arrangements highlight the beauty of the Batak village. It gives the first impression of the Batak village at the entrance, presented with an open space, '*alaman*,' that connects two rows of Batak houses facing each other. The tall, pointed roofs, along with massive woods on the façade, small doors and windows, and the main stairs leading to the house's elevated floor, create a signature imprint of the beauty of these Batak villages. The beauty of these houses is highlighted by the intricate, detailed patterns of the '*gorga*,' the traditional carvings on the façade. Overall, qualities such as these, including the house's distinctive shape and typology, scale, carvings, and materials, become a selling point for tourism (Figure 2.10).





Figure 2. 9. Dualities of locals' mundane everyday life and the excitement of tourism. Photos taken by the author, 2023.

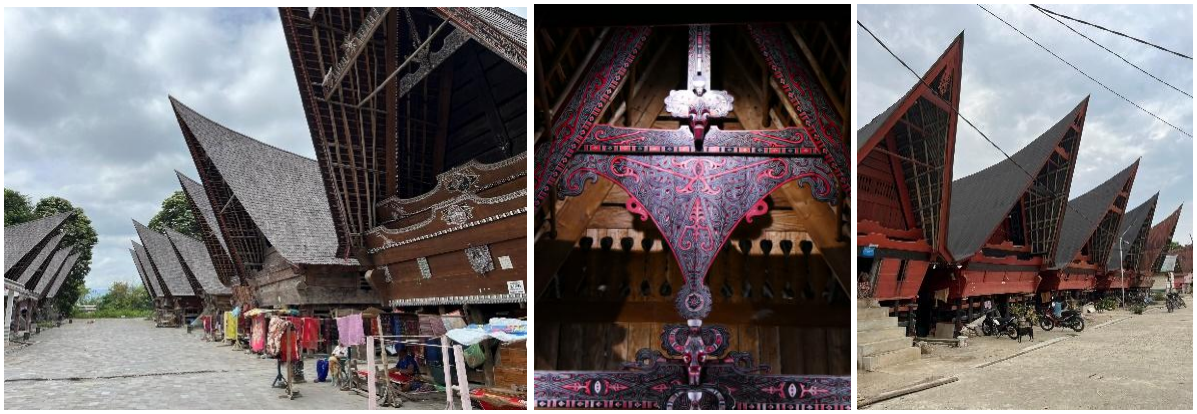


Figure 2. 10. The view of the village, rows of houses, and the *gorga* or carvings. Photos taken by the author.

With all the potential of Samosir, its natural landscape, culture, and architecture, the government decided to use this region as one of the priorities for tourist destinations. According to surveys conducted in 2014, before the 10 New Bali developments, Samosir had the second-largest poor population among the 10 prioritized destinations, after Semeru (Ardhyanto & Kurniati, 2023). With its promising potential, Lake Toba emerged as one of the country's top tourist destinations when tourism began.

According to 2020-2021 reports by the Ministry of Housing and Public Works—the government agency that oversees homestay programs—Lake Toba, comprising the Toba and Samosir regencies, received the most funding and built the most homestays among other regions. Administratively, homestays in the Lake Toba region comprise five regencies, with the following numbers: Samosir (315 units), Toba (208 units), Simalungun (29 units), Humbang (33 units), and Tapanuli Utara (32 units). Unlike other regions, Samosir communities are still relatively organized within the unit of a traditional village called '*huta*', and the selection of these *hutas* aims to create a more concentrated homestay units in the same location. These '*huta*' operate within two systems: the Village government and the traditional clan system, making them an interesting case for the study on the implementation of homestay projects.

Batak: 'Marga', 'Huta' and 'Jabu'

Batak refers to a group of ethnic groups residing in the highlands of North Sumatra, including the Toba, Dairi, Pakpak, Karo, Alas-Kluet, Angkola, Mandailing, and Simalungun (Caglayan, 2004). And Samosir Island is part of the Batak Toba, as it is geographically concentrated around the lake.

An important aspect of traditional Batak culture is the patriarchal, patrilineal clan system known as '*marga*'. Functionally, each *marga* acts as a unit of both wife-giving and wife-taking (Lasky, 2024). After getting married, wives would move out of their parents' house and live in their husband's family house. Therefore, the ownership of the house remained in the husband's lineage, which includes their male children. *Margas*, as social units, play a crucial role in community life, influencing financial and political relationships even among urban Batak individuals today. Lasky further argues

that Batak people today still often rely on marga affiliations for financial and political purposes, a tradition that helps reinforce their distinct ethnic identity (2024).

Marga also plays an important role in the formation of settlement units in Batak communities. *Huta* is a Batak compound, a residence for people of the same descent and ancestors. In other words, people in one *huta* come from the same *marga*. *Huta*, as a Batak term for 'kampung' or 'desa' in Bahasa Indonesia, has a different meaning from the administrative unit assigned as a village. Ganda explains that, in the state's eyes, a village is an administrative territory, while a Batak huta is an ethnographic one based on descent or kinship (2020). Villages are usually occupied by people who are not relatives, but Batak huta is, by people of the same clan.

The depiction of the *huta* area is a small square with a nice, hard, and empty courtyard in the middle (Figure 2.11). On one side of the four squares—sometimes two sides, as *hutas* nowadays enlarge—stood a small group of row houses, each with its own kitchen yard at the back. In front of the row of houses, there is a rice barn called '*sopo*'.

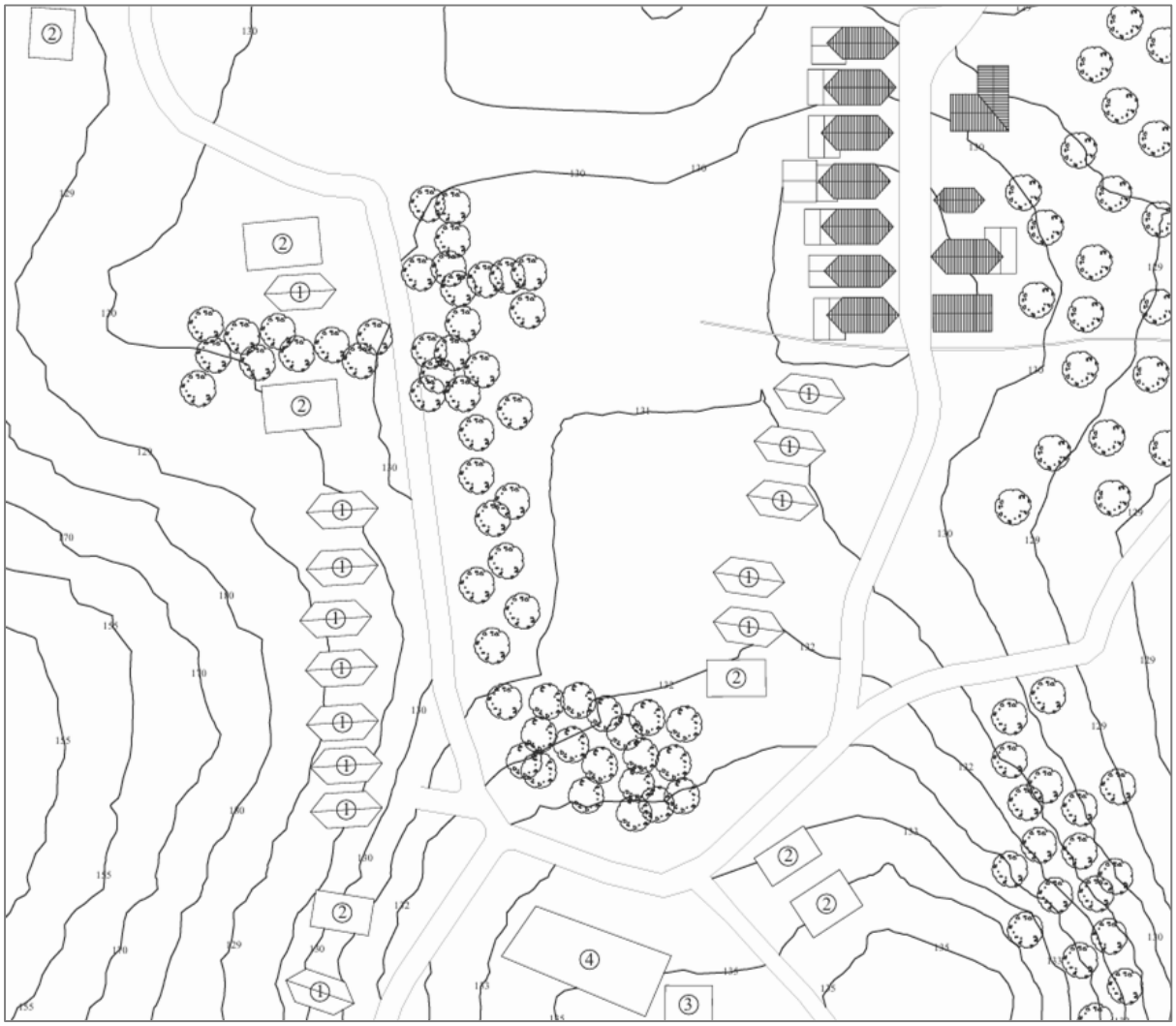


Figure 2. 11. Layout of *hutas:* Lumban Pea and Parhorasan, Samosir. Map created by the author.

According to my interview with one of the *adat* leaders in Samosir, a huta usually consists of around six houses, with the huta leader in the middle and the sopo on the other side of the yard. The founding clan of a *huta* is called the 'king clan' or the '*tano clan*' (meaning clan of the lands). Here, the royal clan will rule the land and address issues faced by people living within the *huta* territory (Ganda, 2020). Meanwhile, another clan living in the huta is the *boru* clan. These people have no rights to the land, only to the houses they built on the *huta* land. This system of *huta* ownership, which is very different from the formal laws applied by the government, remains active to this day, though it faces challenges posed by modernization and tourism development.

Huta, a traditional village of the Batak people, was established when a family clan moved to a new location, either on cultivated or open land (Hanan, 2012). According to Mr. Parminta Parhorasan,[9] a respected *adat* figure in Samosir, there are a few conditions for opening a new *huta*. First, a plot of land that could fit around 6 houses within it, and a *sopo*. It also needs land for agriculture where people in the *huta* could work, as well as a nearby water source. Originally, *hutas* would have a ditch dug around the perimeter of the land as a form of protection; however, it is no longer a common practice. A *huta* begins with one house—called the house of Tunggane Huta, the king of the land—and is placed in the centre. It allows others to build on its left and right sides to the outer side of the *huta*. The house of *Tunggane Huta* is usually accompanied by a '*losung*' right in front of the house, a large stone container used for pounding rice. In addition, *Tunggane Huta's* residence is also marked by the presence of a granary (*sopo*) to store rice (Figure 2.12). Both *losung* and *sopo* are communal facilities, shared by every member of the *huta*.

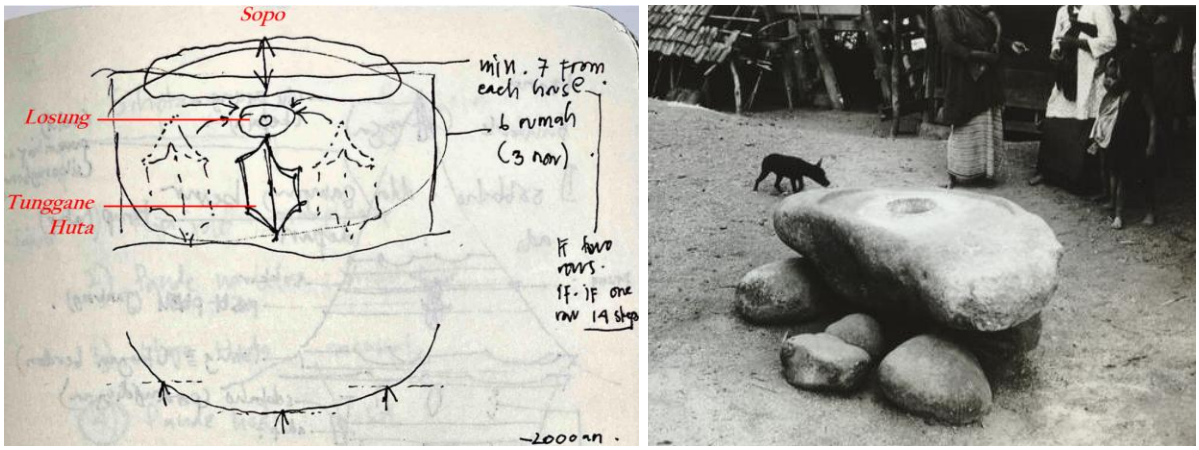
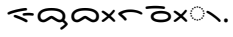


Figure 2. 12. The formation of a *huta* and its arrangements (left), *losung* (right). Data based on the interview with Mr Parhorasan. Drawing (left) scanned from the author's field notes, (right) KILTV Archive.

[9] Mr. Parminta Parhorasan has consented to mention his name as a key source in addressing the Batak custom, history of a *huta*, and cultures related to the architecture of *ruma Batak* and its production. He, in fact, encouraged citing him for these purposes. The interview was conducted in June 2024 during my last round of data collection. It took almost a day interviewing him, encompassing two site visits to *hutas* deemed as 'authentic', untouched by the latest tourism development, onsite and offsite conversations, and meetings with other sources. Unless stated otherwise, my paragraphs regarding the *huta* formation and the meaning of the architectural elements of the Batak house are based on this interview.

The position of *sopo* is important in forming the layout of the *huta*. Mr Parhorasan further explains (see Figure 2.12) that the distance from *Tunggane Huta*'s house to the *sopo* is at least 7 adult-sized normal steps. If the land is spacious enough for a *huta* to have two rows of houses, then the distance between the two rows is at least 14 steps. This distance is then known as the yard or '*alaman*'. The *alaman* serves as an open space for rituals, celebrations, and ceremonies, a place to dry crops and weave "ulos", and a playground for children (Nasution and Widya, 2013).

The relationship between the *tano* clan or *Tunggane Huta* and *boru* clan, those who later joined the *huta* was originally mutual. The landowner was grateful to have new families residing in his *huta* and to help further establish it. Meanwhile, the *boru* clans were thankful to have a place to build a house and a family. However, it was common practice to give the landowner a portion of their harvest as a thank-you. In addition, this property ownership system maintains the residents' status in the *huta* as temporary and conditional on their obedience to *adat* values and traditions. Very rarely, if issues remain unresolved despite multiple attempts, the landowner will ask the residents (including the entire family) to leave the *huta*. Here is where the temporary dwelling fits into the discussion of Batak *hutas*. The house, made of wood using traditional joint systems, can be dismantled, transported to other locations, and rebuilt there.

The house, known as *a ruma*, is a traditional Batak dwelling with very distinctive form and characteristics. The Batak term for this *ruma* architecture is *Jabu Bolon*, and in Batak scriptures, it is written as .

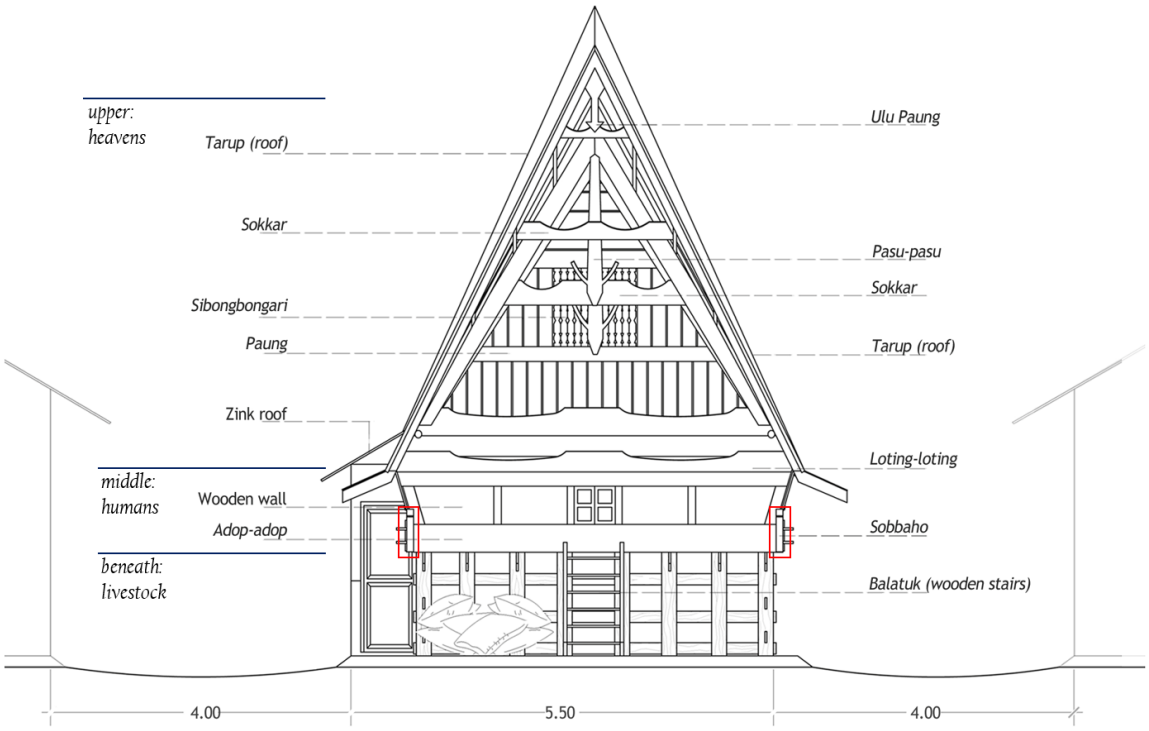


Figure 2. 13. Jabu Bolon and the names of its architectural elements. Data based on the interview with Mr Parhorasan. Drawing created by the author.

Jabu means house, while *bolon* literally means big or grand, and together they become The Grand House represents both its size and dimensions and its cultural values, roles, or status in the community. It is the king's house, as locals proudly state: "*Raja turun dari sini*," "the King is descending from this house." *Jabu Bolon* has distinctive features that observers can easily identify, distinguishing it from ordinary *ruma Batak*. Figure 2.13 illustrates the façade of the *jabu*, along with the names of its parts.

In terms of appearance, Jabu Bolon has very distinctive features, as shown in Figure 2.13. Some of them are made of wood using the traditional timber joint systems, an elevated floor, tilted and pointed roof, and the big wood element called '*sobbaho*'—both on the left and right sides of the exterior walls of the house—and the position of the stairs, which enter the house from the inside of the exterior wall, as contrast to the front façade. *Sobbaho* is a long wooden board attached to the side walls of the house (indicated by the red line in Figure 2.13).

A *jabu bolon* has two units of *sobbaho*. Both *sobbahos* are made from a single log (Figure 2.14). According to Mr Parhorasan, the philosophy of *sobbaho* is that, as they both come from the same part of the log and are then put on both exterior walls of the *jabu*, they would protect the room in between, which is the living space of the house.

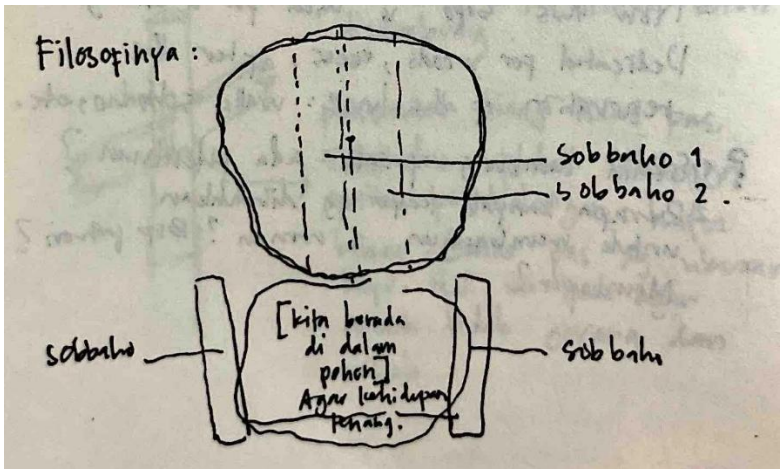


Figure 2. 14. *Sobbaho*. Photo scanned from the author's field notes. Drawing scanned from the author's field notes.

As a dwelling space, *Jabu Bolon* has three levels. Figure 2.13 shows the vertical divisions. First, because the floor is raised above the ground, it creates space 'beneath'. It is called *bara*, where the livestock is usually kept and perceived as the 'low' world. Second is the main house, the 'middle world' where humans inhabit and where families live. And finally, the roof, the 'upper world', which is associated with the heavens and ancestors. Customarily, *Jabu Bolon* features elaborately embellished wood carvings called *gorga*, in red, black, and white. These three colors are associated with divine power, further reinforcing the Batak people's tripartite division of the cosmos (Warden, 2023).

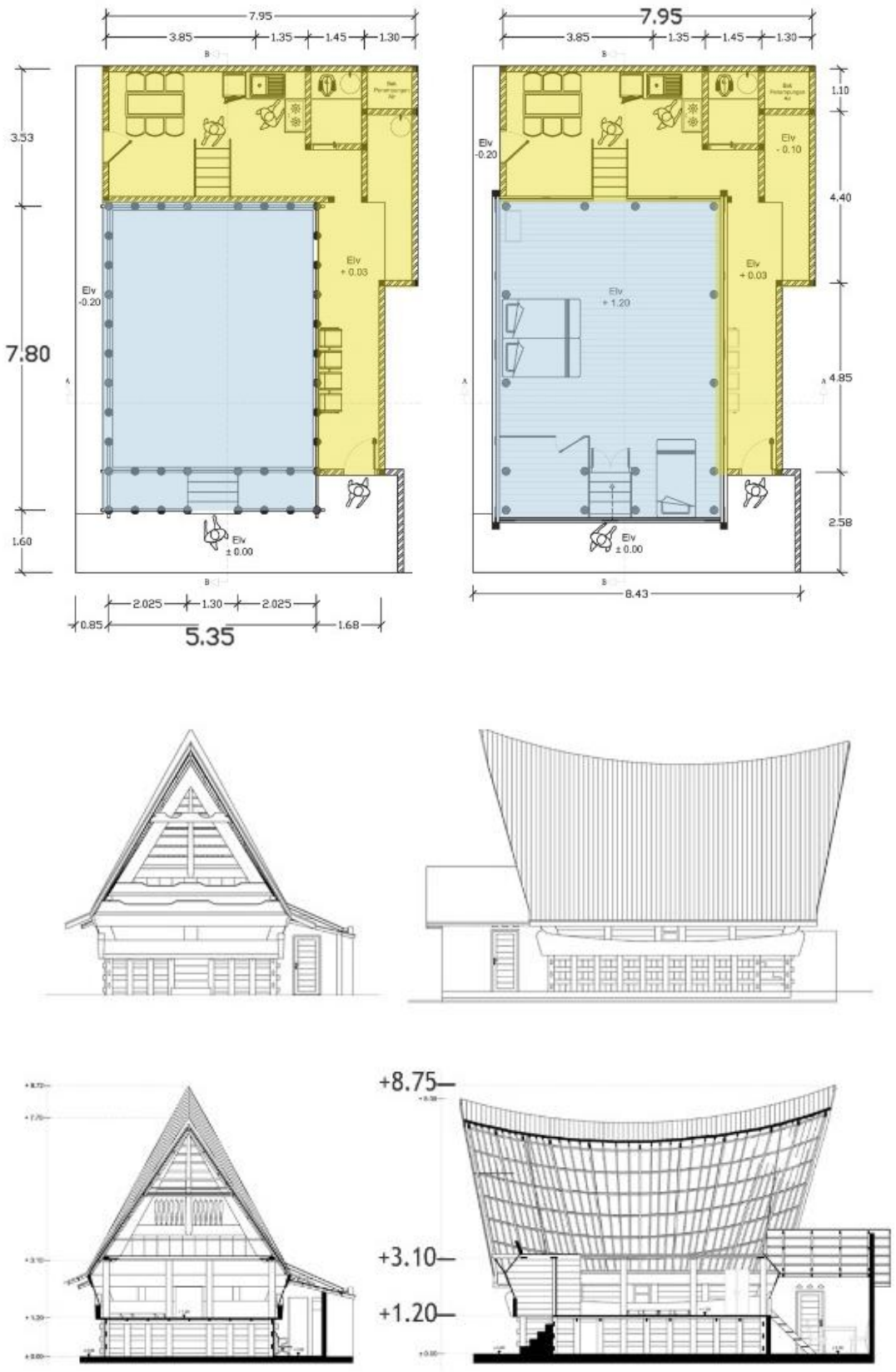


Figure 2. 15. Floorplans, sections, and elevation drawings of *Ruma Bolon*. Data based on observation. Drawings created by the author.

During my visit to Samosir villages, every *ruma Bolon* always has an extension house at the back, connected to the *jabu* via its back door. The layout of the houses is in Figure 2.15. The pattern is that the house consists of two parts, front and back, with the front one traditional and the back more modern. Generally, the extension was built more recently and used fabricated materials, such as brick and concrete, whereas the front one was fully wooden. Figure 2.15 demonstrates this division, with the blue shading indicating the interior of the front house and the yellow shading indicating the extensive part of the house.

Although the dimensions vary, the Batak house is roughly 5.5m (~18 ft) by 8m (~26 ft), width by length. The extension house, however, varies greatly depending on financial capacity, the owners' preferences, and the landowner, or '*Tunggane Huta*'. The front building usually serves as the main house, and the extension functions as service areas, such as bathrooms/toilets and the kitchen. Vertically, the house is divided into three parts. Section drawings in Figure 2.15 illustrate such divisions. The house is elevated by about +1.20 m (~4 ft) above ground, and this serves as the domestic spaces where inhabitants live. The height of this space is roughly 3m (~10 ft). Underneath this living space is a '*bara*' with a height of 1.20 m (~4 ft), which was usually used as a buffalo or pig's coop or, more recently, for storage.

According to Mr Parhorasan, the extension house is an addition. Originally, *ruma Bolon* was a single building without a back extension, standing alone and serving all the activities of "the inhabitants that consisted of 2-4 families living in the house communally." The living arrangement divided the house into corners; each family occupied one corner, mostly for sleeping. As activities such as cooking and dining took place at the centre of the house, the hearth was placed there. Mr Parhorasan further explained that the house began adding a room at the back when the family grew or became more financially stable due to successful harvests. Over time, many houses added a back house for cooking, thereby spatially separating this activity from sleeping and eating. In terms of its physical condition, this extension was initially made of wood and raised to the same height as the front house. Interestingly, the arrival of the toilet in *hutas* became the catalyst for these extension houses to transform into landed ones, and, along with it, material transformations also occurred in the houses.

While studies on traditional Batak houses mainly focus on the *ruma* Bolon, such as Anon (2024), Sitindjak (2018), Tobing & Hutabarat (2019), and put aside the significance of the extension houses, I take a different approach by treating the extension house as a part of the *ruma Bolon.* It is because the extension house has been part of the house for generations, making it an important part of the inhabitants' everyday lives. Therefore, in this research, when I mention *ruma* Bolon, it signifies both the traditional wooden house and the modern extension.

CONCLUSION

As its title suggests, this chapter aims to provide context for this study. While it helps show the conditions and situations surrounding the topic under study, it also emphasizes the study's urgency, relevance, and nuances, making it topical.

This chapter situates this study in the context of Indonesia by tracing the history of vernacular communities in Indonesia's national development, from being intensely marginalized or seen as primitive and uncivilized to becoming a new site of opportunity in 21st-century tourism development. It also highlights how, in the late 90s, decentralization emphasized the importance of cultural identity in uniting the nation, a focus echoed in the current development priority. Therefore, through this study, the sensitive issues of so-called "no longer marginalized indigenous communities" became the focus of discussion, with a view to examining realities from the perspective of the peripheries.

By examining the states' relations with indigenous groups in Indonesia, this study shows that the state's intervention gradually led to greater cultural incorporation into tourism as part of the national economic priority. This aspect of investigation underscores the urgency of this study, as it demonstrates the scale and speed of the state's intervention in vernacular communities and settlements, especially since 2000. It is worrying, and one of the major pet projects was the Homestay program, which I am focusing on.

The goal of the homestays project is to host tourists in rural neighborhoods, especially those with distinctive vernacular architecture and culture, to offer them a unique, authentic experience. The goal is threefold: 1) to promote culture, 2) to accelerate the provision of tourism accommodations, and 3) to help improve the lives of local communities, lifting them out of poverty.

In 2020-2021 alone, during the period this study focuses on, the state built around 2,000 homestays, with the highest number in the Toba Lake region, specifically Samosir Island. This region is widely regarded as a concentrated Indigenous Batak community facing severe poverty.

The following figure introduces the key elements of Batak Samosir communities that are critical to this study: the *huta* and *Tunggane*. Figure 2.16 shows the relationships between huta, Tunggane Huta, clan, and subclan.

A *huta*, or a village in English, is an ethnographic area based on kinship or clan. This definition is different from the state's village administration. Likewise, *huta*'s residents come from sub-clans within the same group of clans, rather than just random people like in the state's village. Meanwhile, *Tunggane* is the landowner of the *huta*. The initial relationship between *Tunggane*, the landowner, and the sub-clan people who built houses and lived on *Tunggane*'s land was mutualistic. Understanding these concepts is important to make sense of the changes in this relationship after the homestay.

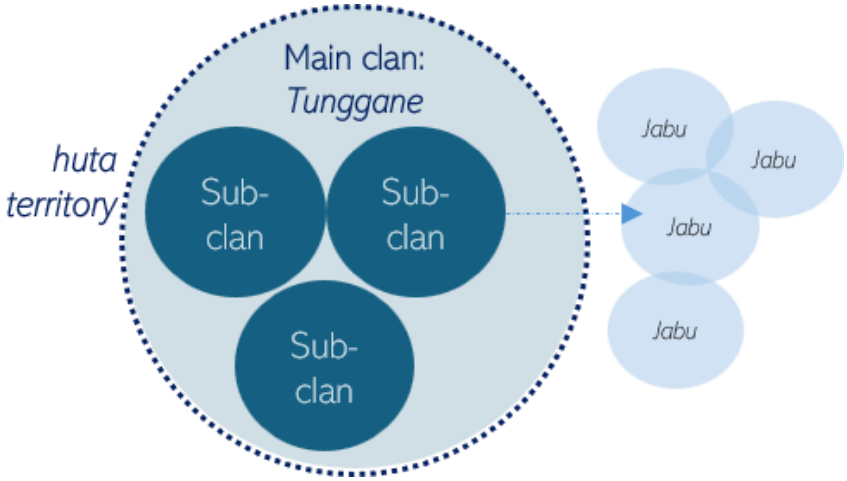


Figure 2. 16. The relations between *huta*, house (*jabu*), clan, *Tunggane*, and residents. Graphic created by the author.

Another key piece of information for understanding this study is that the landlord (*Tunggane*) owns only the land, or the *huta*, while the buildings or houses in the *huta* belong to the residents. And both *huta* and the houses are owned communally, by the clan family, not individually, like the state's property ownership. And through homestays, the state and local systems meet, negotiate, and compromise. Perhaps this is why this case is so fascinating. And so far, no studies have looked into these dynamics.

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

"Boru apa, Ito?"
(What daughter [marga] do you belong to?)
"Nggak ada [marga], Pak. Tapi mamak boru Rambe."
(None, Sir. But my mom was Rambe)
"Nainggolan lah itu!"
(You are a Nainggolan, then!)

This was an opening conversation I often experienced when I arrived at Samosir's *hutas*. It was the way locals got to know a stranger. And I was lucky to have a family background helping me position myself. In the Batak community, *boru* means "daughter," which is more closely related to *marga*, the kinship system. Hence, the question "*Boru apa, Ito?*' is asking which *marga* I belong to.

To me, this question is not only a simple introduction. It has a sentimental meaning. It brought back memories of my childhood when my mother took my siblings and me to visit our grandparents in a small village on the border of North and West Sumatra. My grandparents were both Batak: my grandmother was a *Siregar*, and my grandfather was a *Rambe*. So, my mother was a *boru* from *marga Rambe*.

During these visits, my mother would introduce my twin sister, Geni, and me to other relatives by saying, "*On ma boru-ku*" *(These are my daughters)*, and we would shake and kiss their hands as a sign of respect. Mom went on to explain how we were related to them, complete with all the Batak terms, which I, spectacularly, failed to understand. It was very difficult to comprehend, and it still is. However, during my fieldwork and in the Batak communities again, I took the liberty to proudly introduce myself as a daughter of my mother, a daughter of *Rambe*. It was comforting and familiar, and it felt like I was conversing with families. —*Rest in peace, Mom.*

While it played a big role in narrowing down my case study, it was inevitably not the main reason I chose Samosir. The following explains in more detail my methodological considerations in designing and conducting this research, including the research design and approach, case studies, and data collection and analysis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

My dissertation examines the understudied discourse of Indigenous agency, particularly among communities incorporated into the state's tourism homestay programs. The premise of my work is the autonomy and inclusivity of Indigenous groups with whom the government enters into agreements to set up homestay programs. I am interested in their involvement in implementing the programs, how they influence their architecture, and how they organize their lives around it.

My research examines communities' perspectives on homestays, which are typically part of their daily lives. This study also looks at how homestays influence the community's experience of their architecture. According to Groat and Wang (2013), experts in architectural research methodologies, my study falls squarely within the qualitative research domain. To use their terms, it involves "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter … to present a holistic portrayal of the setting or phenomenon under study as the respondents themselves understand it." (Groat & Wang, 2013:218-219).

In addition, I value the flexibility and nuances that qualitative studies offer researchers. Creswell described these qualities of qualitative methods very well with, "…we ask open-ended questions …, shaping the questions after we explore … our questions change during the process of research to reflect an increased understanding of the problem." This quote resonates deeply with my process. It is especially because my study, examining the impacts of homestay implementation in Samosir, is a relatively new topic, with its application only a few years old. Very few scholarly works are available to provide sufficient background for my research. Therefore, as Cresswell stated, I began with an open-ended question, asking 'how this top-down program is implemented in so many rural communities across Indonesia.' In this regard, I feel the need to briefly outline the evolution of my research that led to this stage.

Guided by this open-ended question, I began snowball sampling, collecting initial data on homestay applications from across the 10 New Balis. I connected with recipients in many ways, including through colleagues' networks in the regions, such as previous participants, on-site research assistants, and informants. Often, I gained perspectives from scholars who visited or conducted research in the regions in question. Also, I spoke with a former colleague who now works for the Ministry of Public Works and Housing to get an introductory perspective on the matter. All these strategies, along with additional desk studies, have helped me narrow down the possible locations for my study sites. Looking back on my journey, up to the proposal defense, I remained with 3 regions: Labuan Bajo, Lake Toba, and Morotai (Figure 3.1). Each location promoted the concept of 'periphery,' while representing the country's geographic diversity from the west to center and east parts of Indonesia to show different developments between the West and East and their relations to the central governments; different scales of the projects based on the allocated funding, the highest, middle, and lowest; and more importantly, the available access and sources to information and logistics in the locations.



Figure 3. 1. Initial proposed research locations.

While it seemed very exciting and manageable at the time, my dissertation committee gently advised me to narrow them further and focus on a single region. I was not convinced at the time, but I kept an open mind. Only until I wrote a paper for the International Association of Study on Traditional Environment conference on January 5, 2024, with an independent researcher in Kitakyushu, Japan, on the state's perspective evolutions of vernacular buildings in the country, which took Labuan Bajo homestays as a part of the discussion, that I began to see a vast difference in socio-cultural, economic, and historical contexts between locations. More importantly, I began to realize that the homestay implementation itself, such as designs, recipients' community backgrounds, and the type of architecture implemented (indigenous *vs.* modern vernacular), is largely distinct from one another.

This assumption was further confirmed when I had the time to visit Borobudur—one of the top three prioritized destinations—the closest homestay region to my domicile —and to stay in one of the homestays and chat with the owner. Most of the homestays in that district were carried out in modern houses. The homestay team redesigned the front of the house, the part facing the street, to imitate the style of a traditional Javanese house. This approach was very different from Toba-Samosir's homestays, which were implemented in Indigenous vernacular houses with a strong cultural system and a communal way of life. These conditions, of course, have direct correlations with how the homestay is implemented, the actors and power relations involved, and, more importantly, the degree of 'periphery' the communities experienced. Looking at what has driven my research from the beginning, which centers on the agency of the marginalized community, I acknowledge that the case of Samosir homestays resonated more closely with it. This was the turning point in my research, after which I focused on Lake Toba.

The summary of this process is in the matrix of Figure 3.2. It answers to all four criteria, including 1) located in peripheral regions (outside Java), 2) involving indigenous communities with relatively strong attachment to the traditional system and communal life, 3) relatively

underdeveloped to highlight the peripheral 'positions' in relation to the center, and 4) using existing Indigenous vernacular houses, instead of re-creating them.

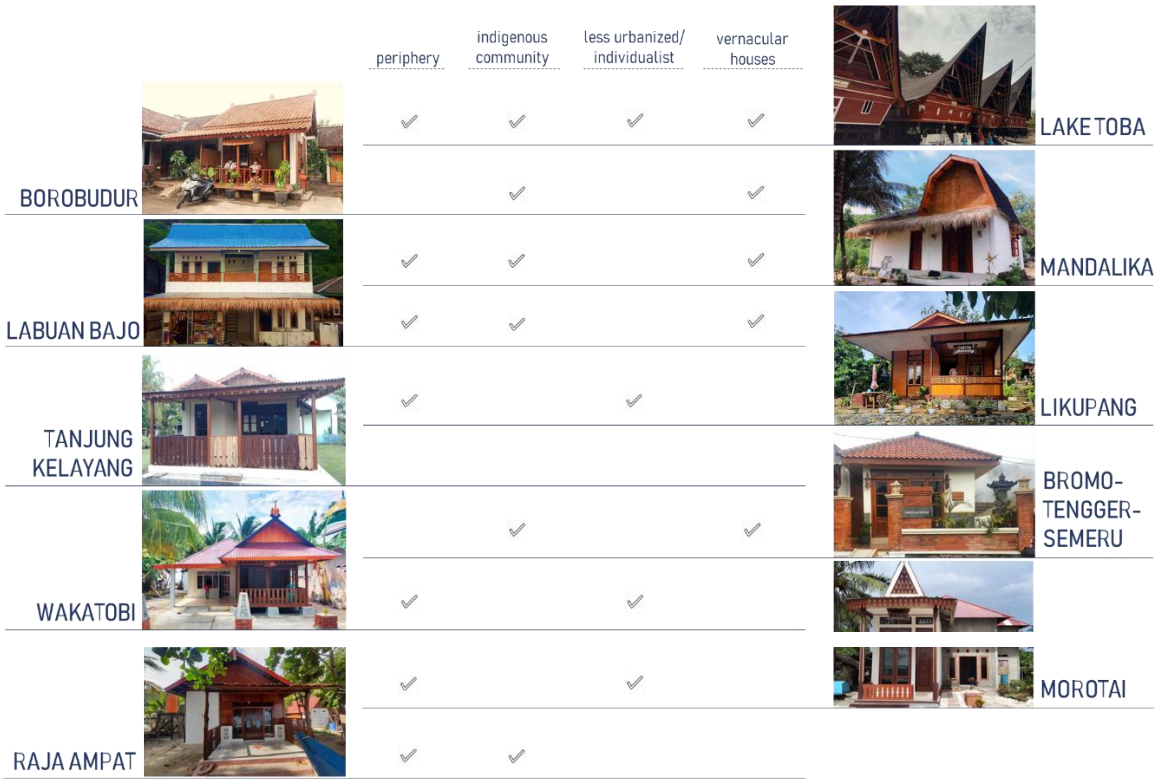


Figure 3. 2. Summary of case selection criteria. Graphic created by the author.

Once I decided on the Samosir region, I began planning the fieldwork in a more detailed, context-driven, and focused manner. This process included reshaping and refocusing on my initial research question. As I understood that the communities in Samosir still practice their cultural values and systems in their everyday lives, as well as living in a communal house of what is known as 'Jabu Bolon', concentrated in compound units called '*Huta*', the implementation of homestay programs is an important stepping stone to understand how the homestays take the form they have right now, especially when considering the position of the local agency within such state's strongly-influenced programs. Only then can further examination be conducted on how these homestays, in return, shape the communities' lives. Therefore, I designed this research into two sequential research questions, as follows (Figure 3.3).

Question one addresses the '*how*': how are the homestay programs implemented, and how are the human agencies involved in the process? This exploratory question aims to address two aspects of the homestay implementation: 1) the stages of implementation, and 2) the people involved in the process and the extent of their roles.

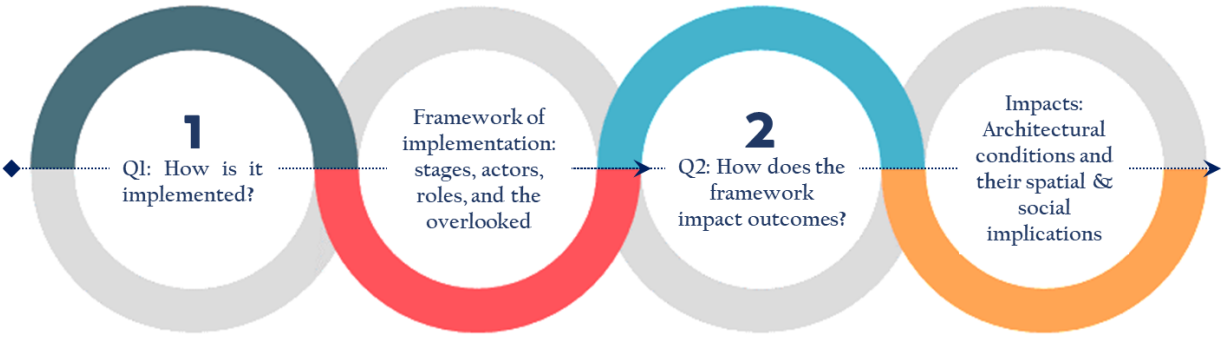


Figure 3. 3. Two sequential research questions and their anticipated findings. Drawing created by the author.

The purpose of this part of the research was to reconstruct the actual procedure for setting up homestays from the recipients' perspective and to map the actors' involvement in the process. From here, I located the positions of local communities in the production process of homestays and identified stages in which recipients sought greater involvement and the dynamics that followed. Based on this, I created a homestays implementation framework encompassing stages and flows, the actors involved and their roles, and further mapped the local communities' presence, absence, and the dynamics between the two. It serves as the basis for the second question.

Question two deals with how the conditions of homestay production, as formulated in the framework implementation from the previous phase, impact the outcomes of the program. I focus on the impacts that directly correlate with locals' involvement, including the physical realities of produced homestays, the spatial experience of homes, and the social implications of homestay production and its presence in host communities' lives. I focus the investigation on these three factors, considering the main phases of implementation with most dynamics occurring among the actors involved in decision-making across the stages.

Having the stages and main questions in place, I proceeded to select the cases. More specifically, which *hutas* or villages, and how many, would I study across the region?

CASE STUDY: MULTISITES

As my study aims to understand homestay implementation in Samosir communities, with similar cultural backgrounds and social-political dynamics expected, a multi-site case study would benefit this research by providing a broader understanding of the phenomenon. According to Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, a multi-site case study "investigates a defined, contemporary phenomenon that is common to two or more real-world or naturalistic settings … [and] offers a means of understanding an individual, event, policy, program, or group via multiple representations of that phenomenon." (2010: 588-590). To ensure the study's validity, I maintain the same research design across all sites and the data collection, analysis, and reporting approaches.

To decide on the sites for my case study, I conducted an extensive review of the homestay team's action plans, an intensive exploration of digital mapping and geospatial visuals, a helpful

discussion with three inspiring scholars familiar with the location, and a discussion with an architect and a civil engineer involved in the project. While physical developments occurred along the Samosir Island corridor (see Figure 3.4), homestay programs mainly took place in the island's northern part (Figure 3.5). These initial explorations sought potential homestay locations as a starting point for the grand tour before data collection.



Figure 3. 4. Locations of projects for various types of physical improvement across Samosir's corridor. Image taken from the homestay team's action plan document.



Figure 3. 5. Locations of homestay projects, concentrated in the northern part of the corridor. Image: *Ibid.*

Additionally, based on an initial interview with an architect who participated in the Samosir homestay project, homestays programs in each location emphasized different qualities, including 1) scenic views of valleys such as Huta Sigapiton, Meat, and Marbun Toruan, 2) beach attractions such as Huta Lumban Bulbul anf Lumban Gaol, 3) scenic views of highlands such as Huta Ginjang, Dolok Martumbur, Kampung Warna, and Tara Bunga, 4) traditional home experience including Lumban Suhisuhi (H in Figure 3.5) and Huta Bolon (I, in Figure 3.5), and 5) cultural attractions such as Huta Siallagan (L, Figure 3.5) and Jangga Dolok. The distribution of these villages is shown in Figure 3.6 below, with legends (in different colors) corresponding to the focus of village development.

While natural landscapes and views they offer are important for tourist attractions, I focused my selection on the cultural qualities of the sites. Therefore, I began narrowing down sites/villages I planned to visit. I selected the top three villages for my study cases based on two main considerations. First, communities should continue to uphold cultural values and communal life. Second, the homestay intervention should have taken place in the natural setting of the everyday lives of the communities, in the inhabited Jabu Bolons in a compound called '*Huta*'. Therefore, I began preparing my Grand Tour, with three top cases in mind: 1) Lumban Suhisuhi, 2) Huta Bolon, and 3) Siallagan, all located at the top of Samosir Island (Figure 3.6, marked with red pins). In these three locations, homestay programs are applied to the traditional village or *huta*, including most of the houses there, if not all; unlike in other regions, where programs often select only some houses in the neighborhood.

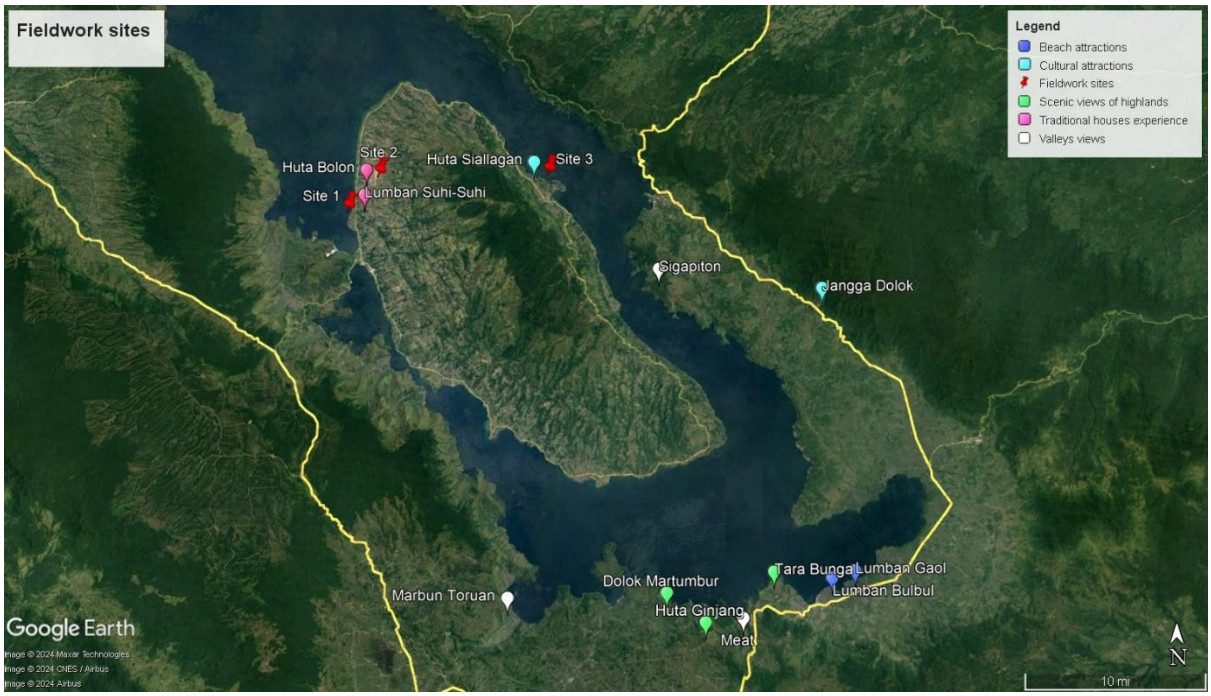


Figure 3. 6. Locations of potential case study sites.

Further consultation with my initial informants regarding the grand tour plan helped address various logistical issues. Also, they helped establish key local informants to help navigate the field,

some of their families and friends I could contact and rely on in case of emergencies, and a friendly, trustworthy driver who would be my guide during the tour. And with Google Maps, I was able to connect with potential homestay hosts and make reservations for my anticipated stays in each location I planned to visit. The trip began on March 4th, 2024, and lasted for six days.

While I have identified the top three villages for my cases, I have expanded the purpose of this grand tour to include a circumnavigation of the island and visits to other potential cases that intrigued me during the initial investigation. I flew from Padang to Medan. And Medan has become my second home. I would stay in Medan for a day to prepare everything before departing for Samosir. Likewise, after spending a few days in Samosir, I stayed in Medan for a couple of days to reflect and take notes before leaving the province and returning to Padang, my first home. During the grand tour, I took a bus from Medan to Samosir. It was a long, difficult 6-hour drive, as the route has many sharp turns and narrow roads along hills and mountains leading to Samosir. Arriving in Samosir, I stayed in Pangururan City because it offers more accommodation and restaurant options. I also rented a motorbike to get around, visiting villages along the northern perimeter of the island. My route for this tour is shown in Figure 3.7.

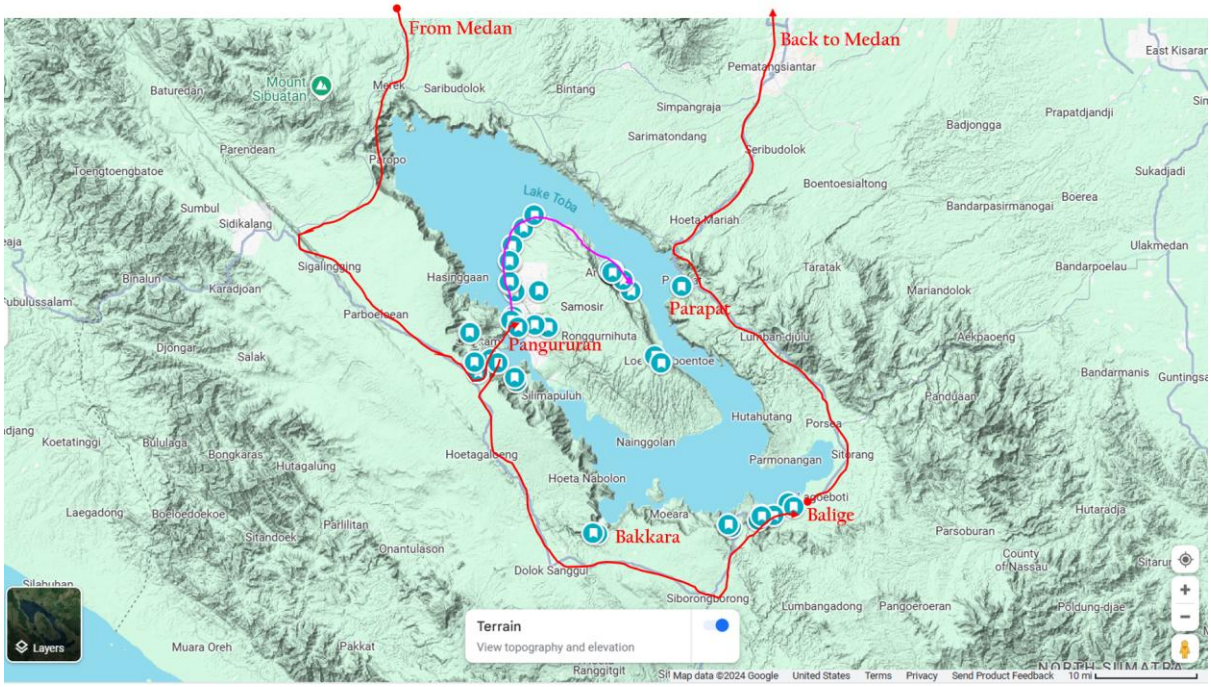


Figure 3. 7. Route and itinerary during the grand tour. Image created by the author using a Google Earth photo.

Overall, during this trip, I explored three parts of the Lake Toba region: Panguruan and Simanindo (the purple line on map 3.7), Bakkara, and Balige on the southern part of the lake. A brief, detailed trip agenda is in Figure 3.8, a screenshot photo from my field notes. In Pangururan-Simanindo, I visited five villages: Lumban Suhi-Suhi Toruan, Huta Bolon, Siallagan, Sosor Nangka, and Parhapuran. The first three villages were planned from the beginning, while the other two were added at the recommendation of people encountered during the trip. Interestingly, while Huta Bolon and Siallagan were two important villages in the area for their conservation and development

progress, they were not active homestays. Therefore, I excluded them from the cases and decided to include the other two: Sosor Nangka and Parhapuran. The purpose of the tour, besides confirming the cases, was to introduce myself and my research, and to state my intention to return to collect data. I collected the informant's name and contact information to make arrangements for my next visits.

FIELDWORK PREPARATION: GRAND TOUR

DAY 1. March 4th, 2024

Padang-Medan (1 hour flight). Medan-Samosir (6 hours driving).

DAY 2. March 5th, 2024

Village 1: Lumban Suhi-Suhi

Village 2: Huta Siallagan

Village 3: Sosor Nangka

DAY 3. March 6th, 2024

Stop 1: Geopark Office

Stop 2: Hariara Pohan

The first village was a conserved village **with no** homestay facilities. Second village was with homestays; however, the homestay programs are from **different program**, which indicates different procesedure and dynamics of implementation.

Stop 3: Bakkara

No homestays as a part of locals' domestic houses were found. There were two homestays found, however they were two new independent buildings built for tourists' accommodations. They were managed by the Village government, instead of by the communities. Does not meet the criteria.

DAY 4. March 7th, 2024

Balige (Museum, village and changes on houses from short observation). Findings on Lumban Gaol might be an interesting case, this can be a plan B if plan A needs to be expanded. Balige will be a different case because it has **different backgrounds** in terms of its relations to **developments and state's interventions**.

DAY 5. March 8th, 2024

Balige-Medan.

DAY 6. March 9th, 2024

In Medan. Reporting the findings of grand tour. Consider and decide the cases for study. Some notes on the trip were shown in the following part (Notes on Case Selections/Rationale).

Figure 3.8. Itinerary and initial findings and confirmations on the potential cases.

Having three villages confirmed in Pangururan-Simanindo was quite satisfying. On day 3, I left Pangururan and started heading south. I had to rent a car with a driver, as I was told the route was not for beginners. I visited Hariara Pohan and Bakkara, known for their strong cultural traditions. It turned out that they were not suitable for my study, as shown in Figure 3.8. Hariara Pohan was built through a different program, with distinct procedures and actors, whereas in

Bakkara we did not find any villages with homestays. In fact, we got lost a few times in Bakkara, so we asked people on the street for directions.

Day 4 in Balige was quite a different experience. Balige is a big and important city for the Toba Batak tribe. During the Dutch colonial period, Balige became one of the administrative centers in the Toba region. In 1959, it served as the capital of Tapanuli Regency, and in 2007, it served as the capital of Toba-Samosir Regency after the district was expanded (Tabo, 2015). Based on my fieldwork in Figure 3.8, I noted that the economic, socio-political, and developmental state of Balige is far more advanced compared to Samosir's. Regarding homestays, I did not find them a suitable case for my study for the following reasons: the lack of vernacular, the communal atmosphere, and the fact that *Jabu Bolons* have transformed into almost entirely modern landed houses, and homestays in *jabus* are no longer inhabited daily. Therefore, I excluded it from this study.

Based on my findings during the grand tour, I decided to focus on homestays in the Pangururan-Somanindo area, in the northern part of Samosir (indicated by the purple line in Figure 3.8). Here, I put forward rationales for the decision:

First, Pangururan is the capital of Samosir Regency, a hub for inland transportation connecting the island to Medan, Balige, and other major cities in the surrounding area. Simanindo district, on the other hand, is the hub for water transportation, with its new harbors and ports. Both make these two districts vital to infrastructure and tourism development on the island and therefore receive more attention. These make it interesting to study how tourism integrates into locals' traditional lives, what is new to them, and how they host tourists in their homes. It has two key elements of research: tradition and tourism.

Second, as the most developed and connected districts, these two areas offer strong points for research operations: accessibility, availability of information and key informants, and resources for safety and logistics.

Third, the Pangururan-Simanindo area hosted the majority of homestay projects in Samosir Regency. Because the cases are located in roughly the same geographical and socio-political context, selecting cases from this area offers methodological benefits for comparing across sites. Along the coastline, homestays inserted into locals' homes, called 'Rumah Bolon', became a new accommodation typology in the area.

Fourth, Geoparks and Geosites, as tourist attractions, help sustain this homestay typology, keeping it active and welcoming to guests. Geoparks and Geosites are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed under a holistic approach to protection, education, and sustainable development, according to UNESCO. The Geopark map shows that more homestay sites have been found in these two regions. Finally, both Pangururan and Simanindo districts are at the early stage of tourism development; a mix of interactions between locals (culture and tradition) and guests (tourism) is prevalent, unlike any other neighboring districts in the regency, which are more urbanized and dominated by tourism, such

as Tuk-Tuk and Parapat; or less urbanized with insignificant presence of tourists, such as Bakkara, Hariara Pohan, and Nainggolan.

With this, I began collecting data on the three aforementioned villages—Lumban Suhi-Suhi, Sosor Nangka, and Siallagan Parhapuran. For this fieldwork, I spent 13 days collecting data from March 16-28, 2024. On average, I stayed 4 days at each site, or '*huta*'. After completing this phase of data collection, I left the region and went back to Padang. I spent about a month writing up field notes, organizing the collected data, and making sure I had everything I planned and what I needed to pursue further.

Additionally, as part of the qualitative research, I decided to conduct a second fieldwork trip to achieve data saturation. Saturation is a pivotal concept in qualitative research, playing a fundamental role in enhancing the completeness and robustness of qualitative findings, at which point no new themes or information arise (Mpofu, 2025). Similarly, according to Hennink and Kaiser, data saturation is "the point in data collection when no additional issues or insights are identified, and data begin to repeat so that further data collection is redundant, signifying that an adequate sample size is reached" (2022: 2). Therefore, while sample sizes in qualitative research are small in numbers, the ability of data to provide a rich and nuanced account of the phenomenon that is important. This is why an in-depth interview is paramount at this stage of research, to gather deep, nuanced perspectives on the phenomenon under study.

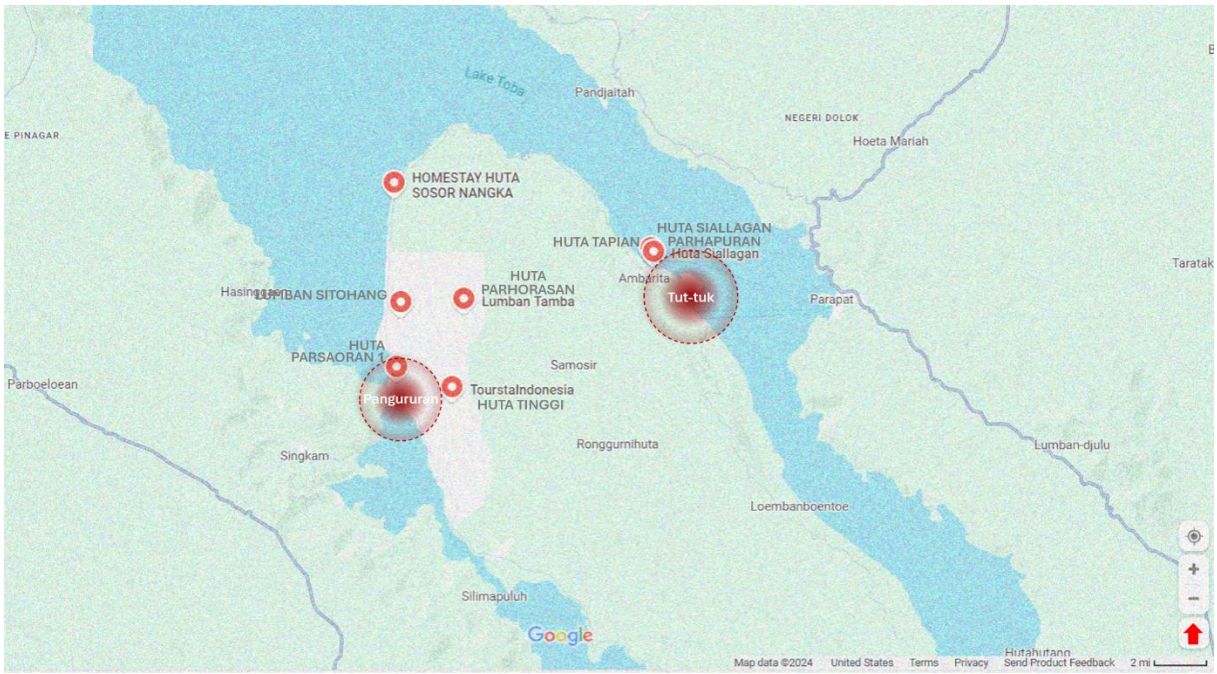


Figure 3.9. Multi-site case study: locations of villages for data collection.

Hence, to ensure I had sufficient data, I believed additional cases were necessary for my study to ensure data saturation. I decided to conduct the second fieldwork trip about 2 months after the first. I spent 10 days in Samosir, from June 24 to July 2, 2024. This time, the villages selected include Parsaoran I, Huta Tinggi, and Huta Tapian. In addition, I also visited Huta Parhorasan, an old village

in an uphill area in the interior part of the island, as a model of 'before homestay' conditions of a *jabu* and *huta*, relatively untouched by the 21st-century tourism development. Overall, Figure 3.9 above shows the locations of all *hutas* (villages) I visited for my data collection.

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

During data collection, I positioned myself as a participant observer. Corbin, Strauss & Strauss (2008) argue that a researcher, as a participant-observer, actively engages with a group while simultaneously observing their behaviors, interactions, and practices in a natural environment. I came as a tourist/researcher, renting a homestay in these *hutas*, experiencing first-hand the dynamics of domesticity and tourism, being a part of locals' homestay routines, and observing and participating in their social interactions and spatial usage.

As a qualitative study, my dissertation combines textual and visual analysis of data collected from 1) in-depth interviews, 2) architectural documentation, 3) spatial observations, and 4) archival research (Figure 3.10). I used architectural documentation to visualize the house's physical condition and the changes made to accommodate tourism. Meanwhile, direct observation was used to examine how such changes shape the way inhabitants organize their architecture and everyday lives. I conducted interviews with homeowners, family members, and local leaders to understand how the homestay projects were implemented in these villages, the actors involved and their roles at each stage, and how these dynamics shape the communities' physical and social realities. In addition, the connection between the data collection strategy and the questions they aim to answer is as follows.

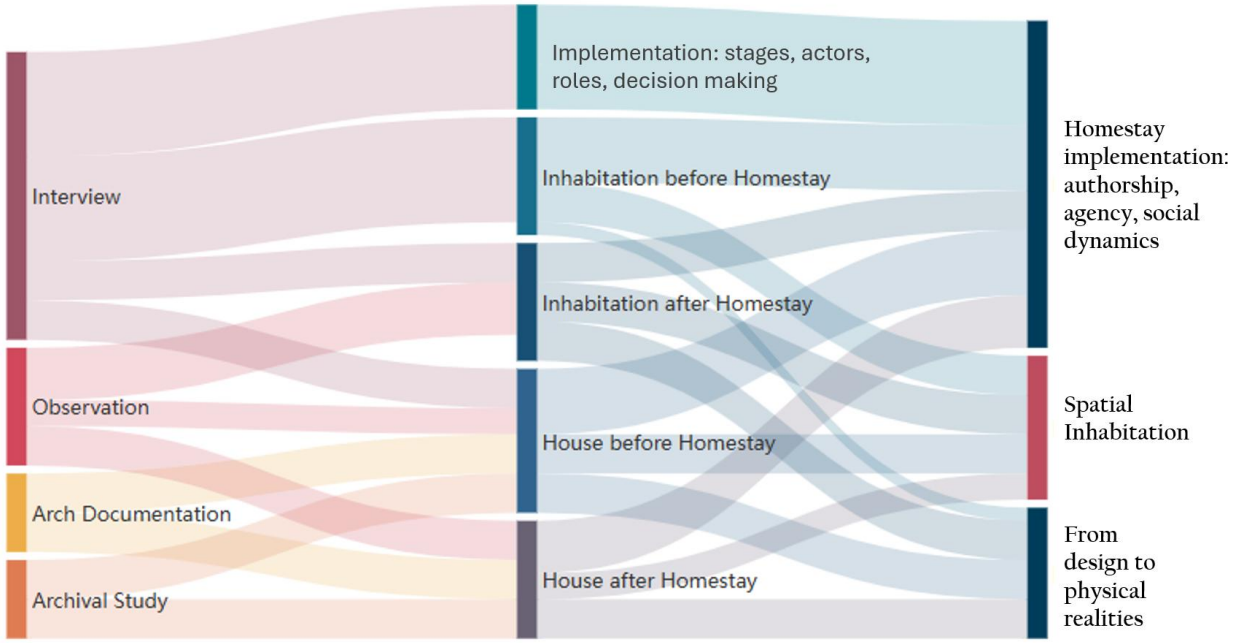


Figure 3.10. Data sources and triangulation. Graphic created by the author.

Data Collection

Data collection involved four activities, as shown in Figure 3.10. More detailed data-gathering methods and the participants involved in fieldwork in these villages are shown in Figure 3.11 below. They mainly consist of architectural documentation, observations on spatial inhabitation, and interviews to capture human perspectives on the homestay programs and to reconstruct the previous physical and living conditions prior to the implementation of homestays.

Figure 3.11 shows that research question 1, regarding the implementation framework of homestays and the local agency's position, relied almost entirely on interviews for data collection. Meanwhile, for research question 2, I used all three data collection methods to answer the three-part question. First part, Q2a, regarding the impacts of implementation on the design and physical realities of the homestays, used both interviews and architectural documentation. Second part, Q2b on the implications for spatial inhabitation, used observations and interviews. Lastly, the Q2c, focusing on the impacts of homestay implementation on social cohesion and community, mainly used interviews as the method, supported by spatial observations of gathering spots where people socialize in the *hutas*.

Research Question		Method	Participants	Anticipated Findings
Q1: Homestay Implementation	Q1a: Stages of implementation, actors involed, and their roles	Inteview	Homestay owners Architects Head of Village Head of 'Huta'	Framework of Implementation 'SAR': Stages, Actors, Roles.
	Q1b: Positions of local communities			Identifying inclusion/exclusion of local communties across implementation framework
Q2: Impacts of 'SAR' implementation framework	Q2a: Impacts on architectural conditions	Interview	Homestay owners Architects Head of 'Huta'	Design process: homeowners' involvements in production of the built design
		Architectural Documentation		Architectural drawings of houses: before and after homestay
	Q2b: Impacts on spatial inhabitation	Spatial mapping on homestay occupation	Homestay owners Tourists	Spatial inhabitation of home: before and after homestay
		Interview on previous spatial inhabitation		
	Q2c: Impacts on social cohesion & dynamics	Interview	Homestay owners Head of Village Head of 'Huta'	Changes in communal values, ownership of property, stucture of power
		Spatial mapping on open space		

Figure 3.11. Data collection methods correspond with research questions.

Method 1: Architectural Documentation

Architectural documentation records the existing conditions of homestays and *hutas*. I also used documentation to identify the improvements and changes made to the settlements for homestay purposes. I conducted interviews with homeowners, followed by documentation, to identify changes made to their homes and to investigate the decision-making process. Documenting the *hutas*, their perimeters, and open spaces between houses and yards required permission from the Tunggane Huta

(Head of Huta). Meanwhile, for homestay documentation, with the owners' permission, I measured and drew the houses to produce architectural drawings, including plans, elevations, sections, and site plans. In addition, documentation activities involved sketching, note-taking, and image-taking for later reference during the production process of the drawings.

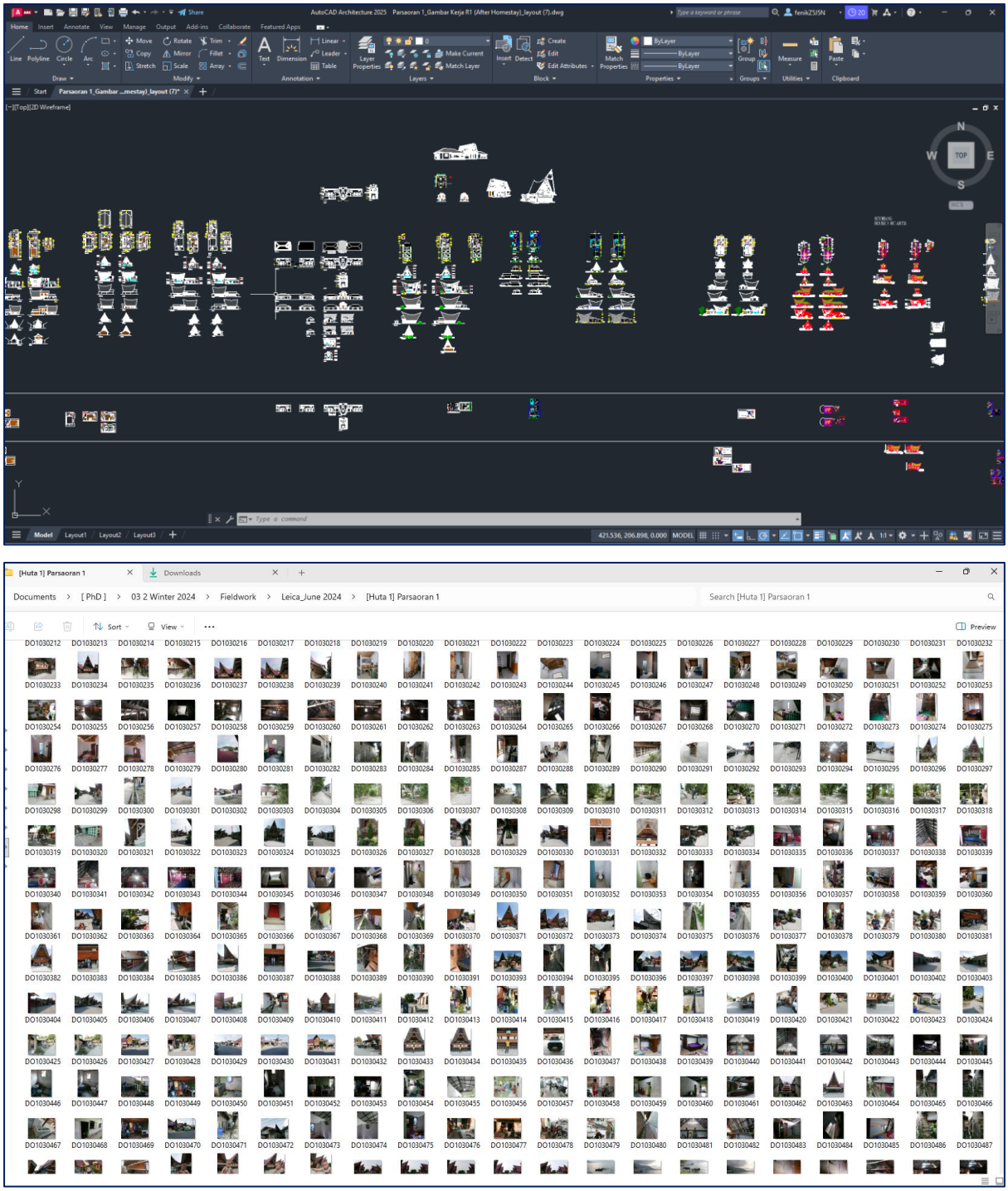


Figure 3.12. Screenshots of drawings production using AutoCAD (top) and photo collection (bottom).

Drawings produced include floor plans, sections, and elevations for homestays, as well as site plans and site sections of the *huta* to show the topography and immediate surroundings. As there were 7 villages/hutas visited and, in each *huta*, I selected three houses as representatives, there were 21

sets of drawings to complete. One set includes 1-2 floor plans, 2 sections, 4 elevations for homestays, and 1 site plan and 1 site section for the *hutas*. I mainly used AutoCAD to make all basic orthogonal drawings (Figure 3.12, top). For further graphic production, I used Illustrator and Photoshop to better illustrate my arguments on a specific aspect of the findings.

For selecting which homestays to include in the study, the field process was neither linear nor universal. Sometimes I selected the houses, but the key informants often recommended others as well. My criteria are 1) the homestay is in *Jabu Bolon*, 2) it is occupied daily as a domestic house for the family, and 3) it actively accepts tourists, as some homestays are reluctant to host guests. This is not something uncommon. Although it does not serve homestay purposes, some owners still resist hosting guests, even after their initial agreement. As long as this list was met, I was quite flexible with the rest of the decision. Very often, I decided my case selection during the visits and was very situational, for instance, it depended on the availability of the homeowners during the period of my stay, their relationship to my key informants—who were the owners of the place I stayed—and not seldom, driven by their interest in my study or their excitement to share their perspectives and experiences.

Method 2: Direct Observation

The purpose of direct observation during the visit is to map the spatial distribution of users and the villagers in the *hutas*. During this activity, data collection focused on mapping movements and interactions among users, such as homeowners and tourists (for in-house mapping) and with other community members (for public space mapping). During this activity, I recorded the data through sketches, notes, and drawings. Examples of these recordings are shown in Figure 3.13. In addition, I used photography to record details, social interactions, and moments of person-place relationships.

Data expected at this stage is the spatial occupancy of users across different situations after the homestay intervention. Some observation scenarios include homestays with and without tourists, open spaces (outside homestays) during tourist visits, and during cultural events such as funerals and weddings. During in-house observation, I obtained permission from homeowners. These spatial and behavioral mappings provided a better understanding of how spatial inhabitation, negotiation, and use occur, both individually and shared by different types of users on different occasions. In addition, such investigations focus on understanding the current conditions of host communities following the introduction of tourist homestay programs in the villages and on comparing them with previous conditions, which I reconstructed from interview data.

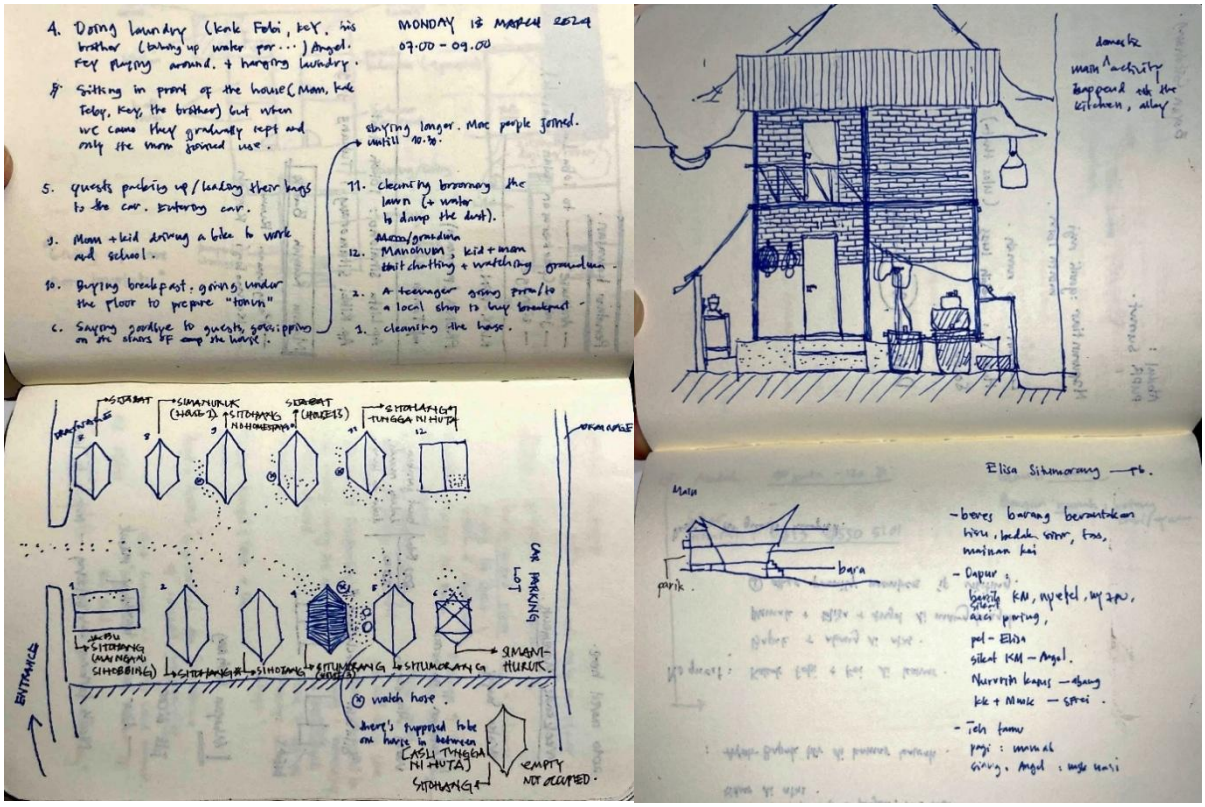


Figure 3.13. Sketches and notes during observation. Images scanned from the author's field notes.

Method 3: Interviews

The previous Figure 3.11 shows that interviews aimed to collect data to answer research questions 1 and 2. Through in-depth interviews, I gathered data on homestay implementation and its impacts on the communities' physical and social realities.

The interviews mainly involved homeowners, village heads, *adat* leaders, heads of *hutas* (or *Tunggane Huta*), homestay coordinators (if any), and architects. I used convenience sampling to recruit participants from groups of property/homestay owners who were available during the site visit, easily accessible, and willing to participate fully in the research, including house visits, documentation, and interviews. I conducted interviews with architects either virtually (via scheduled interviews) or in person at their offices (Figure 3.14). Interviews helped gather data on the intangible aspects of changes that occurred in the communities after the homestay injection in the selected *hutas.*

For *homeowners*, interviews covered four main topics. First, to assist in reconstructing the initial conditions of houses and neighborhoods prior to homestays. Second, to gather data on the spatial occupation of houses and public spaces before the homestay intervention, for comparison with behavioral mapping based on direct observation. Third, to gather background information on the homestay project, including the village's history, the initial acceptance/response of communities to the project, the implementation process for homestays, and homeowners' involvement. Fourth, to understand homeowners' perceptions of the built designs.



Figure 3.14. Interviews with Ar. Freddy Simamora, IAI, in the living room of his office. Photo taken by Gunawan

Interviews with *architects*, on the other hand, explored the design process, including design guidelines, architects' creative process, the involvement of homeowners and other local figures in design decisions, and design communication. The main purpose of the architects' interviews was to understand the extent of communities' involvement and participation in design decisions.

Community leaders in this context include the head of the village administrative unit, *Tunggane Huta*, a respected figure who serves as the homestay coordinator, and the *Adat* leaders. Interviews with this group of participants addressed their acceptance of the projects and their roles in the homestay implementation. In this case, one aspect to study is the role of local leaders in homestay programs. Discussions with community leaders revealed power dynamics interplaying between state actors and locals, which informed the findings on the impacts of social cohesion and the local community's structure after homestays.

Interviews were mostly in Bahasa Indonesia, with only one in Batak due to language barriers. Additionally, I recorded all interviews on audio and, as part of data organization, and then transcribed them verbatim in their original languages before analyzing them. I then translated all documents into English. I organized the transcripts and their translations by participant and huta. These documents were ready for analysis. Figure 3.15 shows some of my filing systems.

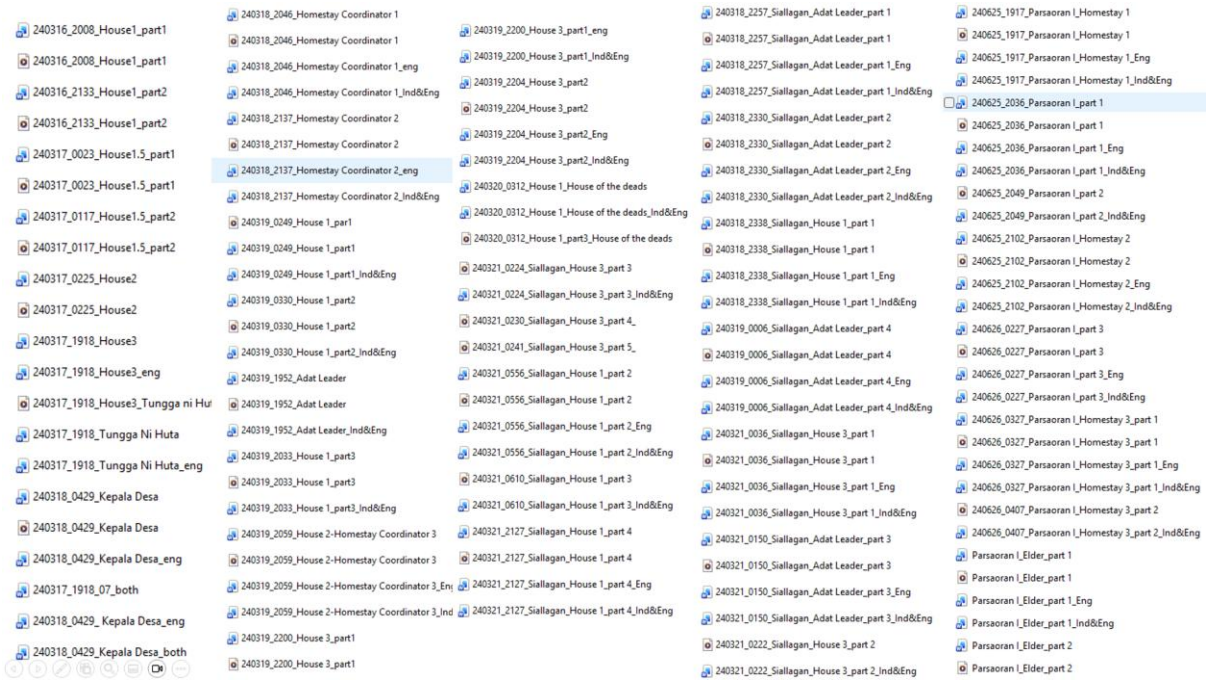


Figure 3.15. Screenshot of the interview data filing system. Image created by the author.

Data Analysis

In general, the analysis consisted of two stages that addressed the research questions. I began the analysis by first answering research question 1, which concerns the implementation process of the homestays. For this stage, as the dataset was textual, I analyzed the data one-by-one based on the hutas, which, according to Cresswell & Poth, is a "within-case analysis" (2018:100). This step of analysis aims to provide an in-depth analysis of each case, focusing on the unique aspects of individual cases. Following this step, I then did the "cross-case analysis by comparing the stages of implementation across *hutas* to compare between cases (finding similarities) to draw generalizations on how homestay implementation happened, what stages were there, and who was a part of the process of decision-making, as well as indicating stages with critical inclusion or exclusion of local communities. The results serve as the basis for question two, which examines the impacts of implementation conditions on the built designs, spatial occupation, and social cohesion of the communities. In the second stage, data from architectural documentation and observations played an important role in answering the second question. The analysis of each data type is as follows.

Interviews

This study used a qualitative analysis, applying coding techniques to the interview transcripts to develop key themes and concepts. Corbin and Strauss (2008) offer guidance on conducting coding and developing categories and themes. The general stages are as shown in Figure 3.16. The analysis begins by coding verbatim interview transcripts to generate codes from key ideas within the texts. While coding, the analytical process of creating codes always refers to the questions the interview data seeks to answer, which, in this case, were the dynamics of homestay implementation. The coding

analysis also documented data accumulation and identified the point at which saturation was reached, i.e., when no new codes emerged from the interview texts.

During this process, codifying/memoing also occurred, with notes and memos made to record definitions and highlight possible direct or indirect connections between codes. Memoing was also a crucial step in identifying the specificities and intensities of aspects of the research questions, such as homeowners' involvement in the design process, design dialogues, and their expectations. I used these notes as a reference for analysis regarding the second research question.

Moving forward, codes that share meaning will be grouped under the same category. By this stage, the group labels are becoming more general and conceptual, while the numbers shrink. This process was repetitive until bigger groups/categories of themes emerged. During this coding process, I used QualCoder, qualitative data analysis software, to assist with organizing the data. I used results from this text analysis, along with architectural data and behavioral mappings, for the remainder of the research.

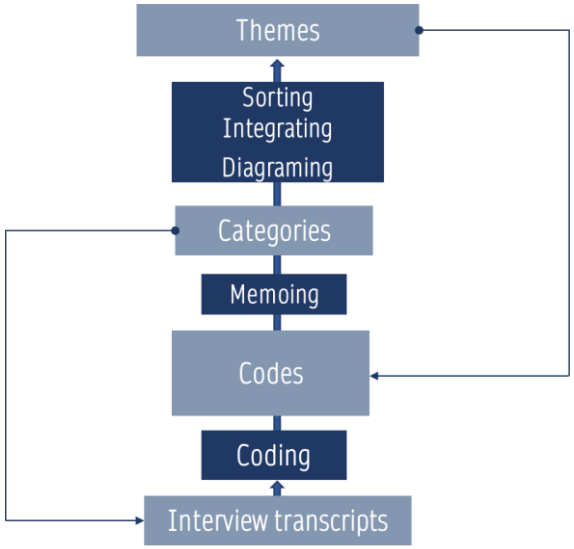


Figure 3.16. Coding process. Graphic created by the author, based on Corbin and Strauss (2008)

An example of coding analysis on the homestay implementation is in Figure 3.17. The sunburst diagram shows the main code categories and their individual codes. The categories represent the stages of homestay implementation. The diagram also shows that the area of each category corresponds to the word count in the transcripts discussing the respective topics, which also corresponds to the length of the interviews. It means that, during the interviews, homeowners elaborated more on the design process than on the construction process.

Meanwhile, within the design category, there are some smaller categories composed of codes. The sub-category "Communicating Design," for example, consists of three codes: "communicating drawing," "requesting changes," and "responding to the requests." Using QualCoder, tracing each code to its excerpts in the transcripts is easy. Often, there are categories within subcategories, or a single code serves as a category. An example of this is Figure 3.17.

This figure shows implementation categories, such as permit, design, and construction. Each category comprises sub-categories; for example, the design stage consists of the design proposal, design communication, estimated cost, and design finalization. Moreover, each sub-category consists of several codes; for communicating design, these include requesting changes, responding to requests, and the communication medium. These codes came from a verbatim transcription of interviews.

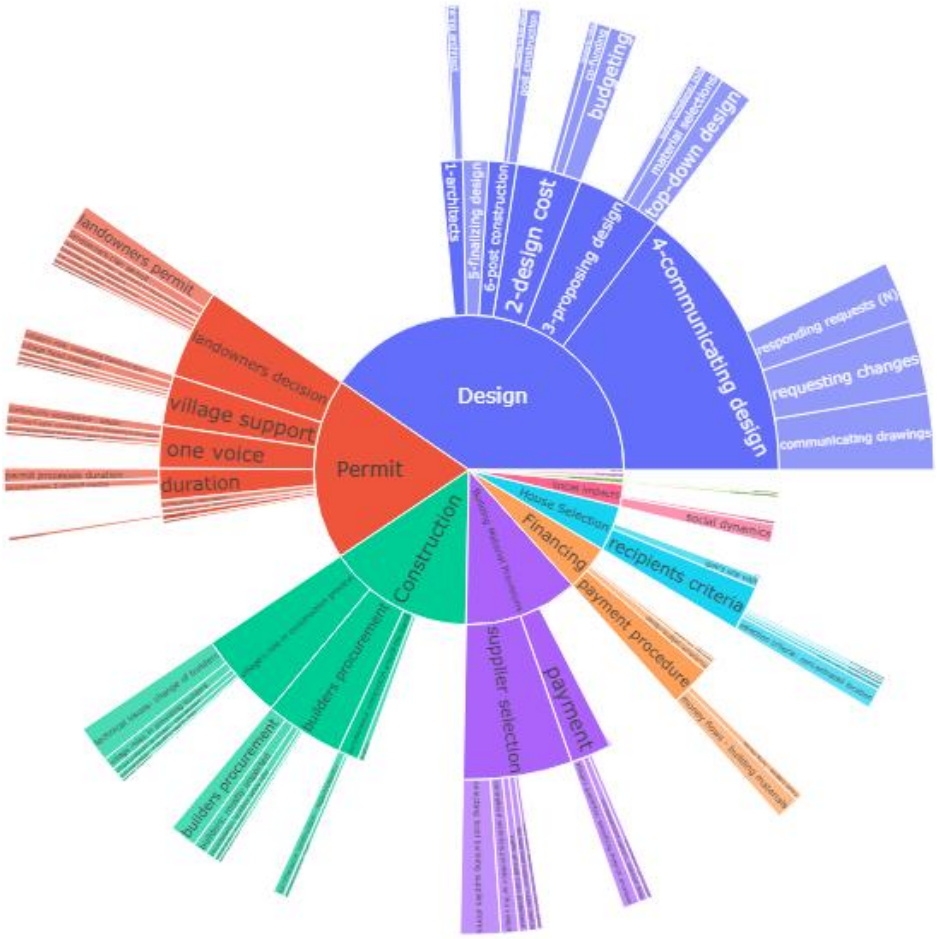


Figure 3. 17. Sunburst chart of counts of coded text based on the total characters of the related interview transcripts. Graphic created by the author.

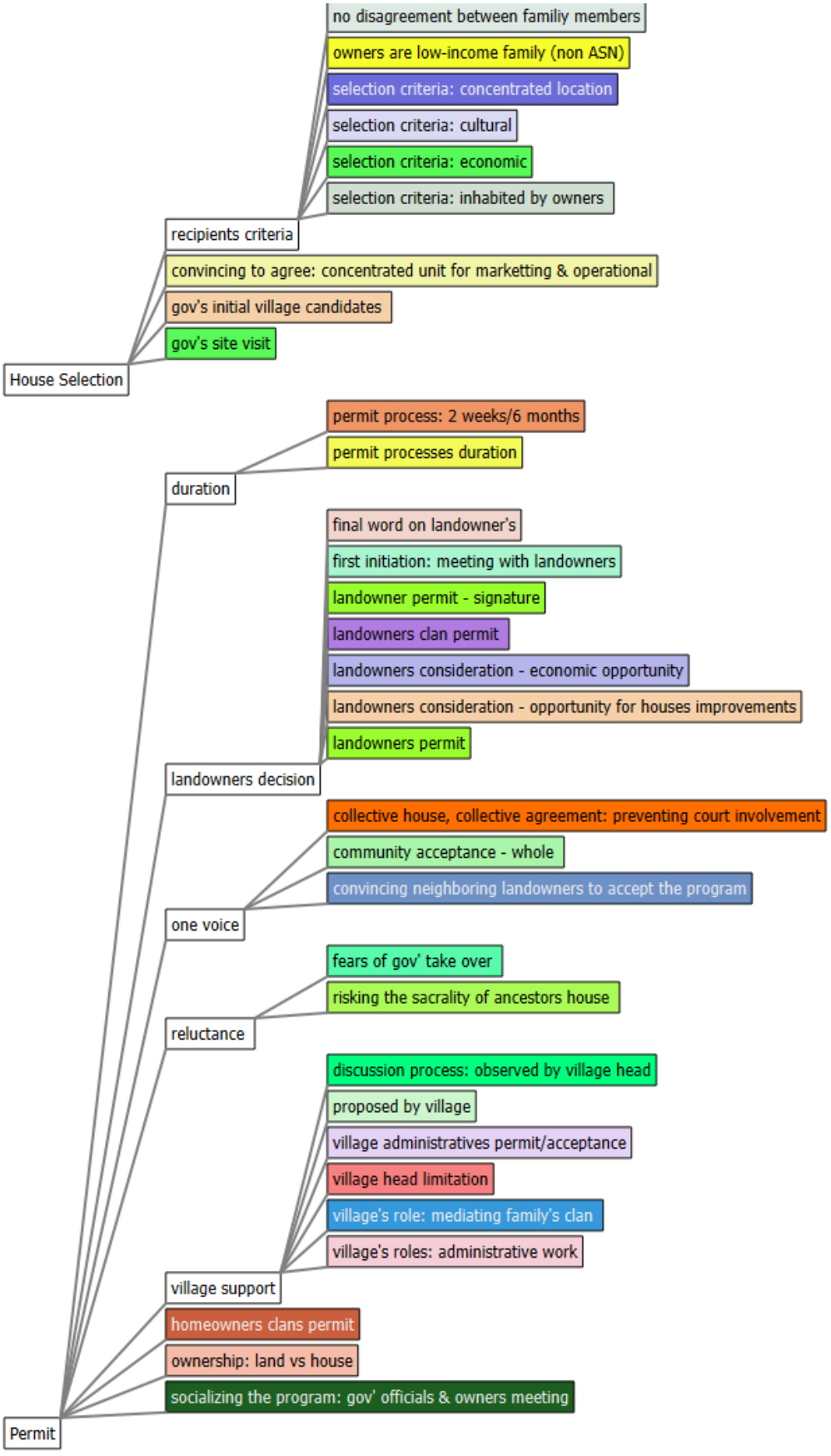


Figure 3. 18. Codes, sub-categories, and categories. Graphic created by the author.

Architectural Drawings and Behavioral Mappings

While interviews capture human perspective and understanding surrounding the architectural production of homestays, this study also emphasizes the physical entities of the architecture, such as buildings and the built environments '*hutas*'. Here, drawings are a useful means to communicate both physical and non-physical attributes of architecture (Fannon et al., 2022). Architectural analysis relied on architectural drawings as the data, including site plans, floor plans, elevations, and sections of traditional houses. The government's documentation, which is the architects' drawings (if any, which were only 3 of all 17 houses), is the primary source for data collection, although not the only one. The primary data source was direct observation of the existing conditions of the houses and villages during fieldwork. I also used textual data to reconstruct the initial conditions of the built environment and the inhabitation of spaces, integrating these texts with the architectural data to provide a basis for comparison between before and after homestay interventions.

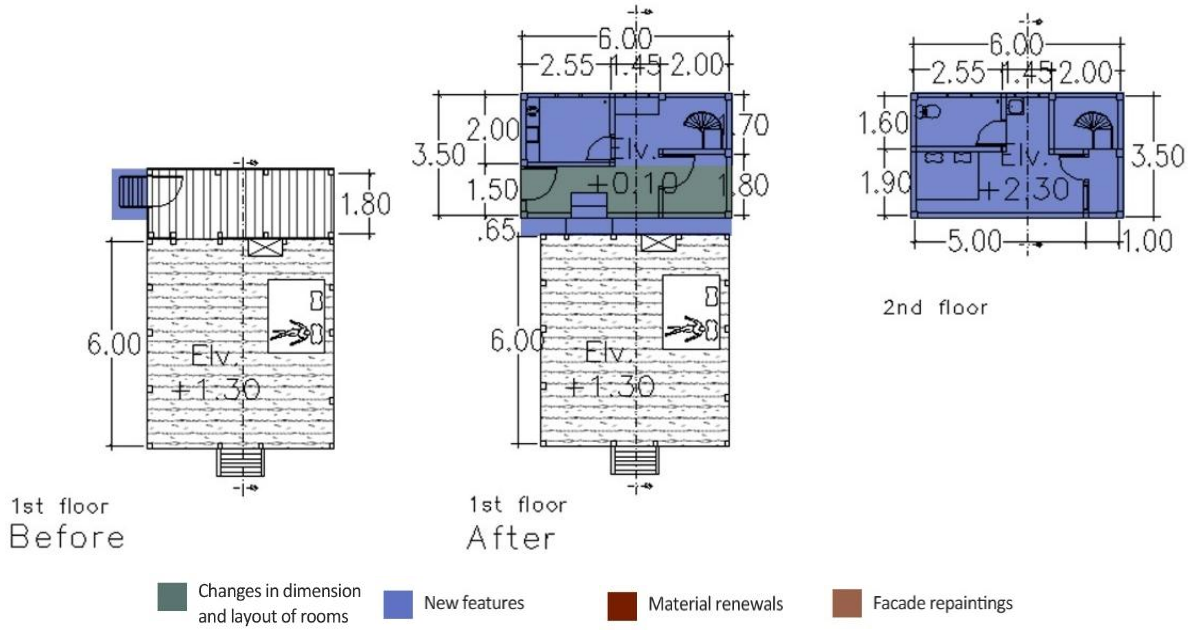


Figure 3. 19. Sample of analysis on physical changes in a house and their categories. Drawings created by the author.

I used analysis of drawings or visual data proceeded by "graphically coding" information on a consistent body of drawings, including grouping and formatting drawings according to the same set of criteria, such as level of detail, arrangement of spaces, and the structural pattern of buildings, etc. (Fannon et al., 2022: 7). Then, I grouped drawings based on the changes they showed when compared to those before homestays. Here, a series of comparative graphic matrices arranges all buildings under study to reveal possible trends in their physical features. The purpose of this analysis is to identify relationships between physical changes observed in the houses and the roles of their owners in effecting these transformations.

Following similar principles, behavioral mapping analysis categorizes patterns of spatial occupation across the houses under study. By focusing on changes in habitation patterns before and after homestays, this analysis used drawings, especially floor plans, to illustrate users' flows and movements within the houses' rooms. Establishing patterns from the houses under study, comparing them, showing patterns of change, and categorizing them into the same group were the results of this analysis. They show the impacts of implementing homestays, especially their designs, on the everyday lives of the inhabitants.

Figure 3.20 is an example of this spatial pattern, comparing inhabitation before and after homestays. The upper drawing is a floor plan before the homestay implementation, showing the movement patterns of the inhabitants of the house, as indicated by the red lines. I reconstructed this pattern using interview data with the homeowners. The bottom drawing, however, is a floor plan after the homestay implementation, along with occupation movements of hosts (indicated by red lines) and the guests', as indicated in the blue lines. This pattern emerged from direct observation during fieldwork trips, supported by interview data.



Figure 3. 20. Samples of analysis on changes in the spatial use of a home, before (top) and after (bottom) homestays. Drawings created by the author.

VALIDITY & RELIABILITY

According to Gibbs (2007), validity in qualitative research requires researchers to assess the accuracy of their findings through specific procedures. Meanwhile, reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects.

Creswell (2014) further recommended eight primary strategies to address validity issues in qualitative research. They are to 1) triangulate different data sources, 2) use member checking to determine the accuracy of findings, 3) use a rich and thick description to convey findings, 4) clarify the bias the researcher brings to the study, 5) present negative or discrepant information, 6) spend prolonged time in the field, 7) use peer debriefing, and 8) use an external auditor to review the entire project.

Different qualitative studies tend to use a particular strategy to ensure validity. For example, Gillem (2007) relies heavily on clarifying bias as a researcher, which proved to be a key element of his approach to his study. He positioned himself as an auto-ethnographer who is a boundary-crosser and further identified himself as having "crossed multiple boundaries in [his] study: geographical, political, and professional" (2007:277).

In my case, I assessed validity through data triangulation across multiple sources, including interviews, architectural drawings, and surveys with various stakeholders, such as government agencies, architects, homeowners, and data leaders. Another strategy I used in my study was member checking, in which I asked participants to confirm whether my understanding was accurate, as suggested by Creswell (2014).

In terms of reliability, Yin (in Creswell, 2014) recommends that researchers conducting qualitative research record all steps in the case study's procedures, as well as the case study's overall procedures. It includes making sure that 1) interview transcripts do not contain any mistakes during transcription, 2) the coding process is transparent, and 3) themes developed from the analysis can be traced back to the related raw data.

Another possible way is to regularly compare data with the generated codes and write memos about the codes and their definitions (Saldana, 2013; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In many cases, researchers also tend to use excerpts from transcripts when writing and reporting their findings (Collins et al., 2012; Purwaningrum, 2021; Hakeh et al., 2021; Kurniati, 2016). In my study, I recorded all interviews, transcribed them, and maintained the coding procedures in QualCode. I also quoted excerpts from interview transcripts, not only to support my argument but also to convey the 'genuine flavor' of the nuances expressed by the participants.

Finally, another important approach to addressing reliability in multisite studies is to ensure that researchers handle individual cases in a similar manner and with consistent procedures. One way to do this is to allow researchers to serve as the main observer and avoid using different informants across cases, as in "single-site studies [as it] can raise questions about reliability" (Gillem, 2007: 275).

In this research, I was the sole researcher who conducted data collection and analysis across the cases and throughout the study. By doing so, I hope to minimize my biases and maintain the scientific values and qualities of my study.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this methodological chapter, I offer four lessons from my research design.

First, my three strategies of data collection—interviews, observations, and architectural drawings—serve well to both illustrate current conditions and trace back to the initial states, when homestays were not yet part of the communities. More importantly, triangulation of the three data sets reveals the nuances of this study, for example, with texts enriching the meaning of architectural drawings and, in turn, drawings visualizing certain realities and the impacts of the homestays experienced by local communities.

Second, as a qualitative study with a relatively small number of cases compared to quantitative research, this study's case selection relies heavily on an understanding of the degree of similarity and difference across cases. For this reason, a grand tour is important in case selection procedures. My grand tour gave me a better understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics of each potential location and allowed me to focus and be more specific in my selection. It is crucial, especially for the later stage of research, when one needs to compare and draw reasonable conclusions. Without the grand tour, I would not have been able to form a solid argument because there was no common ground among the cases.

Third, in my research, I rely on interviews as my method. Although observation and architectural documentation contributed significantly to this study's findings, I argue that interviews would be the primary means of data collection. This decision is not without reason. Firstly, the use of interviews as the main method is due to my research questions, which require verbal explanations to reveal the nuances of this study. Secondly, it is due to the communities with strong oral traditions. Here, interviews accommodated the locals' rooted oral tradition, meaning they are familiar and comfortable telling stories and sharing experiences through conversation, which is why this research successfully captures the dynamics among the participants.

Fourth, understanding the communication methods commonly used by local communities helped me realize that any form of written documentation or communication would feel foreign and could even raise questions and fear among them. This is why I opted out of written consent in my IRB approvals, which I believe was a good decision. In my IRB application, I requested an exemption for written consent as a part of the participants' hiring procedure. Instead, I used verbal consent and voice recordings as forms of documentation. Therefore, I decided to do this because my participants are unfamiliar with formal written documentation and because this study concerns state affairs—the homestays—which involve a long, complex legal documentation phase; having their consent

documented in writing would cause them unease and even lead them to decline to participate in the study. Therefore, understanding contexts not only helps situate the study within specific settings and dynamics but also informs a better methodological design.

Finally, while some aspects need improvement for future studies, particularly the time allocation for each type of data analysis, I argue that my methodology effectively and efficiently answers my research questions.

PART II

DESIGN + AGENCY

CHAPTER 4
IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter marks the start of the results reporting for fieldwork and data analysis, which consists of three parts. The first part delves into the physical, social, and cultural background of the *hutas* where homestays take place, to help explain how the next part unfolds. The second one focuses on the procedures for implementing homestays, encompassing the stages, actors involved, and their roles. Finally, the last part emphasizes the positioning of local agency, specifically the Indigenous *huta* communities, within the homestay implementation framework. This part aims to reveal key phases in which local agency plays an important role—either through active involvement or exclusion—in defining project outcomes, at least during the period of this study.

SELECTED HUTAS: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The selection of the six cases in Samosir, as previously elaborated in the Method chapter, is based on two criteria: 1) strong cultural attachment of the communities, which is the focus of tourism, and 2) homestays taking place within the well-defined *huta* territory, rather than within the modern village administrative unit. The six cases, in chronological order of visits, are: 1) Lumban Sitohang, 2) Huta Sosor Nangka, 3) Huta Siallagan, 4) Huta Parsaoran I, 5) Huta Tinggi, and 6) Huta Tapian. Figure 4.1 shows their distribution on the map.

The distribution of homestay *hutas* is largely along the island's perimeter. This aligns with the Homestay team's concentration of homestays, laid out along Jalan Lintas Samosir, which runs around the island's perimeter. Five of the *hutas* under study are on the roadside, while the other, Huta Tinggi, which literally means 'uphill village,' is located at higher latitudes. It takes 20 minutes to drive to the city, with several sharp turns along the way.

While seven villages are marked on the map, only six serve as homestay cases. The other one, Huta Parhorasan, located in the interior of Samosir Island, represents the somewhat original *huta* before homestays, as it still maintains its traditional *sopo* structure and is not involved in recent tourism activities. Development in the capital city of Pangururan inevitably affects the lives of these hutas. Take Huta Parsaoran I as an example. Parsaoran I is a *huta* that is relatively close to Pangururan City, within walking distance, perhaps 5-10 minutes. This proximity inevitably brings the *huta* closer

to tourist activities, which are mainly concentrated in Pangururan and Tutuk (the large red circles in Figure 3.9). Similarly, Siallagan Parhapuran is close to Tutuk, known as the 'Bali' of Samosir; therefore, the *huta* is heavily influenced by tourism.

Meanwhile, *Huta Tinggi* and *Lumban Sitohang* are farther from the two locations, which means less direct interaction with tourists and a less vibrant city life, with fewer amenities (restaurants, shops, public transportation) for tourists. This is also the case for Sosor Nangka. In fact, this *huta* is the most isolated among the other five, in terms of its interaction with tourists and its preparedness as tourist accommodation.

That said, it is important to examine the initial involvement of the six villages in tourism activities before the implementation of the homestay programs. Based on my observation during fieldwork, the degree of *huta's* involvement in tourism shapes its initial social structure and acceptance of the homestay program. I will discuss this further while introducing the villages shortly. Additionally, *huta's* proximity to the center of regional development is important for understanding the extent of a village's involvement in urbanization and modernization before the homestay program. Therefore, both factors, initial tourism involvement and local communities' dynamics, are the driving factors in defining ways of introducing the six villages in this study.

In the following section, I introduce the six *hutas* based on their urban characteristics. I begin from the most urbanized to the least in the following order: Huta Siallagan, Huta Parsaoran I, Huta Tinggi, Lumban Sitohang, Huta Tapian, and Sosor Nangka.

Huta Siallagan Parhapuran



Figure 4. 1. Views of Huta Bolon Siallagan, front and back. Photos taken by the author.

Huta Sillagan is a *huta* for the Sillagan families. It is named after its clan name, and historically, it came from the king's nickname, 'Lagan', meaning "ill-tempered," the ill-tempered King[10]. Huta Siallagan comprises two villages: Huta Bolon Siallagan and Huta Parhapuran Siallagan. While both *huta* belong to the Siallagan clan, *Huta* Bolon is the original village of their ancestors.

According to the interview with the local *adat leader*, the two *hutas* began with the fact that his grandparents had two children. The older inherited the original *huta*, Huta Bolon Siallagan, while the younger opened a new huta in a neighboring area, which later became Huta Parhapuran. Because the parents gave their blessing for the younger to open a new *huta*, he then could use the clan's name: Huta Parhapuran Siallagan. It is to indicate that the *huta* is still related to the Huta Bolon Siallagan.



Figure 4. 2. Huta Bolon Siallagan and Huta Parhapuran Siallagan. Drawing created by the author.

[10] It is according to one of the elders from of Siallagan families, known as Opung Rey, based on the interviews conducted during the fieldwork in March 2024.

Huta Bolon Siallagan has existed for over 600 years, according to an informant from the Siallagan family, *Opung* Rey (*opung* means elder). *Opung* Rey detailed his calculation as follows:

> "*According to our family 'tarombo' (family lineage), I am the 15th generation with grandchildren, which means it is already 17th generations so far. If we calculate each generation at 35 years, then 17 years equals 595 years. That is how old this huta is.*" It was one of the oldest *hutas* in Samosir.

In terms of interaction with tourism, Siallagan's *hutas*, Bolon, and Parhapuran have been tourist attractions since the 1980s, during Soeharto's era. *Opung* Rey, recalling his experience as a tour guide during this period, took tourists from the Siallagan Port (the top part of the map in Figure 4.2) to Huta Bolon Siallagan for a tour along the red line. Huta Bolon Siallagan is famous for its conserved village and serves as a living museum to this day. In the 1990s, especially during the Visit Indonesia, tourism was at its peak, as *Opung* Rey explained,

> "*... there were up to 30-40 boats of tourists a day .... It really helped with the economy, which was why we could send our children to school. But after Soeharto's administration, which coincided with the Bali bombing and was followed by demonstrations in Jakarta, tourism became unstable. Tourist visits declined ever since, until the tourism revival under Jokowi administration in the 2000s.*"

Recognizing Huta Bolon Siallagan as one of the region's long-standing tourist destinations, the state selected it as a pilot project for homestay programs, along with the revitalization of the conserved *huta*. While the main attraction is the *huta* Bolon, an open museum, the homestays are not open for business. It was intentional. It is due to its role as a pilot project for a new typological experiment for a home incorporating tourists' accommodation, a homestay.

On the other hand, Huta Parhapuran Siallagan serves as a pathway from the port to the museum, which has become a very active area for tourists' shopping. The path was full of small shops selling local crafts and souvenirs. However, since the development of road infrastructure connecting Pangururan, many tourists have come to the island by car and no longer need to stop at Siallagan port in *Huta* Parhapuran. It has caused many shops to open only during peak seasons, such as New Year's, Christmas, or Eid. Additionally, the revitalization of Huta Bolon included tourist shopping centers right behind the *huta*, further dispersing tourists' spending.

Regarding homestay programs, Huta Parhapuran received around 13 units scattered throughout the *huta*, facing the pathway, as shown on the map. Finally, long-term engagement with tourism has created more independent, individualized communities in the *huta*. During my visit, I confirmed that although the locals still identify themselves as a part of Siallagan and practice Batak culture, such as inheritance and marriage systems, the management of the property, including houses, lands, *hutas*, and shops, is owned privately by a nuclear family, not anymore by *Tunggane Huta*. Therefore, decision-making is primarily in the owner's hands, with very little, if any, control or intervention from *Tunggane Huta*.

Huta Parsaoran I




Figure 4. 3. Views of Huta Parsaoran, front and back (retails). Photos taken by the author.

Huta Parsaoran I is located on the main street, Pangururan-Simanindo. The back of the *huta* is facing the street, while the entrance is through an alley that leads to the *alaman*/courtyard of the *huta* (Figure 4.4). While houses in Huta territory usually face the *alaman*, with the service area at the back, Huta Parsaoran I adopted a different approach. Houses along the street have two facades: one facing the *alaman* and the other facing the street. The latter adopted a mixed-use function, with residential and small shops/retail (red-shaded, Figure 4.4). The business owners are varied: some are homeowners, while the *huta*'s residents are the others, and the majority of the business owners rent or lease their shops from the owners (not direct family members). In other words, houses along the road have two faces: *jabu* on the inside, and retail on the outside (extended houses, identified by pink shading).

The residents in the *huta* are mostly the owners or extended family members of the *jabu*. However, there are some houses that people outside their clans lease. They are immigrant people from Java and West Sumatra. This practice is uncommon in the *huta* territory. Among the six villages visited, this is the only one with a very diverse population and houses rented to non-Batak families. In addition, the village administration rented a house in this village for an office 'Kantor Desa' (number 4 on the map), and another unit serves as *Posyandu*, an integrated health post (number 5) for *hutas* within the village territory.



Figure 4. 4. Huta Parsaoran I. Drawing created by the author.

On the other side of the *huta*, it borders a small forest, a grove, where family tombstones and a pigsty are. In the Batak culture, a *tombstone* is shared, both its use and the cost of construction. It is a multi-story structure that sometimes reaches the height of a two-story house. The tombstone has several rooms to house the dead clan members. The older the bodies, the higher they get in the structure. The architecture of this structure is particularly interesting: it varies in size and style, reflecting the family's status. Before homestays, there were many pigsties in this wooden area, owned by the residents, and almost everyone had one. However, as one of the requirements for *hutas* to receive homestay projects, the tradition of farming pigs needed to move away from the residential area, which is now number 7 on the map. Therefore, many of the pigsties disappeared, and only one remained active. The impression I got during my visit was that the locals tried to hide it by strongly

discouraging me from strolling in this area. Once I reassured them of my intention, they finally allowed me to go and guided me there.

On my first day visiting the *hutas*, as a methodological strategy, I would ask to meet with *Tunggane Huta* (landlord), to introduce myself and obtain a permit to collect data. In this *huta*, however, the landlord does not reside there—he is in Jakarta—yet his family (his wife and one of the children) live there. As the *Tunggane Huta* does not participate in the locals' everyday life, its social life is less communal and more independent. It aligns with relatively frequent contact with tourists from Pangururan, only a 5-minute walk away. The *huta's* people have more interaction with tourists, especially after the launch of Pangururan Waterfront, a water-and-light show, as one of the city's main attractions.

Huta Tinggi



Figure 4. 5. Views of Huta Tinggi. Photos taken by the author.

Huta Tinggi, although it is not necessarily far from the city, only 10-15 minutes driving, the *huta* is relatively remote in the interior island and is at a higher altitude. The name, *Huta Tinggi* means the uphill (*tinggi)* village (village). This geographic condition significantly affects the huta's access to clean water. For years, the residents in this *huta* relied on rainwater for daily consumption and cleaning and on Toba Lake for laundry. Only recently, in 2023, did they receive a government water supply from PAM (*Perusahaan Air Minum*, or Municipal Waterworks) to support the homestay operation. However, regarding the water quality, one participant stated, "*...but the water is like this, weak and yellow, because it is water from the river, we cannot consume it.*" Due to these qualities, villagers usually purchase clean water from the local company and have it delivered to their homes. It is especially the case when they have guests.

In daily life, however, locals still collect rainwater for drinking and cooking. For laundry and bathing, they use the supplied water, which they consider a 'convenience', as they can do laundry at home; they no longer need to go to Lake Toba every weekend with sacks of dirty laundry: "*Previously, if*

we wanted to do laundry, we stacked them first, then we went to Lake Toba during the weekends. ...near the Waterfront, there was an open bath where people did laundry, but after it was built, we were no longer allowed to wash there. Prohibited."



Figure 4. 6. Huta Tinggi. Drawing created by the author.

Regarding the initial interaction with tourism, this *huta* had been providing lodging to tourists long before the homestay program arrived. The lodging business began in 2013 in one of the residents' houses because of the beautiful *jabu* they have (Figure 4.7). The initiator was one of the residents, who happened to be the head of the provincial Tourism Ministry through their connections. Over time, they organized the *huta* as a tourist destination. They offered packages focusing on rural daily life experiences, such as farming, harvesting, milking cows, cooking local cuisine, coffee processing, and other workshops with local people. Most of their guests were international.

This initial 10-year interaction with tourists has helped initiate homestay programs, as the *huta* people are already familiar with hosting tourists. As the implementation of homestays began, the state emphasized the role of the previous tourism coordinator in their social life. While the locals take pride in their history and ancestors' lineage, the role of *Tunggane Huta* is not necessarily significant in the daily lives of locals in running homestays. This is also because *Tunggane Huta* no longer lived in the *huta*. His brother and family do, to help run the lodging business.



Figure 4. 7. One of the homestays in Huta Tinggi. Photos taken by the author.

Huta Tapian



Figure 4. 8. Views of Huta Tapian. Photos taken by the author.

Huta Tapian is located right by the lake; as the name suggests, *tapian* means 'on the side' (of the lake). Although it is close to Huta Siallagan, implying that it is also near Tuk-tuk, the tourist area, this *huta* is relatively untouched by tourism, as it is not on the main routes. During the visit, one of my favourite moments was walking along the lakeside from Huta Parhapuran to Huta Tapian, enjoying the natural scenery and the vibrant local life. Laughter, a sunset, and a view of a fisherman floating on the lake far away completed my long day after conducting research (Figure 4.10, left). Not too far

from Huta Tapian, within 10 minutes' walking, is the new ferry port, Ambarita, which transports people between Samosir and Ajibata (Figure 4.10, right). The port is a part of the 2010s super-priority development of tourist destinations in Samosir Regency.

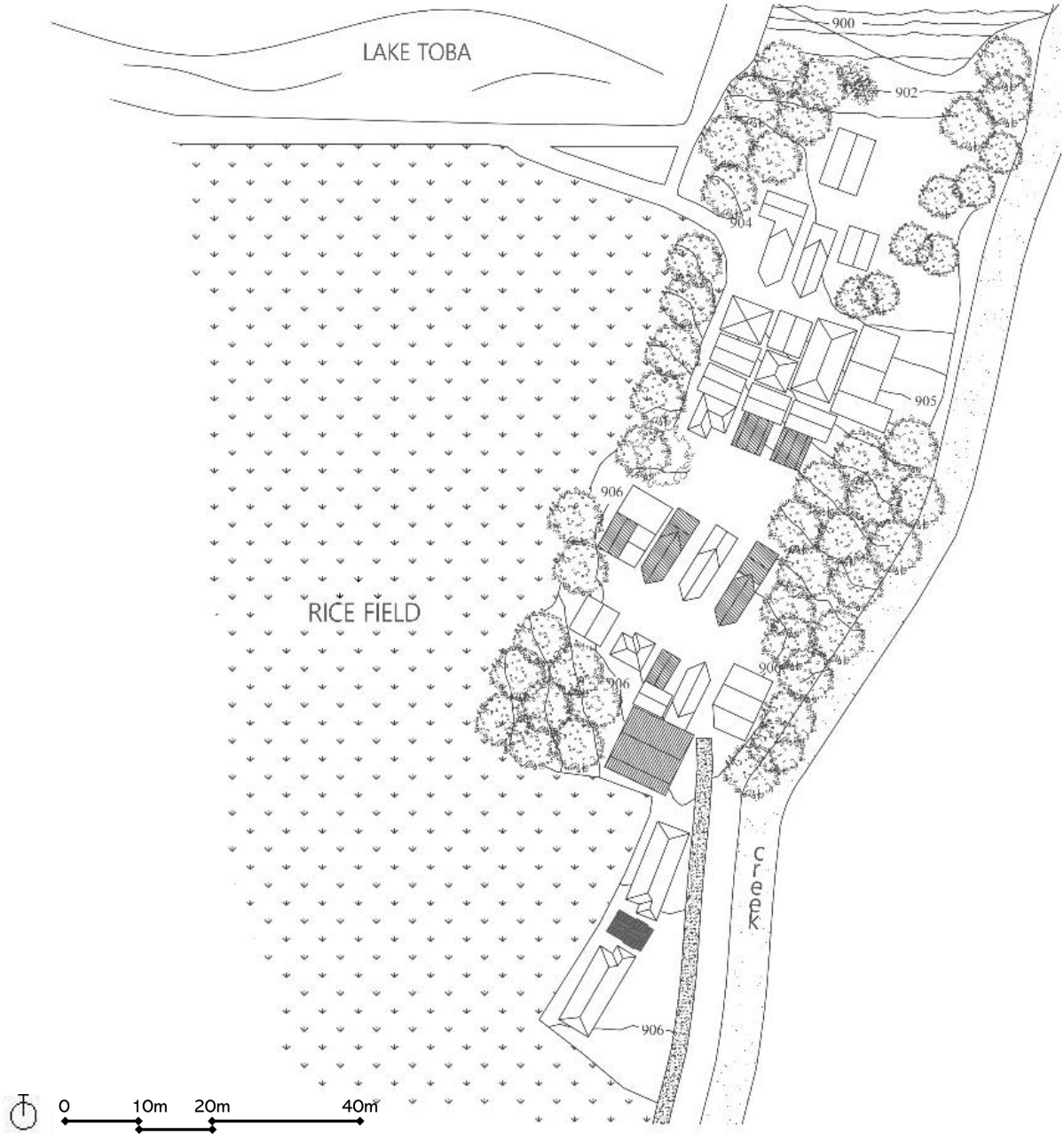


Figure 4. 9. Huta Tapian. Drawing created by the author.

Geographically, Huta Tapian is relatively close to tourist attractions such as Huta Siallagan, Siallagan Port, the new Ferry port, and Tuktuk market, one of the island's most touristy places. In terms of accessibility, there are two ways to reach this *huta:* one is via a paved road along the creek (on the south of the site plan, Figure 4.9), connected to the main street of Pangururan-Simanindo, and the other is from the Ferry port by Lake Toba. Additionally, this *huta* is surrounded by a large rice field and offers a beautiful view of the mountains on the west side of the map.

While this *huta* is relatively close to some important tourist attractions on the island, it was still relatively isolated from tourist activities until the arrival of homestay programs and the new port. There are 8 homestay units in this village (shaded in Figure 4.9), each with a different design, unlike those in other *hutas*. However, most houses in this *huta* did not receive homestay incentives because they were unsure about the government's long-term involvement and control. According to the architect in charge of this *huta*, after homestays began operating, those who initially rejected them are now expressing interest and hope for more homestay programs to participate in.



Figure 4. 10. Views of Huta Tapian (top) and Ambarita Ferry port (bottom). Photos by the author, March 2024.

Lumban Sitohang



Figure 4. 11. Views of Huta Tapian. Photos taken by the author.

Lumban Sitohang is adjacent to another huta that also offers homestay programs, Lumban Sinabang. They are adjacent, separated only by an alley (Figure 4.12). Following this alley to the west leads to Lake Toba, not far from these *hutas*.

In total, there are 14 homestay units in both villages (shaded houses in Figure 4.11). Additionally, their neighboring village, Huta Raja (south of Sinabang), just after the trees on the

south side of the map, is known as a traditional Ulos-weaving village. It was a tourist destination long before the initiation of the homestay project on the island, as their ulos is one of the main producers for other regencies among the Batak communities.



Figure 4. 12. Lumban Sitohang and Lumban Sinabang. Drawing created by the author.

Ulos are traditional fabrics used for various cultural rituals, such as weddings, funerals, and the birth of a new baby, as well as in everyday life. Although Huta Raja received a revitalization project and the state redesigned their houses more comprehensively, they are not a part of homestays. They specialized in *Ulos*, demonstrating the hand-weaving of the local fabric and displaying finished products in the alaman, or courtyard, so tourists could observe and buy them.

The tradition of weaving *ulos* is also a part of the everyday life of the Sitohang people. During my visit to Lumban Sitohang, many residents were handweaving in front of or under their houses, originally used for livestock such as water buffalo and pigs (Figure 4.13). In the immediate area around Sitohang, there are some structures that house machine weavers hired by locals to create fabrics with local patterns, but made by machine. It is a growing business in the area, employing immigrants from other regions to work as weavers, with the majority coming from Nias Island, known for its reliable, hardworking ethic. The weaving houses are located outside the Lumban Sitohang huta, with very basic structures that the locals have no control over. One of the homestay owners argued that these structures are not visually appealing, especially since tourists in Sitohang can see them immediately.



Figure 4. 13. Lumban Sitohang weaving activity in the *alaman*/front yard (left) and under the house/*bara* (right). Photos taken by the author.

Although this village shares a weaving tradition with Huta Raja, Lumban Sitohang does not market its products as Huta Raja does. Lumban Sitohang offers lodging through the homestay program, while the ulos is marketed individually. Before homestays arrived, Lumban Sitohang had no interaction with tourists' activities. Although it is adjacent to Huta Raja, a tourist attraction, the village was not a part of the tourism activities until the initiation of homestay development. The Head of the Village argued that this was also why Sitohang and Sinabang, the close neighbors of Huta Ulos, became homestay hutas to provide economic opportunities for all *hutas.*

The gap of attention and development between the two villages changes dynamics among the villagers, as expressed by one of Lumban Sitohang's residents, "*Huta Raja received a major makeover, huge funding, ... compared to us, ours is nothing. President Jokowi has visited that huta twice.*" In terms of social structure, all *hutas*, including Sitohang, Sinabang, and Huta Raja, still maintain the role of *Tunggane* Huta, with a strong influence on decision-making within the hutas, especially in matters related to tourism. In fact, these *hutas* play the most significant roles in *Tunggane* Huta during homestays, more so than in the other villages I visited.

Huta Sosor Nangka



Figure 4. 14. Views of Huta Sosor Nangka. Photos taken by the author.

Sosor Nangka, Sosor and Nangka, means 'extension of a *huta*' and a 'jackfruit tree.' The local leader told me that originally, there was a jackfruit tree in this *huta*, used to mark the location of this new village, extending from the original one up high in the mountain. Although Sosor Nangka is not far from Simanindo Raya St, the main street circling the island, the topography places the huta over 10 meters above street level (Figure 4.15, with blue notes on the key topography lines).

This topographical condition, along with a narrow alley leading up to the *huta*, makes it relatively invisible from the street, which is not a strong quality for attracting tourists. In fact, this *huta* was not a part of the homestay plans. Sosor Nangka's homestay coordinator argued that they received the homestay program because they had actively proposed it to the team and, after the team received rejections from nearby hutas, they stepped up to express their strong interest. Hence, they are now one of the homestays *hutas.*

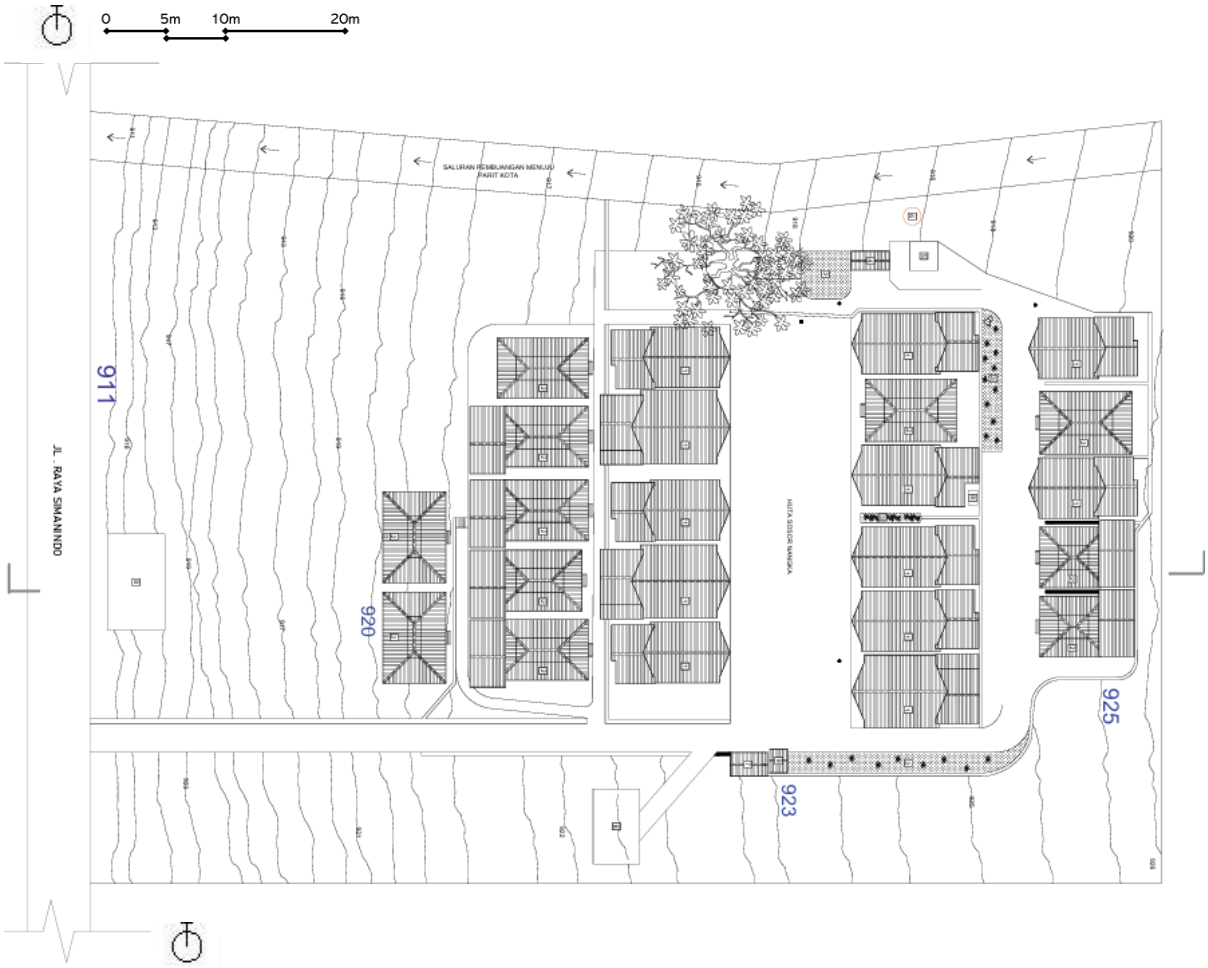


Figure 4. 15. Huta Sosor Nangka. Drawing created by the author.

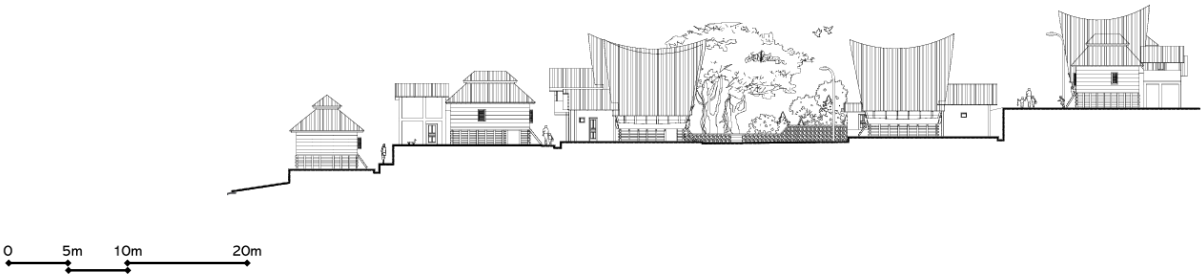


Figure 4. 16. Huta Sosor Nangka. Drawing created by the author.

Regarding previous interactions with tourists, the *huta* had none. The coordinator stated, "*Yes, we saw people visiting the beach spot close by, some tourists passed by on the streets, we know tourism has developed, but we had never had interactions with them.*" This condition reflects the social structure of Sosor Nangka's community, which remains strongly communal and traditional. The people are mostly farmers, with crops and rice sunbathed in the yard '*alaman*' in front of the houses, live with *Tunggane Huta* in the *huta*, and are still collectively celebrating 'meat day', when they would slaughter pigs and sometimes dogs to mark the end of the farming days of the week. Overall, the idea of homestays was

initially very foreign to the majority of people, except for the coordinator, who had migrated to other regions several years before finally decided to come back *huta*.

Additionally, conditions in Sosor Nangka were severely affected by the lack of water. Due to its higher elevation (Figure 4.16), pumping water into the village cost-effectively was challenging. For generations, the people of Sosor Nangka relied on Toba Lake for showers, laundry, and everyday water. There are two open communal baths by the lake, one for females and one for males. Every day after bathing in the lake, the villagers would bring home containers of water to store. They also often collect rainwater.

One of the local universities provided a public toilet in the *huta* through their community outreach program. Recently, the homestay coordinator organized the drilling of a deep well for their water supply, which is sufficient to meet basic needs, while laundry, which requires a lot of water, is still done at the lake. Due to a lack of water supply and economic constraints, this *huta* lacked toilets or bathrooms in its people's houses. According to the coordinator, "*That was why we wanted this homestay program so very badly.*"

IMPLEMENTING HOMESTAY

The massive structural integration of Batak architecture and culture into the state's prioritized homestay program in Samosir does not occur without extensive preparation and initiation. Formulated at the state level, the homestay program is a one-size-fits-all approach ready for nationwide implementation. The state then tailored the approach to the dynamics and contexts of each location.

With a focus on the implementation in Samosir, I dedicate this part to elaborating process of realization of such a top-down program in *hutas* communities in Samosir, with strong cultural and communal systems. Drawing on interviews with architects, local village governments, adat leaders, landlords, and homestay owners, I found that there are six stages in the on-site homestay implementation procedure in Samosir *hutas*. These implementation stages are general and apply to all *hutas*, with specificities and differences highlighted in relation to the *huta*'s context.

Stage 1: Selection

The first stage of implementation was Selection. It involved identifying potential recipients for the homestay projects (Figure 4.17). This procedure began with the village head's acceptance of the homestay programs brought to the regency by the regional/provincial governments. Before this offer, the homestay project team mentioned that they had identified some potential villages for the programs. Based on this list, the team visited the village governments and connected with them to further discuss the possibility. At the same time, the village administration also promoted their villages to the government officials as potential project recipients. So the interest was mutual, as

mentioned by one of the head villages, "*...We also took an approach [initiative], so we took them for a walk and showed them all potential areas [hutas].*"

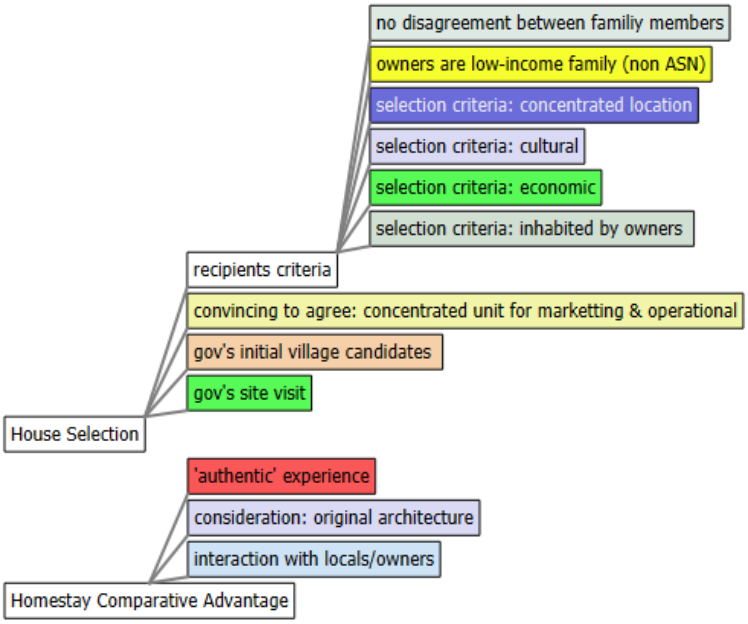


Figure 4. 17. Codes and categories of the first stage of implementation, the Selection.

Based on this first assessment, the homestay team decided which neighborhoods or *hutas* best met their criteria. The recipients' criteria relied heavily on economic and cultural factors. The recipients should own and inhabit the family's traditional houses, *Ruma Bolon*, rather than concrete-brick modern houses. The importance of a homestay with a traditional *Jabu Bolon* structure as part of the accommodation stems from the comparative advantages it offers. It includes the authentic Batak experience for tourists, close interaction with locals, and the original architecture of the *Jabu.* Therefore, in addition to offering mundane yet culturally rich experiences, the government argued that using traditional Batak structures as homestays also helps conserve them.

The selection prioritized houses within the traditional organizational system known as *huta.* With this, the government expected to have more concentrated units of *jabus* in one location. Therefore, locations with highly concentrated traditional buildings within their territories would likely be the recipients of the homestay programs, such as the Pangururan and Simanindo subdistricts. In addition, *Rumah Bolon*, whether uninhabited due to migration, unoccupied, or rented to outsiders, was not eligible for the homestay project unless the owner was willing to 'mulak tu huta,' a local term describing returning to the village or *'huta.'* It is because many traditional houses are left behind as family members migrate to the city.

Meanwhile, the economic criteria for homestay recipients require them to come from low-income families, as this project aims to strengthen the local economy and address the poverty issues faced by the Samosir people for generations. In fact, a study shows that Samosir has one of the highest

numbers of low-income families among the 10 New Balis (Ardyanthi & Kurniati, 2024). In line with this idea, members of hutas who were civil servants or worked for local governments were automatically ineligible to receive homestays. This sometimes meant that their houses were the only ones in the whole *huta* that were not homestays. In an interview, a participant expressed their opinion on this criterion, saying, "*It is always assumed that an ASN [a civil servant] is affluent, regardless of the reality.*" However, if they are interested in running a homestay in their houses alongside the rest of the village, they are welcome to do so at their own expense. There will be no assistance or intervention from the government.

Stage 2: Permit

The second stage is Permit. Once the site visit was complete and the team had an idea of which *hutas* and households they would offer the homestay programs to, they moved to the second stage of the implementation process: obtaining a full agreement from all potential recipients (Figure 4.18). Based on data analysis, the Permit stage encompasses several key codes and categories, as shown in Figure 4.18.

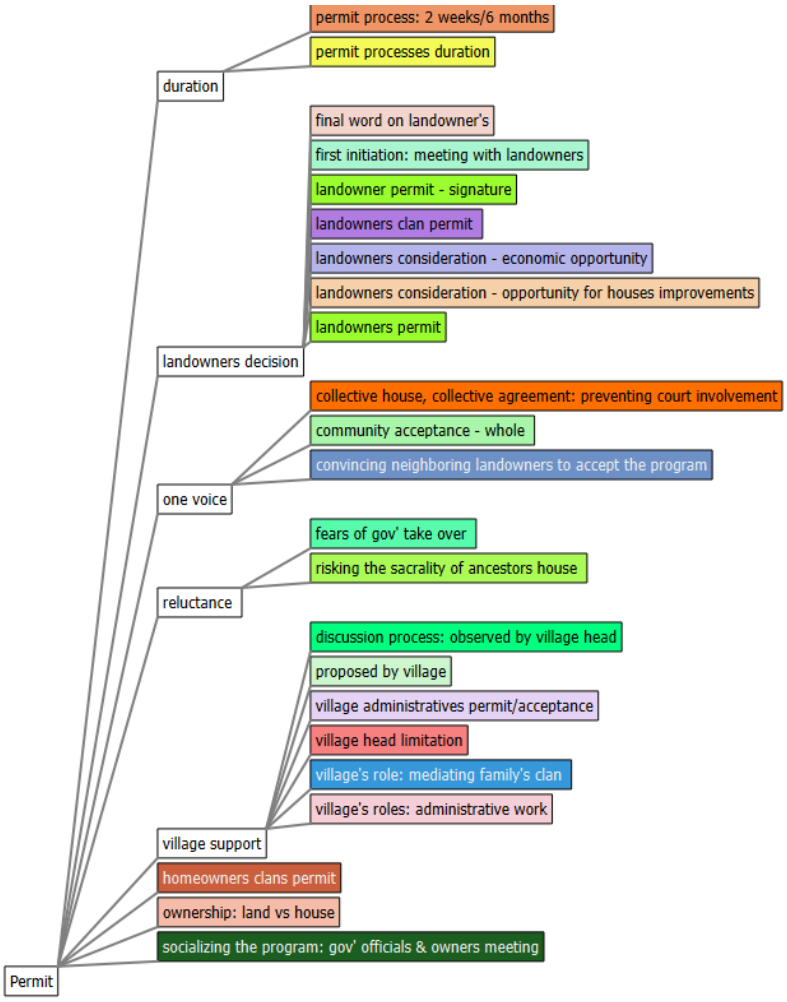


Figure 4. 18. Codes and categories of the second stage of implementation, the Permit.

Obtaining permits for homestays in these *hutas* requires the village government, as the smallest administrative unit under the district, to act as a mediator between the homestay team (government officials and architects) and residents. One *Tunggane Huta* explained the roles of the Village Head, or *Kepala Desa*, in local terms, during the initiation phase of the homestay project, and how it intertwined with the roles of *Huta* Head, or *Tunggane Huta*, as follows:

> *"It [the relationship between Kepala Desa and Tunggane Huta] is reciprocal, like this: if Kepala Desa did not agree [to receive homestay assistance], it could not have been proposed to us [the huta people]. It would have been redirected to the other village or huta, like that. So, for example, the ministry selected some hutas, they said, 'we want them [homestays] there [in this huta],' like that, the village head could not immediately say yes. Instead, he would say, 'Come, we sit down with that person [the Tunggane Huta],' and then they came to me."*

However, it is worth noting that there were different perspectives on the extent of the village officials' participation in the process. Once the team selected the locations, with the village head's assistance, the homestay team met with the locals to discuss the possibility of implementing homestays in their *hutas*. An interesting finding here is that the permits do not come only from homeowners, who will receive the homestay units in their domestic and private spaces, but also from the landlord, a male figure known as '*Tunggane Huta*.'

Tunggane Huta refers to the king of *huta*. Batak settlements, including those in the newly inaugurated Samosir Regency, prior to the institutionalization of village territory through the enactment of Law No. 5 of 1979 on Village Government, applied the traditional Batak system of government called huta (Gultom et al., 2023: 1128). Before the institutionalization of the village under state control in the late 70s, the *Tunggane Huta* coordinated activities in a village, especially those of agrarian functions to include overseeing schedules for farming, regulating planting systems, homogenizing seed types, and carrying out 'marsiadapari' activities (alternating service work in each field) and other activities to avoid social conflicts in a village (*Ibid*). Since the implementation of Village Government, the role of *Tunggane Huta* has gradually decreased and has been taken over by the Village Head and the village administration.

The *Tunggane Huta* position is inherited through the father's lineage. According to the process of opening a *huta*, *Tunggane Huta* was the founder, or the person who opened a new *huta* on an unoccupied plot of land and gradually transformed it into a compound inhabited by the clan family members (Hanan, 2012). It means that changes to houses, including those related to homestays, on land owned by the *Tunggane Huta* require his permission. Therefore, before the homestay team began interacting with the homeowners individually, it was mandatory to obtain permission from the *Tunggane Huta* in the village.

Asking permission from *Tunngane Huta* for any housing renovations has long been a common practice in the hutas. In the daily practice of building and renovating houses in Huta Batak, obtaining a permit from the *Tunggane Huta* is always the first step before any work begins. *Tunggane Huta* permission is needed regarding any house changes, including adding a toilet; the '*turun jabu*' or putting down the elevated backhouse to the ground; adding, expanding, or moving stairs of the house; changing materials of the backhouse from wood to bricks, for example; and any other types of reconstructions on other parts of the house. Obtaining permits from *Tunggane Huta* shows respect before commencing construction preparations, such as purchasing materials and hiring builders.

The permit procedure is a part of a tradition called '*Demban Napuran.*' The tradition is named after the tools used in the process: *demban is* the local name for betel leaves, while *napuran* is the local name for betel nuts. Therefore, *Demban Napuran* refers to the combination of betel leaves and nuts, which are commonly used items in Batak communities (Silalahi, 2019). They are symbolic offerings, often combined with rice and money, and are central to various rituals, including hosting weddings, welcoming guests, and obtaining permits. To do this, the *huta* people would go to *Tunngane Huta with demban napuran in their palms and offer money as a token* of gratitude for granting their requests. One of the villagers I interviewed recalled their experience doing *demban napuran* when they wanted to build a toilet around the kitchen area in the back house, as follows:

> "*...we asked permission from Tunggane Huta. You know 'demban napuran' right?... Here is how we do it: we put it in the middle, between these two palms, like in a praying position [simulating the hand gestures]. That's how we asked for permission. ... I do not know how much people gave, but we offered 500,000 IDR, which was a lot of money around that time. ...Well, they did not set the price, but still, you know, we wanted to do our best.*"

According to one of the *Tunggane Hutas*, in an interview I conducted on March 27th, 2024, the purpose of asking landlords for permission is to ensure that all construction in the huta is under control, so no one does as they please without considering the rest. It also aims to secure the huta's land ownership, including the land on which the houses stand. The rest of the villagers are only homeowners and are not permanent residents, unlike *Tunggane Huta's* direct lines.

While obtaining *Tunggane Huta*'s permit is the individual responsibility of the homestay construction team, the team organized the process. The initial discussion primarily took place between the project team and the *Tunngane Huta*, with the village head and villagers present. Based on the interviews with a *Tunggane Huta*, the final word to decide whether a *huta* receives homestays or not is his: "*... here [in Samosir hutas], we [Tunggane Hutas] didn't approve [of homestay], it stopped, that's it, all stopped.*" In fact, there are some cases where *Tunggane Huta* did not receive government homestay proposals in their *hutas*.

There are two reasons behind this rejection. The first is the community's lack of trust in the government. There is a fear that the government's intervention would risk the ownership of their lands and that, at some point, the government would take over: *"We don't want to accept that. Later, our house will become the property of the government."* This fear is not baseless. Historically, Indigenous Batak people have suffered various losses, including their customary adat rights to land and forests, and the government's seizure of millions of hectares of communal forest, uncultivated land, and forest gardens (Haug et al. 2017). More recently, Samosir's Indigenous communities, particularly the Tano Batak, have been actively fighting for their land rights against the more recent expansion of the paper pulp company Toba Pulp Lestari (TPL), which has often led to significant violence, deforestation, and criminalization of the Indigenous people (Sinambela, 2025).

Second, the concept of homestay is too strange for the *huta-ers*, including the *Tunggane Hutas;* they had difficulty comprehending their sacred ancestors' house becoming a 'hotel room' for strangers, not least for financial reasons. In this case, there is a fear of losing the dignity of the ancestors' house, or desacralizing it, which is considered a serious violation of the ancestors: *"This is our descendant's huta, it should be respected. If this becomes homestays, we never know what those tourists will do in our homes."* Seen as ancestors' houses, *Ruma Bolon and huta* embody the sacrality that comes with many restrictions on their use and alteration. In this respect, before making any changes to the house, it always begins with rituals to ask for the ancestors' permission, involving the sacrifice of livestock such as buffalo and pigs for everyone's safety.

For a *Tunggane Huta* to say yes to the homestay program, it also requires the approval from every member of the direct *Tunggane Huta* recession lineage. As the Batak community follows a patrilineal system, the current *Tunggane Huta*, who lives in the *Jabu*, should also obtain permission from his father's brothers and his grandfathers before agreeing to the program. *Tunggane Huta* in charge, who is the youngest male descendant from the original *Tunggane Huta*, is the one who stays in the *huta* to 'guard the base'. Before deciding, he informed everyone regarding the homestay plan and asked for their approval. In most cases, the current *Tunggane Huta* convinced the rest of the family of the program's benefits. Therefore, most of the *hutas* accepted it. In the event of rejection, other villages would replace them, as in the case of Sosor Nangka.

Tunggane Huta's considerations to welcome the homestay program in a *huta* vary; however, two main reasons are: 1) it was a rare opportunity to get assistance to improve their traditional Batak houses from the government, and 2) it's potential for economic benefits for the villagers is vital for the community, as many are low-income families. After *Tunggane Huta* granted permission to use the land for homestays, the homeowners then came into the picture.

> *"These all homestays are here because I said yes. All use my signature [for the permit]... Ask these houses [owners], they all need my permission, Tunggane Huta's. If I did not approve, it would not*

[happen]. Even the Village Head couldn't force it. That's the case in the whole hutas on Samosir island."

Similar to *Tunggane Huta*'s, obtaining permission from homeowners also required the unanimous consent of all family members. As this is a communal house with shared ownership, the ownership status often becomes a source of disagreement among family members, with not a few ending up in court, according to a village head I interviewed on March 28th, 2024. To prevent this, obtaining legal permits from both the landlord and the homeowners is vital. This process turned out to be the longest step in the homestay implementation, taking roughly 3-6 months across the hutas during the one-year program. It represents complex, intricate negotiations within the community to reach a unanimous agreement on the properties shared across generations.

To understand the permit attainment from homeowners is to understand their initial response and understanding, as advertised as 'homestay.' This investigation begins with a series of inquiries into local communities' understanding of homestays and what has been explained to them to help them ultimately decide to participate in the projects.

To most of the locals, the homestay was initially a new concept. Almost nobody understood what it entailed. The term 'homestay' itself is an English word, which is understandably very foreign to the ears and tongues of the locals. To reach locals, the state sometimes introduced homestays under a more common government term, such as 'sarana hunian wisata' (tourism residential facilities, abbreviated as 'sarhunta'). *Sarhunta* is a program characterized by the central government's aid, especially in tourism-prioritized regions, to help prepare and provide inhabitable houses for accommodation businesses, targeting low-income households, usually referred to as tourism residential facilities.

However, during the program's initiation, they used the term 'homestay' daily. In fact, the government put up a 'Homestay' sign on the front door of every house receiving assistance under the project. It helped the term 'homestay' to be gradually embraced by locals and finally become part of everyday language. It is interesting to note some of the pronunciation adaptations of the English term 'Homestay' to the local tongues. They embrace and adapt it into their own words, ranging from *'hom-ste,'* *'hom-stai,'* to *'hom-sti.'*

The initial confusion about the homestay application was beyond a language barrier. The program resistance even came from far more crucial factors. It challenges the traditions and customs of the local community regarding the roles of the *huta* and the grand house 'Ruma Bolon' as the place to go home to for all the clans' members, including those migrating and living in diaspora, or, in local terms, *rantau*. While the practice of hosting guests and family members in *Ruma Bolon* is not a new thing to the Batak community, as it is one of the cultural responsibilities of *huta* residents, the homestay practice remains very foreign and even unnatural to some.

This is due to monetary involvement. If hosting people is a source of pride and represents the valued, close, tight kinship within the family, receiving money for hosting evokes a different sentiment in some. It erodes the value of loyalty and dedication to the culture, and instead tints it with 'pamrih'—the expectation of benefit—and a transactional mindset. Statements from villagers such as, *"Why do we have to serve strangers in our own home?" "We do not live off of it" and "That is not how I support my family"* represent such sentiments towards the homestay program in Ruma Bolon.

To address such issues, the involvement of key figures such as the *Tunggane Huta*, Village Head, and/or other respected members of *huta* residents was crucial. They helped provide an understanding of how a 'homestay' works and the benefits it offers, including additional income, home renovation, and cultural pride promoted among tourists.

Another issue contributing to the challenging permit process was the program's pressure to secure approval from every potential recipient in the same *huta*. One of the respondents expressed the pressure they experienced with:

> *"We were gathered first, being questioned, who already got permission, who had not. Those who did not need to pocket their permission first. Only then could the homestay begin, as all had to be simultaneously. It couldn't be, for example, that five people were okay and one wasn't; it meant 'no' for everyone in the huta. Therefore, everyone must agree. ... if someone doesn't agree, they [the homestay team] said that they would cancel and give it [homestay] to other hutas."*

In other words, during this permit process, if one family was not yet fully convinced to participate in the program, their neighbors helped them see the benefits. The *Tunggane Huta* also played an important role here, explaining the advantages of homestays to those initially reluctant. Similarly, in some cases, a village head also mediated between a family member and their elders. Finally, once everyone agreed, the homestay team prepared the legal paperwork for signing. The documents needed signatures from the homeowners and from the *Tunggane Huta*.

Stage 3: Design

After the homestay team obtained and documented all permits, the design process began (Figure 4.19). Architects in charge of the design production were selected and hired directly by the governments. An interesting attempt to bring the design process closer to the Batak communities was to hire Batak architects, who are Batak and members of the South Sumatra Chapter of the Indonesian Architect Association. In practical terms, using Batak architects helped ease the architects' introduction to the communities. Reflecting on my interviews with homeowners, when asked who the architect in charge was, they mostly remembered the marga: *"He was Simamora,"* or *"it [the architect] was Sinurat*, with both *marga* or clan names, rather than one's first names.

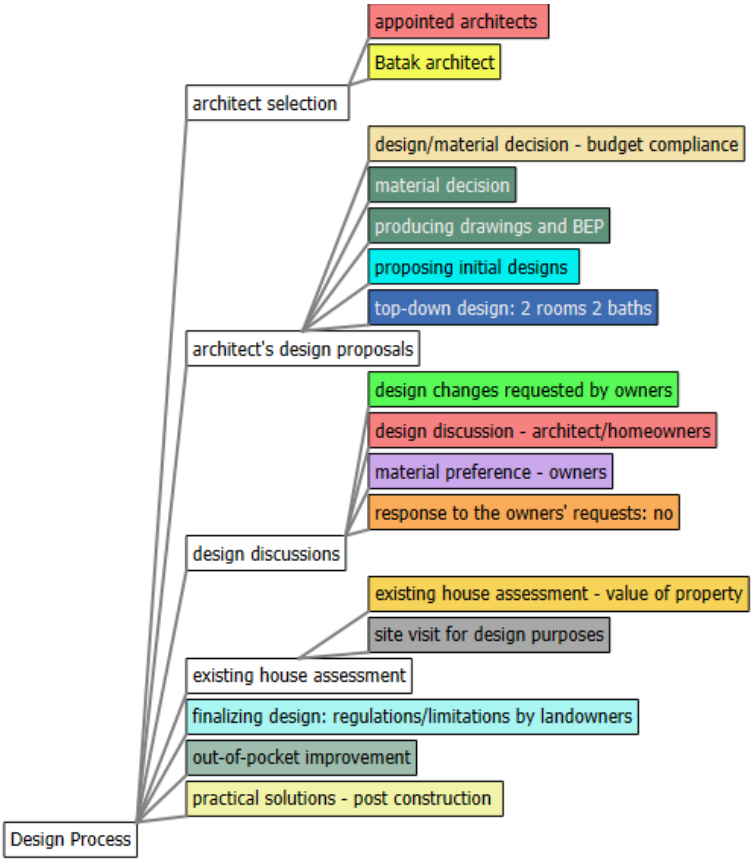


Figure 4. 19. Codes and categories of the third stage of implementation, the Design.

The design process started with a preliminary assessment of the existing houses. The assessment includes estimating the property's value (the houses) and identifying any necessary changes/renovations to upgrade the houses into homestays. As a guideline, the government's requirements for a house to be a homestay cover three points. *First*, the house needs to have at least two bathrooms, with toilets, and two enclosed bedrooms. Here, while in everyday life the front *Jabu Bolon* also serves as a bedroom, it is not counted as one bedroom unit. Examples of this are as follows: if the house had only one private bedroom and one bathroom, then the homestay team added another unit for each; if houses had no private bedrooms, then the homestay team provided two; and if some houses already had two bedrooms, the team would add more if the land allowed; and so forth.

Second, as the homestay prioritized houses with traditional structures, the *Jabu Bolon*; therefore, improving the *Ruma Bolon* conditions is mandatory. Improvements to the *Jabu Bolon* are mostly minor renovations, such as beautifying the houses and their façades. The purpose was to present a well-maintained, aesthetically pleasing image of dwellings to tourists. Fourth, while accommodating tourists' needs through visual refinements of the *hutas* was important, the guideline also emphasized the preservation of this endangered traditional architecture. The government also regulated the homestay team to make no major changes to the *Ruma Bolon*.

Based on these relatively simple guidelines, the architect began to design. However, in their homestay design process, the architects attributed the restriction on design options mainly to budget

constraints. The team specified that the budget allocated per house ranged from 90 to 120 million IDR (~7,500 USD). In this sense, financial constraints limit the potential for design innovation in the house. Hence, the renovations may vary across houses depending on their initial conditions.

With these considerations in mind, the architects hired and appointed by the governments, instead of by the homeowners, began designing the homestay units. Outcomes of the design process include architectural drawings of the proposed final design, rendered drawings, a budget estimate plan (BEP), and Detailed Engineering Designs (DED) for each house accepting a homestay unit. This process was independent and free from the owners' intervention. Although the degree of creative independence varied from architect to architect, the majority of the design process across *hutas* was direct. It centered on the architects, keeping the owners out of the loop.

After the designs were ready, the architects, along with officials from the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, presented them to the owners. The homestay team distributed all physical drawings to the owners, but in some cases, the owners claimed they had never received them. I argue that this flow of processes and people involved/excluded solidified my hypothesis about the top-down design of homestays: formulated and finalized by government-appointed architects, homeowners had very limited interaction and involvement in the design. The time-sensitive nature of this project also pressured the design process to move quickly and be ready for immediate use, leaving less room for negotiation and customization.

Once the architects completed the design, they entered into the design discussion phase (Figure 4.19). It is a stage where architects return to the *huta* with their proposed designs and present them to the *huta* people, including the owners and, sometimes, especially *Tunggane Huta.* In this process, while the owners reviewed the drawings (though, in most cases, they lacked the capacity to do so), the state did not provide sufficient time or resources to accommodate changes arising from the owners' aspirations. It was due to time pressure, as the previous stages had already taken too long.

Another factor that influenced the communication of design was the limited ability of local communities to read such specialized architectural drawings. In some cases, homeowners relied on architects' verbal descriptions of their units' designs, while others put their trust in flashy, rendered drawings presented to them. However, in my opinion, these two media for communicating design were not sufficient. Drawing from the interviews with homeowners, not a few admitted they had no understanding of the design at all and, unfortunately, only began to see it during construction.

In cases with a strong landlord figure, such as Lumban Sitohang, *Tunggane Huta* also participated in design decisions for homestay units in his *huta.* Even though homeowners requested some design changes from the architects, the designers would go to Tunggane Huta to check with him whether those changes were acceptable. And if the answer were no, then it would not be accommodated. In this case, in addition to the architect's voice, *Tunggane Huta* also wielded significant power in transforming houses into homestays, further positioning the homeowners at the peripheries.

A statement by *Tunggane Huta* resonates with this, "*...that house [pointing at it] the owner asked to expand to the side, one meter more than what it was drawn, and I said, "Nope. Reduce it." And they [architects] made it just like I told them.*" It shows *that Tunggane Huta, as a landlord, has significant control over the houses on his land and makes considerable effort to ensure that the development of homestay units aligns* with his understanding of what a good *huta* is. It includes equal-sized houses, with no particular unit outshining the others, and ensuring unoccupied lands for future generations, allowing them to live and build in the *huta* by encouraging the present generation to build modestly.

On the other hand, in *hutas* with more independent, less communal communities, where the role of *Tunggane Huta* is merely symbolic or historical, the design discussion did not occur. The process was less complicated. Many homeowners did not have the chance to evaluate the design, and it seemed like a given. So, all they could do was allow the construction to proceed at the expected pace set by the homestay team.

Stage 4: Construction

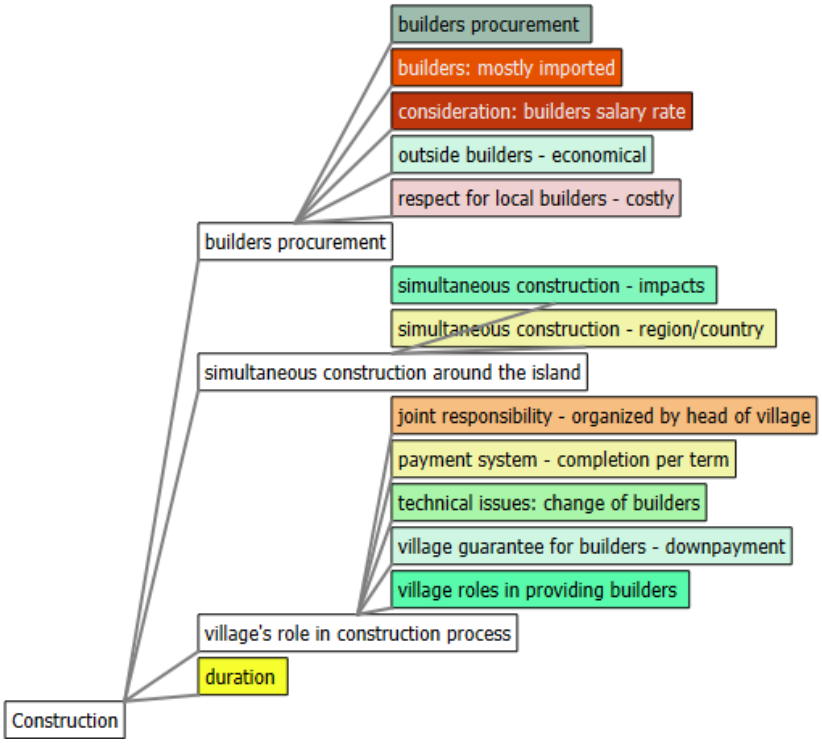


Figure 4. 20. Codes and categories of the fourth stage of implementation, the Construction.

I want to highlight three key aspects of the construction process. As part of a national-scale program with a year-long completion period, the construction process faced several challenges, particularly due to limited budget and the availability of builders and building materials. All the factors interplay in the construction process, informing how it proceeded. Because the national program has the same timeline across the country, regions receiving homestay projects began construction around the same time, which drove up demand for building materials. Therefore, it is

worth paying attention to the dynamics of construction preparation, including the mobilization of construction workers as needed.

On Samosir Island, with the highest number of homestay units, this was especially the case. Due to the high demand for builders in the region, most of the builders constructing the homestays in the *hutas* came from outside the island, including Tebing Tinggi, Medan, and Siantar, neighboring regencies, and even from Java. These builders were known for their quick work and low labour costs. Compared to local builders, they were much more affordable and better suited to the budget set for the individual homestay unit. One village head who helped recruit outside builders explained:

> *"... local builders are very different; they operate differently. At that time, the total construction cost was only 120 million [IDR per house], and the [local] builders asked for 70 million for wages only. It wasn't doable. Not possible. [While imported builders'] salary was only 20 to 25 million to make one unit. It was actually too cheap, if we consider the type of work they do. But they were willing to do it. So, we welcome them and provide basic temporary accommodation during their stay here. ... Perhaps because it was difficult to find jobs in the city, when there is an opportunity here, they grab it right away. You know, something like it's better than nothing."*

The wage gap between outside and local builders is also due to the locals' great respect for their builders. It has been a tradition to treat builders as part of the family, not in a transactional, industrial way. One of the homeowners stated that: *"We have a great respect for our builders; we provide food and cigarettes daily during their work, and also we sacrificed pork for the ceremony before the construction begins. It is the tradition."* In addition, because outside builders' per-project wages were lower than locals' per-day wages, hiring outsiders was more cost-effective and better suited to the set budget for homestay projects. Consequently, while local builders receive high respect from the community, they have less involvement in the homestay project.

However, when I tried to investigate further the lack of local builders' involvement in the project, a somewhat defensive response was given as, "*...they were some local builders too, like [that house] near the entrance, it originally used a local craftsman, they changed them later on due to some misunderstanding.*" Overall, hiring local builders was the case in only a few instances, while importing builders covered almost all aspects of construction and locations across the island. Hiring outsiders was structural and massive, "*...we provided them with basecamps [temporary housing] during the construction, and we [the village head] managed to pay the downpayment for these outside builders with 1 million IDR per person so that they have something to leave for their family when they were here, away from their family.*"

In terms of the actual construction work, the duration varied from village to village, from 1 to 2 months. It depended on how many builders were working in the given *hutas*, as explained, "*...if you bring in a lot of builders, it would be finished quickly.*" Considering the relatively short construction period, it was clear that the longest stage was the house selection and permit process. A participant elaborated

on this as follows: "*Because, as far as I remember, this program had to be completed in a year. So, with the construction here, it was only one month, then the rest was the initiations at the beginning, you know, house selection and permits (!). Oh, that [permit] was endless.*"

Additionally, because all villages were building homestays at the same time and shared the same timeline for the homestay project, finding builders was not the sole issue. The construction did not occur only in the Pangururan-Simanindo districts, where the *hutas* under study reside, but also in other villages in the regency and even in other regencies and provinces across the country. Therefore, another critical problem was the material provisions, including ordering, payment, delivery to the locations, and distribution to each house and *huta* for the construction. The measures taken in each village varied according to the village's social structure and the village administration's involvement in financing. Given the importance of finance in this project, I dedicate this discussion to Chapter 8 to provide sufficient elaboration on this aspect and its relation to the issue of agency implementation.

Stage 5: Hosting

Having the structure complete is only half the way to achieving the goal of the homestay project. It is now time to complete the room with furniture and some decorations. For furniture, the homestay team planned to provide two to four sets of mattresses with pillows and blankets, and two sets of linens, all dedicated to the guest's room. Likewise, each homestay unit received a two-door cabinet dedicated to storing linens and blankets when there are no tourists, or for tourists to use during their stay. Distributing these basic items helped the local communities to get the homestay running.

Despite similar construction and items provided for homestays, the interior décor varies across the units. While some offer minimum facilities, those provided by the homestay team, others choose to further beautify their units on their own. An example of this is units that cover the wooden floor, add bed frames for the mattresses, and a small table in the corner, paint the interior walls a specific color, decorate with curtains, hang wall decorations, and cover the interior roof surface with fabric. Figure 4.21, consisting of three photos, shows the visualization of these examples, taken from one of the units at Huta Sitohang. As shown, the room looks clean, well-maintained, comfortable, inviting, and, at the same time, informative and educational, creating a sense of the location's cultural richness. In my opinion, this homestay is one of the best I have visited and stayed in during my visits to Samosir.







Figure 4. 21. The interior of a homestay unit with decoration and personal improvements. Images taken by the author, March 2024.

In terms of human capital, with assistance from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Industry's team, locals received workshops, training, and lectures on how to host tourists, prepare the unit to meet the set standards, and manage procedures for marketing, booking, and payment for the unit. The ministry even dedicated a sub-page on its official website for homestay reservations. Here, they provide information on the homestays, their locations, and how to make reservations through the listed homestay coordinators' details. The coordinators are then responsible for distributing the guests to all homestay units. It includes encouraging the villagers to participate and be excited about hosting tourists.

The roles of homestay coordinators became important in the communities. The person for this position is usually active, respected by the community, and committed to the program's success. The appointment of coordinators varied across *hutas*. Some have their *Tunggane Huta* serve as the coordinator as well. Others chose a member of the *hutas* who was engaging, demonstrating initiative, and could coordinate and organize the community. Of the six *hutas* I studied, four had *Tunggane Huta* as the coordinator, while the remaining two chose other members to serve in that role.

Across all *hutas*, *with Tunggane Huta* serving as homestay coordinator as well, there is an interesting dynamic in how this role evolves. While at the beginning the reservation and distribution of guests centered on *tunggane-huta*/homestay coordinators, this gradually changed, and their roles

began to decentralize as more homestay owners became aware of the power of social media and more familiar with marketing strategies. In addition, during the initiation of a homestay project, such as the permit and design process, some villagers felt that *Tunggane Huta* took the opportunity to reclaim their authority as landlords more aggressively than before the homestay. It made them uncomfortable with the *Tunggane Huta* also controlling the everyday management of guests. A participant mentioned that,

> *"He [Tunggane Huta] prioritized those who were in his [social] circle, who are close to them. For example, he gave guests to the neighboring huta, instead of to us. So, we [the participant and another homestay owner] decided to start our own marketing. You know, using Facebook, TikTok, putting it on Google Maps, and relying on the power of word-of-mouth marketing as well. All possible ways. It was not too bad. I received a lot of guests and sometimes had to give them away to others because I was fully booked."*

This trend, while varying in the intensity of social dynamics among villagers, occurs in all hutas that initially had Tunggane Huta, which also served as the homestay coordinator. It includes Siallagan Parhapuran, Huta Tinggi, Huta Tapian, and Lumban Sitohang. In one of these villages, for instance, a new figure emerged, serving as a coordinator, handling marketing and distributing guests among their group. In other words, there are two groups of homestay organizations within the same *huta*, which inevitably creates some tension among its people. Likewise, the other *hutas* gradually shift from relying solely on *Tunggane Huta* as the coordinator to organizing their own reservations through individual marketing efforts. Specifically, on *Huta Tinggi*, a member declared their separation from the *Tunggane Huta* homestay system due to what they claimed were some misunderstandings from previous guests:

> *"I'd better not have any guests at all to avoid being played like before. We hosted guests from a government agency, and they [coordinator] said that because it was government, we did not get paid. Well, I do not think that was the case. Not fair, because we still had to buy water, water is scarce here, and we still needed to pay electricity bills. So, I said no thanks, I will manage."*

Unlike these four *hutas*, Sosor Nangka chose a community member as the coordinator. The coordinator is the one who initiated the process of putting together a proposal for the *huta* to be one of the homestay program recipients. Given the limited initial interaction with tourism, as previously described, the homestay operation in this *huta* remains heavily reliant on the coordinator. The communities, unlike other *hutas*, are not as active as others on social media, not least in using it as a marketing platform. Therefore, the publication of these *hutas* is mainly on Google Maps. It was also how I found this *huta*'s location during my grand tour while selecting my studies.

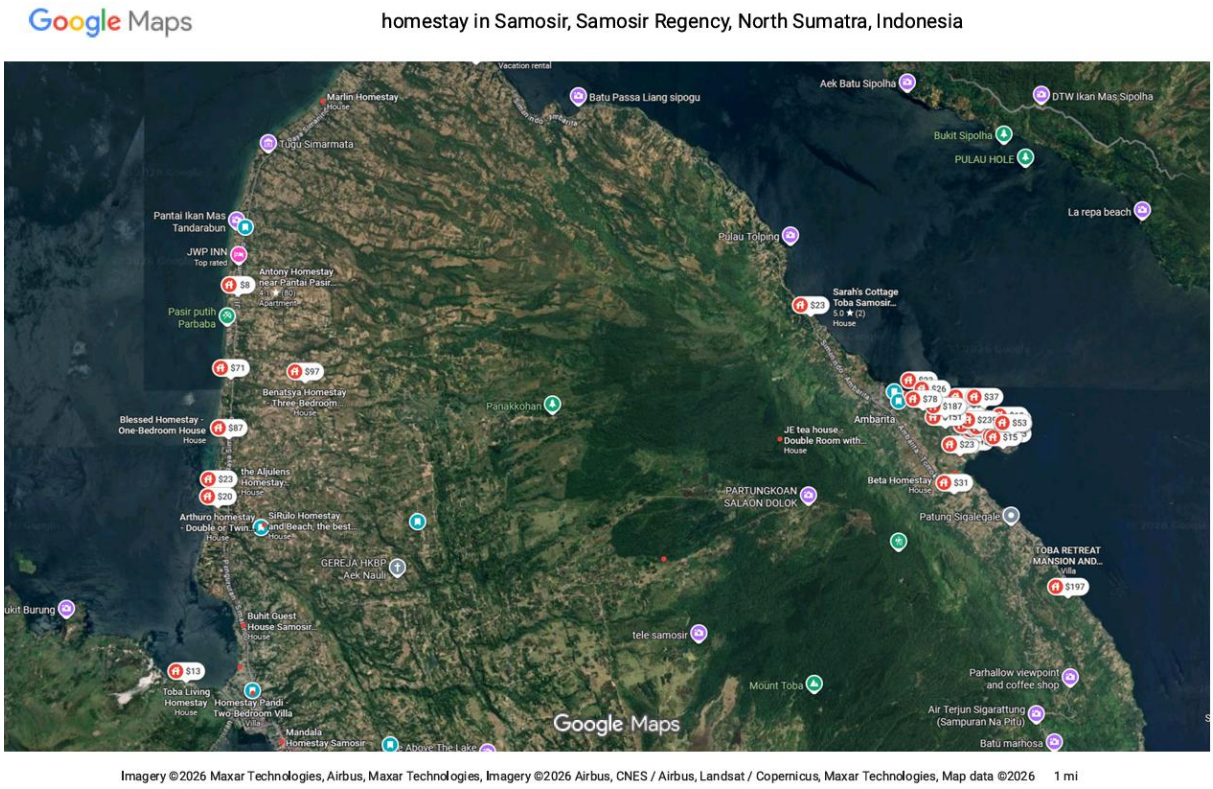


Figure 4. 22. Distribution of homestays and other types of accommodations in Samosir. Image taken from Google Maps search, 2026.

Similarly, Huta Parsaoran I also relied on Google Maps for its marketing. In fact, I initially got in touch with the homestay owner through the details provided on Google Maps. As there was no established position for Tunggane Huta from the beginning of the homestay initiative—he was living elsewhere, and only his wife and adult daughter lived in the *huta*—and no appointed coordinator, this village manages its homestay units individually. There is no centralized organization like in other villages. Most of the owners posted their units on Google Maps themselves.

Finally, while it is true that in most cases, the initial homestay coordinators and their roles reduce over time, from initially applying to all homestay units to only a small portion of the communities, it is also the case that the figure of a 'homestay coordinator' multiplies. It is no longer an individual-centered figure but rather a shared role among the members. In all *the hutas* under study, more homeowners are participating in the management and operation of homestay units. In this sense, I argue that the responsibility is distributed, shared, and democratized.

On the other hand, at times, this multiplication of new leaders vis-à-vis homestay coordinators also creates tension and new dynamics within the communities. This is especially the case for the hutas with a strongly involved *Tunggane Huta*, particularly those who openly exercised their power during the initial stages of homestay implementation. Finally, as homestay activities increasingly become a part of locals' everyday lives, the coordinator's role becomes more central to the community. The 'homestay coordinator' is a new role with control and responsibilities closely tied to

locals' lives. This title creates a new leader, a new center of leadership, within the *hutas*' social structure of the *huta* communities.

MAPPING THE AGENCY

The previous two sections have laid the groundwork for understanding, first, the setting and initial socio-cultural landscape of the six hutas, and second, the implementation procedures of the homestay project in these communities. This section presents a synthesis of both in a graphic that combines information on the stages and the human agency involved (including those that are overlooked). This part aims to identify the critical positions of local agencies across the implementation stages and to assess their potential influence on the outcomes.

This discussion focuses on locating the local agency within the dominance of the 'government team' in realizing the homestay projects in Samosir *hutas*. Figure 4.23 shows the actors involved in every stage of homestay implementation. The Figure shows the agency's categories in four groups: Homestay Team, Village Administration, *Tunggane Huta*, Homestay Coordinator, and Homeowner.

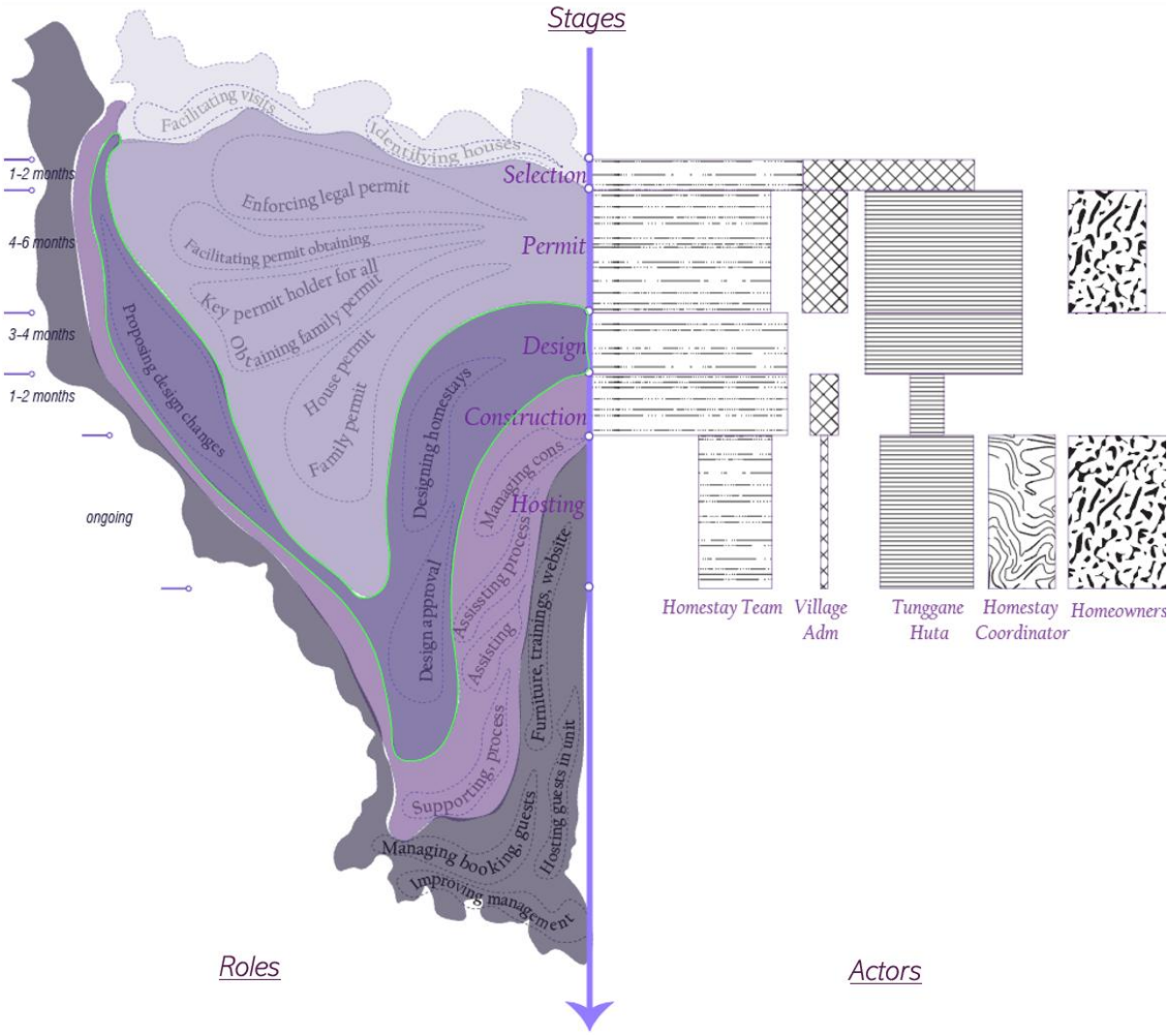


Figure 4. 23. Stages, actors, and roles in homestay implementation. Graphic created by the author.

As I am using the peripheral perspective in this study, the Homestay Team comprises external agencies and actors, in addition to, and perhaps in contrast to, the local communities of Samosir. The team includes project managers, engineers, contractors, and architects, as well as government-appointed officials to oversee implementation. In this study, I refer to them as the 'homestay team' unless otherwise specified, such as when using 'architect' to refer specifically to the design process.

In contrast to the external actors, I use the term 'local agency' to represent the other three groups of actors involved, as shown in Figure 4.18. They are the *Tunggane Huta*, the Homestay Coordinator, and the Homeowner. The 'local' term means that the groups belong to and are members of the *hutas*' residents in which the homestay programs are implemented. Not to be confused with Village Government; although the district officials reside in the area, they are not necessarily residents of the given *hutas*. Their relationship to the selected hutas is professional, as it is through their occupation. Although they belong to the same category, these three groups have different magnitudes of roles, influence, and involvement within and across the processes of the homestay projects.

Additionally, there is an intermediary actor: the Village Administration or Village Head. Figure 4.23 shows that the village head's presence across the stages is relatively lower than that of others, as indicated by the bar's size. Village administration, as part of the state's system, primarily serves as a liaison for the homestay team coming to the region to connect with locals. Although the village governs the districts and the people who reside in the *hutas*, its role in the homestay project is limited to assisting and mediating between the two groups. Examples of this include 'assisting the homestay team during their initial assessment' in the Selection stage; 'facilitating legal permit gathering' during the Permit stage; 'assisting construction preparation' in some *huta*; and, finally, during the *hosting* period, the village helps and offers additional support to the homeowners (Figure 4.18). Overall, the village participated in the on-site stages held in the *hutas*, thereby excluding the Design stage.

In terms of the Homestay Team, their roles are significant in almost every stage, especially during the production stages, including *Selection*, *Permit*, *Design*, and *Construction*. Team involvement is lower during the *Hosting* stage. Although less dominant, they remained involved in the *Hosting* process, especially at the beginning, providing training and workshops and furnishing homestay units with basic bedroom furniture.

On the other hand, the local agency, especially *Tunggane Hutas* and Homeowners, mainly became involved in the second stage, the Permit, and remained involved throughout the rest of the process, Design and Hosting. Figure 4.23 shows their significant presence in these stages. *Tunggane Huta* has significant involvement in almost all stages, except Selection. *Tunggane Hutas* were especially influential in the *Permit* procedure, as they owned the *hutas*. Similarly, this is also the case for the local

agency 'Homeowners,' which owns the houses into which the homestay units are inserted. In other words, all local actors participated in the *Permit* stage. Local agencies also actively participate in this phase to obtain the required government permits. This was a defining moment for the *hutas*, determining whether they were eligible to move forward with the program.

Here, the homestay project became a contact zone where local communities and their respective roles met, collaborated, and navigated the dynamics in response to the state team's presence. Homestays, as contact zones, create new dynamics among locals while also maintaining and navigating existing social structures. Therefore, I identify Permit as one of the stages where local agencies hold a strong position within the overall agency composition.

The strong presence of all local agencies was also evident during the *Hosting* stage. After the government's initial involvement, these actors have been in charge of running the homestay business to this point. *Tunggane Hutas*—in some cases with Homestay Coordinators—and the Homeowners together organize and manage the home-based accommodation business in the *hutas*. The relationships among these managing actors form and transform continuously as they progress through the hosting process. During fieldwork, my participants mentioned that the government's role had recently resurfaced, introducing a new element of business: taxes. News of the new, imposing tax ripples through the system of local agencies that have so far been re-established.

As both stages, *Permit* and *Hosting*, experienced the strongest presence and involvement of local agencies, I believe that these two parts of the implementation create unprecedented social dynamics among the actors responding to the government's involvement. Taking this into consideration, along with the dynamics within each stage as previously explained in the chapter on "Implementing Homestays," the *Permit* and *Hosting* procedures often involve discussions of control and ownership of the generationally shared properties, as well as communal and socio-cultural relations among residents.

Meanwhile, the local agency's weakest position occurred during the Construction stage. Although *Tunggane Hutas* were briefly present during the construction stage, especially in the preparatory work leading up to on-site construction, their roles were not consistent across the selected six hutas. However, when they did present, their roles were highly significant in shaping the flow of work. Likewise, the homeowners were barely involved in this stage.

Although Figure 4.23 shows that homeowners were present during construction, I view its impact as insignificant, as demonstrated by the more voided pattern on the bars. This change in pattern represents a different dynamic among the actors. The voided bar of homeowners shows that their presence was evident through attempts to participate in the process, yet they had no impact on the outcomes. The lack of homeowners' involvement and impact stems mainly from their exclusion from the project's financial management. Therefore, in addition to socio-cultural dynamics and

property ownership, 'money power' will be a focal point in discussions of the social implications of homestay implementation.

Finally, locating the agency positions and their relationships reveals that local agencies are most present at some stages, the *Permit* and *Hosting*, and least present at others, such as *Design* and *Construction*. The presence or absence of local agency during the production phases of homestays reflects the extent of their involvement. This part of the study examines the extent of the local agency's involvement and control, and how they shape the project's outcomes and the communities that live with it. The project's outcomes encompass three aspects, which are the foci of the second sequential part of this research (Figure 3.3, p. 70). As stated in the research design sequence, the second part aims to assert the impacts of local agencies' involvement on the 1) architectural conditions of the homestay products, 2) spatial experience of homes, and 3) social implications of homestay production and management.

The first examines the agency's impact on the trajectory of homestays' physical realities, tracing their evolution from creation to construction. It involves three stages: design, design communication, and the built structure. The second assesses changes in locals' experiences of place/home after the homestay. The third delves into the social implications of homestay production on the community. It focuses on the 'communality' tradition of Batak society, particularly regarding property ownership and socio-cultural relations.

CONCLUSION

This chapter addresses the first research question: the implementation of homestay, including its stages, the actors involved, and their roles. In Samosir, there are six stages of implementation; this section briefly summarizes them.

The first is the Selection of the *hutas* or villages and houses. The actors involved here are the homestay teams, comprising provincial ministry personnel and architects hired by the state, and the Village administration, which serves as the primary gateway to local communities. The homestay team visited the villages and assessed the feasibility of transforming them into homestays. The second stage is the permit. Here, the Village head introduces the homestay team to the *Tungganes*, *i.e.*, the landlords, to gauge their interest in homestay. This is a defining moment because if *Tunggane* said no, regardless of what the rest of society wants, it would not happen.

The permit stage involves many actors, including, of course, the homestay teams, the village head, the *Tunggane*, and the homeowners. As both the house and the *huta*'s land are family property, the permit also involves other family members, and it must be unanimous. Therefore, extensive negotiation occurred during this time. In fact, it was the longest stage, lasting from 4 to 6 months.

Interestingly, of all the six stages, Permit is the only stage in which homeowners' involvement takes on significant meaning.

The design stage is the third one. It was relatively short compared to the permits. The design process was very direct and top-down, with the architect providing one-size-fits-all designs for the *huta*. So, it is safe to say that homeowners were not involved in design decisions, even though it's their homes. On the contrary, the *Tunggane* was quite influential and even disapproved of the designs, asking the architect to change them. It is because he "*needs to maintain the harmony of all houses in his huta.*" —I repeat here to make it clear that the landowner and homeowner are different; the landowner owns only the land, not the buildings.

The next stage is Construction. This phase mainly involved the homestay team, with little participation from the village head and *Tunggane*, and some homeowners who continued to fight for their change requests through the builders. In this stage, the state's team exercised the most control, including financial aspects such as purchasing building materials, hiring builders from outside the island (as local builders were largely not involved due to wage-rate issues), and paying them.

Here, the homeowners were almost like spectators, witnessing all the hassles and construction work with no control over them, even though the homes were theirs. Many villages and houses suffered unpleasant consequences of this system, especially when the builders left their homestays unfinished due to "*homestay running out of money.*"

The last is hosting, which is an ongoing process. Since its launch at the beginning of 2021, the people involved in hosting activities have evolved—I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 5
DESIGN

This chapter delves deeper into the *Design* element of the homestay project. Specifically, in this chapter, I examine the extent of Indigenous people's involvement as recipients in the Design phase of homestays implemented in their houses. The previous chapter established that the homeowners participated in this Design stage; however, their involvement was negligible. I dedicate this chapter to understanding the relationship between the local agency's involvement and the design products built in the communities' homes. In other words, this chapter focuses on tracing the built homestays back to the design process, considerations, and decision-making.

This chapter consists of two parts. I organize them inductively, starting with the specifics of each unit and then moving to a more general perspective. The first part covers the design specificities of each homestay unit under study, and the dynamics surrounding the unit's production and construction. The second part summarizes the physical transformation from a '*home*' to '*homestays*,' the lessons learnt regarding the design and the buildings' adaptability to the tourism comfort of tourists.

HOMES *VS* HOMESTAYS

The designs of the government-sponsored homestays focused on promoting the use of traditional Batak Jabu as the image and on using extended houses as design experiments. Centering the physical transformation on the back house, rather than the traditional front *Jabu*, creates spatial similarities with the house, providing homeowners with a sense of comfort through its physical familiarity. It also gives homeowners a sense of relief that they can maintain the unique architecture and sacred significance of their family home, the *Jabu Bolon*. This section will focus on the spatial and physical transformation of the homestay houses, both the traditional front and the extended back.

Based on the general conditions of the *jabus* in the *hutas* under study, the insertion of homestay units into these houses brings some changes to the existing houses. Design guidelines for house transformation in the homestay program, as previously described, should meet two goals: 1) to conserve the traditional Batak house, implying no major changes made to the *jabus* that would damage their authenticity, and 2) to accommodate both guests' and inhabitants' spatial needs and comforts by ensuring that the back house has a minimum of two bedrooms and two bathrooms. These changes,

while obviously physical, also affect the house's spatial organization to accommodate both tourism and domestic use.

The changes made to houses were mainly to meet the homestay standards. The practice of change varies from one house to another. To understand the changes and patterns across houses, I dedicate this section to exploring the transformations and generating patterns. I compare their existing conditions during my visits with the initial conditions prior to the implementation of homestays.

I analyzed these transformations by categorizing and grouping changes consistently present across the houses into consistent groups. I organize this section by the *hutas.* Additionally, in the discussion, I provide illustrations and draw samples from each group. Figure 5.1 shows the catalogue of the mentioned drawings.

To demonstrate the pattern of physical transformations in the houses, I used documented drawings of homestays, including floor plans, elevation views, and sections, as the media. I color-coded the drawings and treated them as visual texts. The coding process focuses on differences between the houses before and after the homestay injection. Identifying the changes is the first step in analyzing and uncovering patterns that occurred during the transformation process.

Huta Parsaoran I

House 1

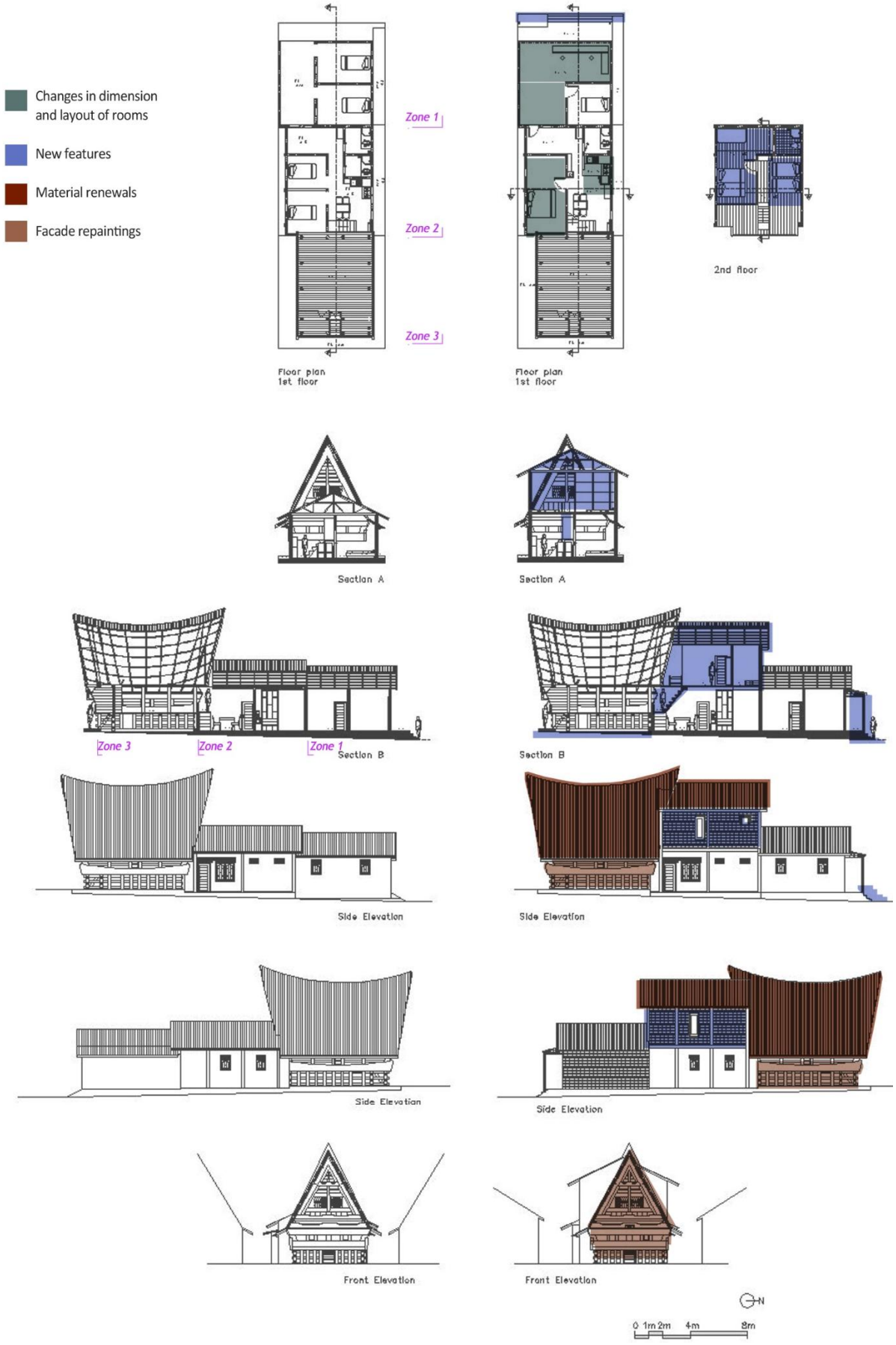
Figure 5.1 presents two sets of drawings illustrating the house's transformation. Each set of drawings represents the home from before and one after the homestay. Additionally, one set includes floor plans, 4 sides of elevations, and 2 sections.

Figure 5.1 identifies several changes occurring in House 1 in Huta Parsaoran 1. House 1, referring to the ground floor plans, consists of three zones: zone 1, the front part facing the street; zone 2, the middle one; and zone 3, the traditional *jabu* orienting to the interior *huta* or the '*alaman*'.

Zone 1 initially consisted of a one-bedroom apartment for lease. Around the time the homestay program arrived in this village, the renter changed and the lease was transferred to their extended family. Since then, the new renters have responded to the streets and taken the commercial opportunities that have arisen. The new renters use some portion of the house, the front part, as a store selling mobile phones, SIM cards, and other electronic devices.

Meanwhile, the owner and their inhabited zones 2 and 3. Zone 2 initially was for bedrooms and a kitchen. Zone 3 was the wooden traditional house and remains the same. Based on the floor plans in Figure 5.1, the house's total footprint remains unchanged, with only a slight increase due to the addition of a staircase at the front of the house, which in this case is the store in Zone 1. The footsteps in Zone 1 add less than 1 m to the street, providing greater access and a smoother transition from the sidewalk to the store's front porch.

Figure 5. 1. Changes in House 1 of Huta Parsaoran I, comparison between before and after homestays. Drawing created by the author.



Other changes found in the drawings include the room layout, as indicated by the positions of interior walls within Zones 1 and 2. In Zone 1, the initial two-bedroom house has been converted into a one-bedroom unit, with the front bedroom disappearing. It provides more space for the circulation/living room and for the front store, as the function shifts from mainly residential to mixed commercial-residential, with a focus on commercial uses. The circulation area changes from 2.6 m to 3.3 m, adding around 0.7 m (~2.3 ft).

In Zone 2, the house's layout changes considerably with the removal of the interior wall separating the two bedrooms, merging them into a single large bedroom designated as the main bedroom. There were initially two bathrooms across the bedroom. However, during the homestay implementation, they removed one of the bathrooms, leaving only one, to make more space for the kitchen area. Previously, the kitchen was a part of a small 3.4m x 3m area, along with the dining room and dish racks. By demolishing one bathroom, an additional 1.6 m (5.3 ft) of space becomes available for a new sink and cooking station, as well as for circulation around the stairs connecting Zone 2 to both the newly constructed second floor and Zone 3—the traditional wooden house *Ruma Bolon*.

Furthermore, the most significant change in this house is the addition of a second floor over Zone 2. The second-floor plan is mainly divided into two large areas. First, a large bedroom with a bathroom in the corner, right above the one on the ground floor. Second, a living room adjacent to the bedroom. Stairs connecting it to the first-floor Zones 2 and 3 open into this space.

From the section drawings in Figure 5.1, considering the vertical connectivity of the whole house, the stairs flight from the second-floor landing passes through the intermediate landing, directly in front of the wooden wall of *Ruma Bolon*. There is a small door attached to it, which is the traditional house's back door in Zone 3. From this landing, the stair flight turns left, descending to the kitchen and the back door of Zone 2, leading to the outside of the house from the kitchen area. Therefore, Zones 2 and 3 are all connected, whereas Zone 1 is not. Although the door connecting Zone 2 to Zone 1 exists, it is not accessible to give privacy to the lessee. The owner then permanently closed the connecting door.

Based on the section drawing, the house's floors are at three different heights. The first floor, covering Zones 1 and 2, is at ground level, while the second floor is 3 m (9.8 ft) above ground. Between these two floors is the living space of Zone 3, the traditional wooden *jabu*, located at an elevation of +1.1 m above ground, or around 3.3 ft (see section drawings in Figure 5.1). Another note from the section drawing: there is an addition (in blue) right at the foot of the wooden house (Zone 3), a concrete casting that covers the ground and extends 1 m beyond its perimeter to create a small terrace around the house.

In terms of materials, the new second floor of Zone 2 is made of concrete and brick. The second floor and the interior wall between rooms, however, are entirely made of wood, except for the bathroom. The new bathroom is the same size as the old one downstairs. Additionally, the fixtures selected by the homestay team for the new bathroom are slightly different from what local people are

familiar with. The homestay team provided a toilet seat for the new bathroom, while the old one is a squat type. The purpose is to give the new building, the inserted government-sponsored homestay unit, a more modern atmosphere for tourists.

Figure 5.1 also shows the material changes made to the traditional house during homestay construction. Elevation drawings in Figure 5.1, shown in dark brown, highlight changes in roof materials. While still using the same material, the zinc sheets, the homestay team replaced the old zinc roofing with new ones due to the old roofing's deteriorating quality. The new and fresh image is the goal of this material renovation. Similarly, they replaced roofs in Zone 2. Another material change is the folding door on the back elevation of the house, replacing the previous brick walls.

In addition, some changes are evident in the house's façade, with the exterior walls repainted in the same color tones across the homestays to create harmony among them in the village. Figure 5.1 shows the change in paint color from light brown to the exterior walls in elevation views. It shows that only the wooden house has new paint. The color selection for Ruma Bolon homestay for this house and other houses in Huta Parsaoran 1 is a combination of brown, white, and black (Figure 5.2). Black is for the poles, *sobbaho* wooden planes and *loting-loting*, while brown is on the wall and *adop-adop* the horizontal plane on the front wall, and white is in between. These colors are known as the traditional colors of the Batak people (Warden, 2023), which helps make them familiar and acceptable to locals.

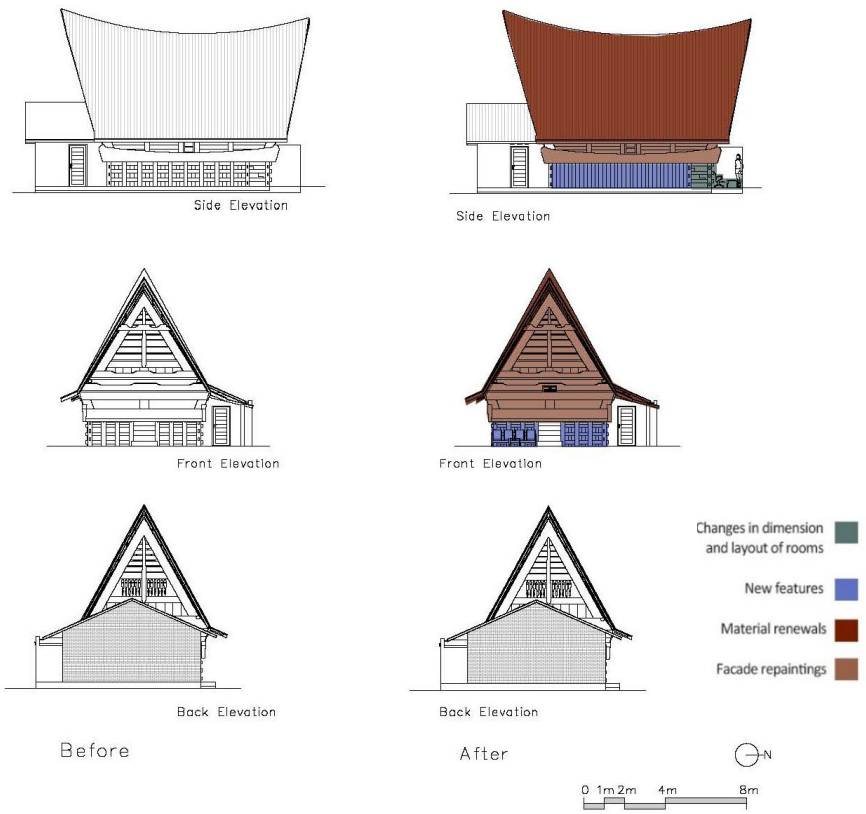


Figure 5. 2. Façade repainting of House 2. Photo taken by the author.

House 2

Figure 5. 3. Changes in House 2 of Huta Parsaoran 1, comparison between before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.





House 2 does not undergo any expansion beyond the existing exterior walls, unlike House 1. Top views of the roof perimeter show no additions or subtractions to the building masses, as shown in Figure 5.3. Changes in this house mainly occurred within the house's perimeter—the interior part of the house. Figure 5.3 illustrates these changes, encompassing 1) the room layout, 2) new spatial divisions, 3) additional rooms, 4) material renewals, and 5) façade repainting on exterior walls.

In House 2, the main modifications occurred on the ground floor of the traditional jabu, with a brand-new floor added at -0.3 m (-1 ft) below ground level (floor plan, Figure 5.3). Unlike House 1, this house has an additional floor below ground level, whereas House 1 is above ground. This additional floor uses the space beneath the traditional *jabu*'s habitable space, which was previously used for livestock. Therefore, to differentiate this new floor, I refer to it as the 'lower ground' floor.

The lower ground changes significantly. A comparison of the floor plans before and after the homestay highlights these differences. The blue shading in the floor plans in Figure 5.3 indicates the new features added to the house. A space beneath the traditional wooden house, which was initially abandoned and historically used to house livestock such as buffalo and pigs, has now been transformed by the homestay project into a new house for the inhabitants.

This new lower ground floor is divided into three parts, including two bedrooms and one open space serving as a living room. To accommodate the minimum human living space on this floor, the room's initial height between the ground and ceiling, 1.2 m (3.9 ft), must be increased. Therefore,

they dug the ground for about 0.5 m (~1.6 ft) deep to raise the room's height, bringing the room's free height to 1.5 m (~4.9 ft).

Moreover, the interior walls separating rooms on this floor are made of plywood sheets. The same materials are used for the exterior walls behind the main structural wooden posts, which are attached to the wooden posts supporting the traditional house; the interior side of the wall is made of plywood sheets, while the exterior side is made of wooden boards placed between the posts (Figure 5.3). This additional lower-ground house also requires a foundation to support the concrete floor and plywood walls. Casting the concrete floor changes the house's foundation, giving the wooden posts that were initially standing on the stones fixity and rigidity.

Regarding interior connectivity between the additional floor and the rest of the house, a door is provided on the lower ground floor—as shown in the red rectangle on the floor plan—to connect it to the side of the house. Unlike House 1, the extension house of this unit is not only on the back of the house, but also on its side. The owners can access the side extension directly from the front, giving this house with 2 front doors, one on the wooden house and one on the side extension.

The provision of a homestay in this unit also affects the extension house, with major changes to the rooms' layout. The floor plans in Figure 5.3 illustrate this change with green shading. The side house, with a width of only 1.7 m (~5.6 ft), initially served as a hallway, allowing users to enter from the side door without going up the elevated wooden *jabu*, and led to the back of the house, where the kitchen and dining room were. Likewise, before the homestay, the back house included the kitchen and dining room with no wall separating them, and a stair flight at the back led up to the wooden house at 1.2 m (~4 ft) above the ground, where the owners used to sleep at night.

In contrast, after the homestay and tourist visits, the homeowners decided to convert the back house into an additional guest room for rent by moving the dining table and cooking station to the side house, directly into the hallway, which significantly reduced the circulation space. Due to limited hallway space, one side of the dining table is attached to the wall, and chairs are pushed under the table when not in use to allow for circulation. These changes is in green shading on the floor plans in Figure 3.5. To further enhance privacy in the new guest room, a brick wall was added, and the stairs were removed and reoriented to face the side of the house rather than the back as before.

In addition, the builders added a bathroom on the back (blue shading on the floor plan in Figure 3.5), sharing a wall with the existing bathroom (no shading). The insertion of a new 1.40 m x 2.15m bathroom (4.6 x 7 ft sq) in the back house reduces the length of the rest of the room from 5.20 m to 3.8 m. It consequently leaves space for a new bedroom measuring 3.8m x 3.6m, with a significant reduction in circulation around the door and stairs.

Another change is in the tradition of a wooden *jabu*. The interior layout of the house also transforms from an open bedroom to a new enclosed guest room, with more beds and new furniture in the rest of the room, such as a coffee table, drawers, and chairs, as shown in green on the 1st-floor

plan. Minor changes, such as repainting the walls and changing the roof material, are also being made in this house. The interior walls of the traditional house are also painted a bright pink. Some parts of the wall are also decorated with pink wallpaper (shown in light brown shade in the section drawing in Figure 5.3). The owners also bought extra mattresses for their guests. Such small renovations and additions were completely the owners' initiatives. It signals strong initiative and dedication from the owner, as this type of beautification is not a part of the government-funded homestay program, as stated by the participant, *"We saved up, and one by one we bought these mattresses, we painted the wall, and so on. We want it to be beautiful."*

Regarding the exterior walls of the traditional house, the wood is painted in a combination of black, white, and brown, similar to House 1. This paint change is shown in elevation views of Figure 3.5. This color combination is the theme for all the houses in this *huta*, including those that did not participate in homestay programs. Finally, as in House 1, the builders replaced the old zinc roofing with dark brown roofing on this house (front elevation, Figure 5.3) to create a more modern image.

House 3

House 3 has into three zones: zone 1, orienting the street; zone 2, the extension house encompassing two storeys; and zone 3, the traditional wooden house. The floor plans in Figure 5.4 show that Zone 1 does not exhibit significant changes in room layout or dimensions.

In Zone 1, the arrangement of two bedrooms adjacent to a living room and a motor repair shop at the front of the house remained unchanged after the homestay construction was completed. However, a small modification to the front (Zone 1) of the house involves replacing materials in the bedrooms' walls. The side elevation views of the house before the homestay (Figure 5.4) illustrate this combination of materials: brick on the lower half and wood9999en planks on the upper half.

Views from after the homestays show a change on one side of the wall. The builders replaced a 6.8 m (22.3 ft) section of wall, from half-brick, half-wood to full brick. They also applied this change to the interior wall between the two bedrooms. Meanwhile, the rest of the walls in Zone 1 remain the same.

In Zone 2, both the first and second floors underwent major interior changes. An additional bathroom was located right beside the existing bathroom on both storeys (in blue on the floor plans, Figure 5.4), with dimensions of 2.5m x 2m (8.2 x 7 ft). The added first-floor bathroom reduced the circulation space at the side door, with flight stairs leading up from the outside. It permanently closed the door. Another change resulting from this addition is the disappearance of open laundry and washing areas on the first and second floors, respectively.

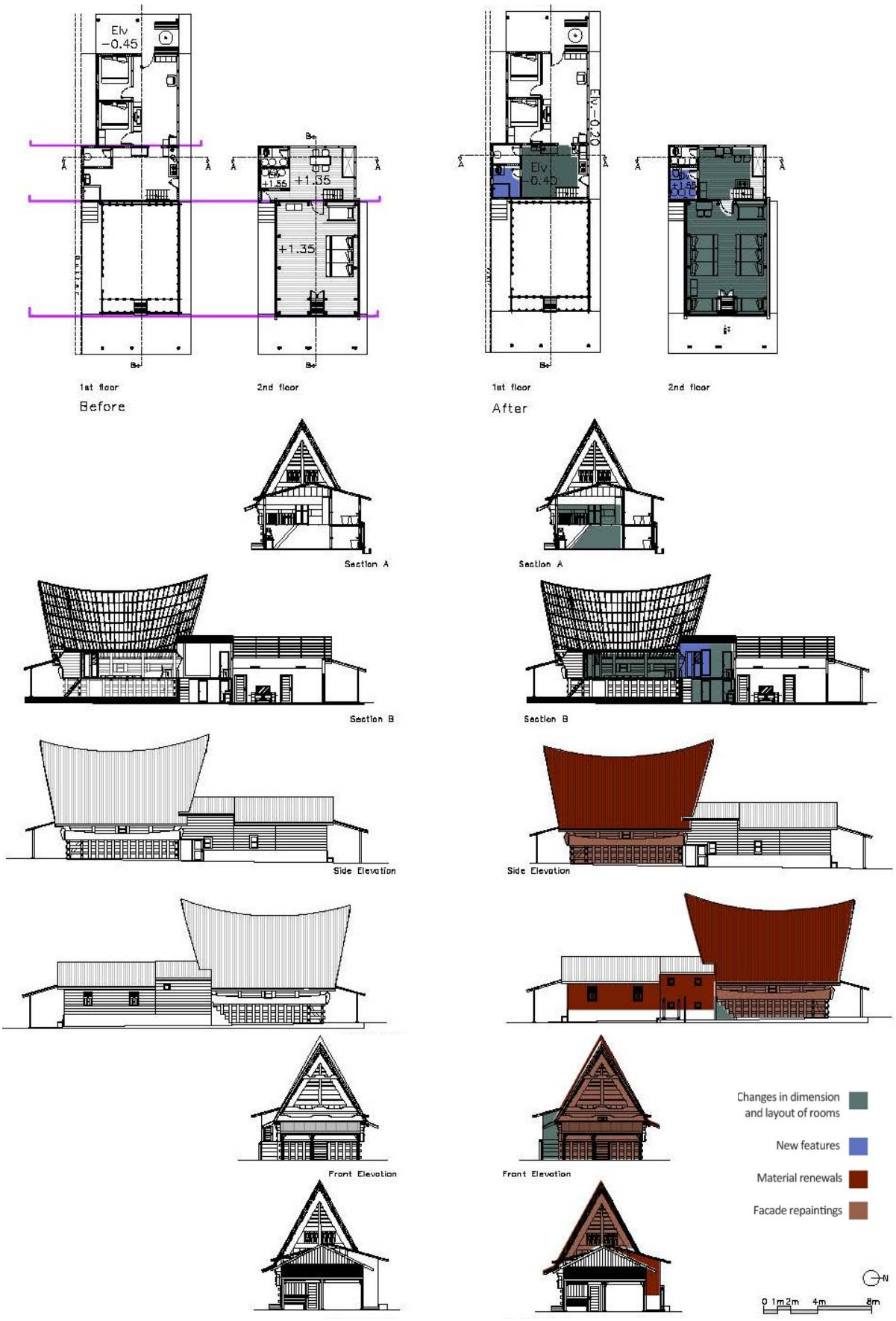


Figure 5. 4. Changes in House 3 of Huta Parsaoran 1, comparison between before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.

The construction of the homestay removed the second-floor laundry room. On the first floor, however, it is moved across the new bathroom to the area under the stairs (shown in green on the 1st floor plan, Figure 5.4). It caused other furniture, such as gas stoves, dining tables, and dish racks, to move around the room. On the second floor, the green shade indicates a change in furniture. The space in the green shade was initially designated for a dining table, and after the homestay, it was designed to accommodate a kitchen, dining table, and a dish rack for guests.

Zone 3 finally only experiences changes in its interior and façade. The interior of Zone 3, which was previously used for residential purposes, has been redesigned to accommodate tourists, resulting in changes to the room layout and furniture, including adding mattresses, removing a temporary wall, and installing a new drawer and a coffee table. In addition to interior changes, the face of the house is also updated. Zone 3, which is the traditional wooden house, also received treatment, including new paint and the replacement of old roofing materials with the same type but brand-new. This beautification on the exterior wall aims to create a harmony with other homestays in this village, like other houses. This transformation is good because it does not change the exterior, although some changes have occurred inside.

Huta Tapian

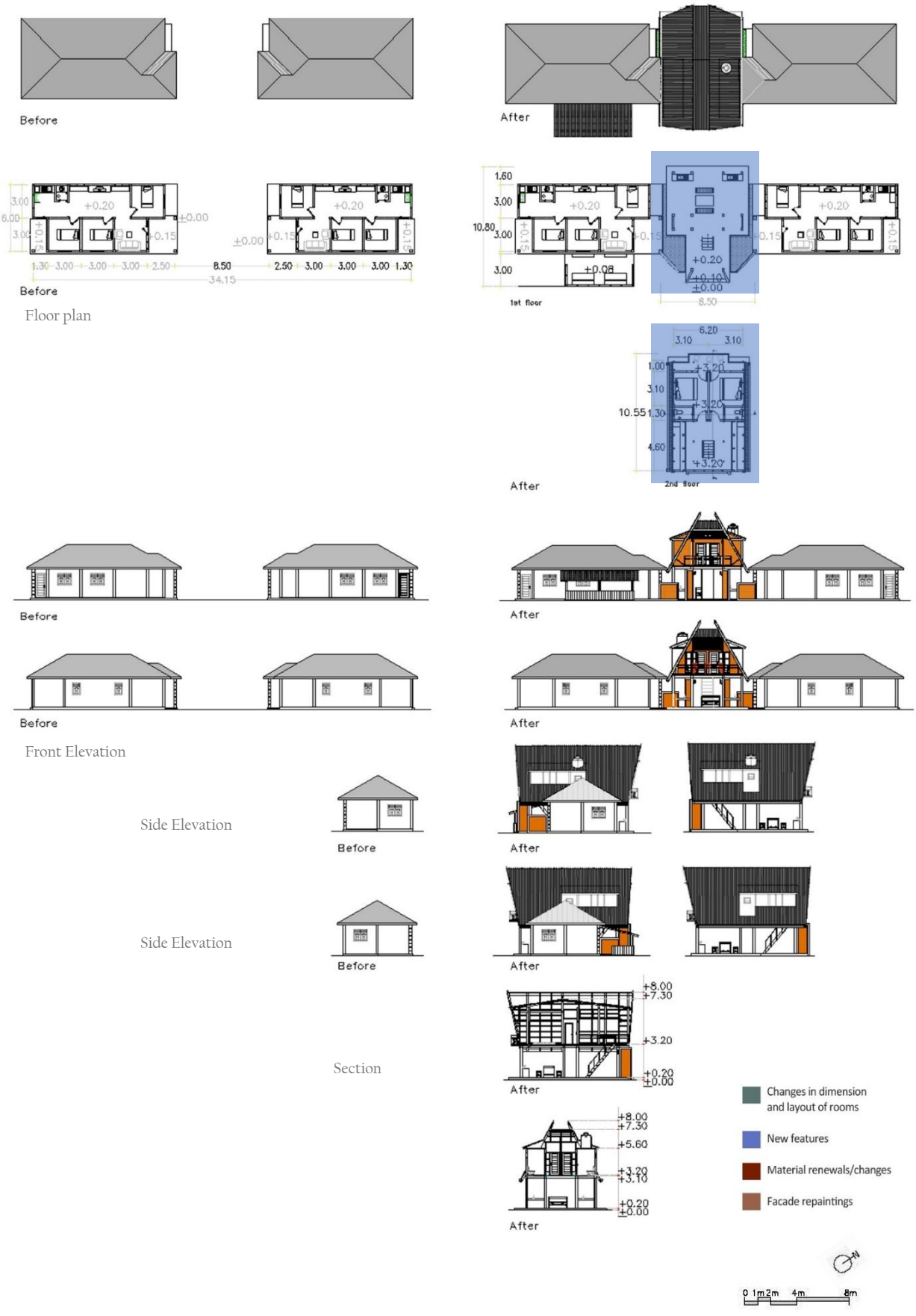
Huta Tapian offers a different case of physical transformation for houses that received the homestay program. The most distinctive design approach is in House 1 in Huta Tapian, located at the *huta*'s entrance, just outside the compound (Figure 5.5). This homestay is a brand-new building that connects two modern houses, made of bricks and concrete.

Figure 5.6 shows this new structure, highlighted in blue. The two houses were in very good condition and had just recently finished their renovations. As the houses are in good condition and there is a free plot of land between them, the architect decided to build a new building dedicated solely to homestays. Therefore, the existing houses remain unchanged, and homeowners' everyday lives will not be directly affected in terms of spatial use.

This arrangement is manageable because the homeowners are related, brothers. Because the owners can keep their houses unchanged, the architect has greater design flexibility in creating a *Ruma Bolon*-based homestay. The architect, with his consent to have his name here, Freddy IAI, argues that his work is quite different from that of other appointed architects in other villages in the Samosir region.

The existing houses are identical in layout. In the floor plan in Figure 5.5, the blue shading connecting the two existing houses represents the new homestays under construction. On the first floor of this new building, there is an open space with hip-tall walls along the sides, leading to the front doors of the existing houses. These segmented half-height walls also provide users with privacy from the outside, as the homestay is located on the roadside and is relatively crowded.

Figure 5. 5. Changes in House 1 of Huta Tapian, comparison between before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.



This ground floor is for gathering, as shown by the placement of a concrete-made table and benches on either side of it (red rectangles in Figure 5.6). In the sitting area, two kitchen sets and sinks face the rice fields at the front (green rectangles, Figure 5.6). It also indicates that the space is for cooking and dining for homestay guests. There are no walls surrounding this ground-floor plan, allowing users to see the surroundings. On this floor, the ground also includes the stair flight that connects this open space to the second floor, where the homestay units are located.

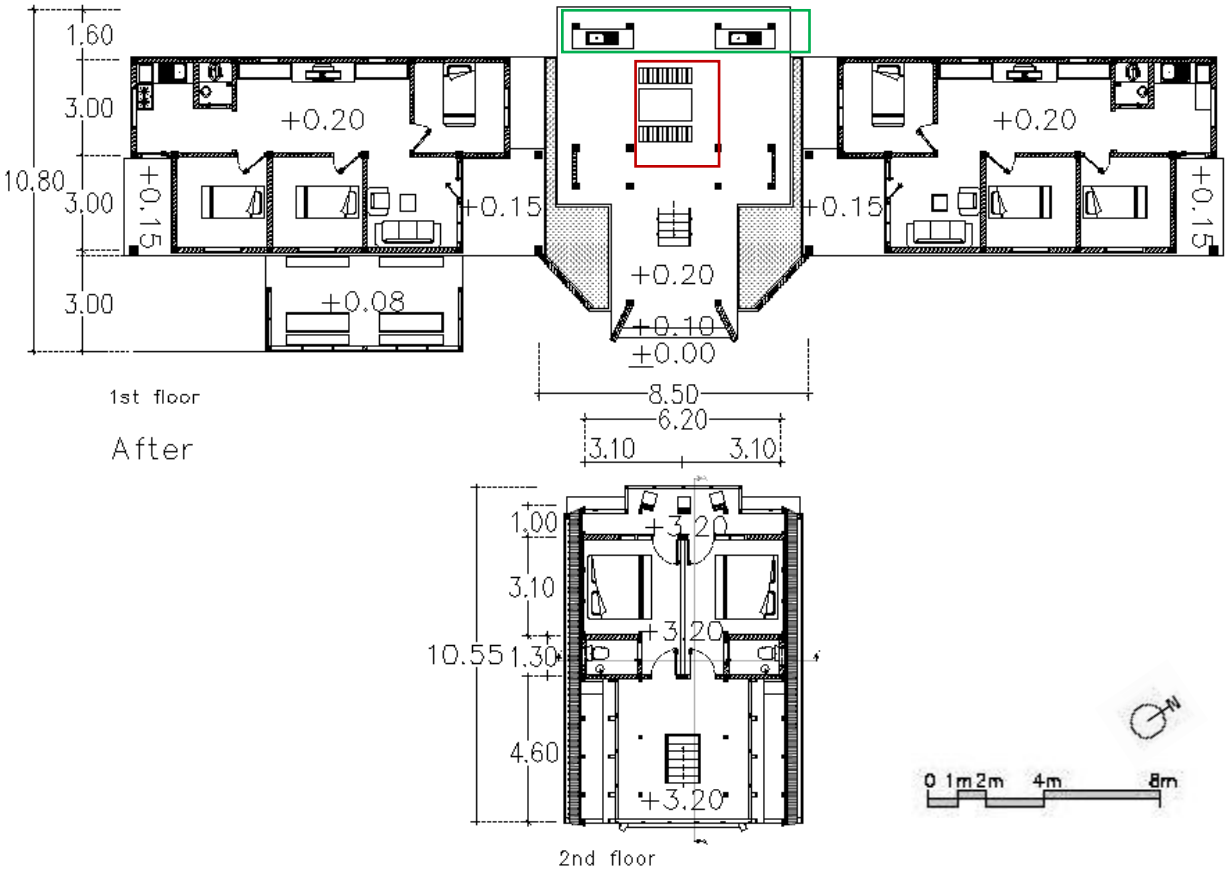


Figure 5. 6. Floor plans for House 1 of Huta Tapian. Drawing created by the author.

The second floor has two parts: the front porch and the homestay bedrooms. The porch is located in the stairs area, connecting it to the ground floor. The porch, with a quite spacious room measuring 6.2 m x 4.6 m (~20 x ~15 ft sq), is again an open space facing the creek across the road. Railings are put around the building to provide safety and create a place to relax while enjoying the view from a height of 3.20 m (10.5 ft) above ground (Figure 5.7, left image).

Another outdoor space is also available at the back of the bedroom units. Unlike the front porch, these back balconies are accessible only from the bedrooms, making them private and available only to homestay guests. The back balconies are relatively small, measuring 1.6 m (5.3 ft) wide by 3.5 m (11.5 ft) long. The back balcony is a shared space, accessible from both bedroom units, so guests from both rooms can use it simultaneously without physical separation. Additionally, the builders

added chairs and a small table along the railing in this space to create a relaxing spot for guests to enjoy the cold weather and hot beverages while taking in views of rice fields and distant mountains (Figure 5.7, right photo).



Figure 5. 7. Views to the second-floor front porch (left) and from the back balcony (right). Photo (left) taken by Gunawan Fonides, 2024; and right taken by the author.

Moving to the interior part of the homestay (Figure 5.6), the bedrooms are located between the front porch and the back balcony on the second floor. The two bedrooms are identical in both dimensions and layout. Measurements for each bedroom are 4.40 m x 3.10 m (14.5 ft x 10 ft). Furniture is very limited, with only a queen mattress. Meanwhile, the bathroom is located by the front door and attached to the exterior walls on both sides of the building. Bathrooms have a length of 1.3 m (4.3 ft) and a width of 1.80m (6 ft), leaving 1.3 m (4.3 ft) for the circulation area around the front door, bathroom door, and pathway to the back door.

Front and back elevation views in Figure 5.5 show that the homestay has a rectangular open space on the ground or first floor and a broken 'A' shape on the second-floor building, with a gap at the top of the A-shaped roof. It also makes the building's roof act as the walls covering the second story's wooden floor. Meanwhile, the side elevations show openings in the roof and walls to allow the bathroom walls to stand vertically, providing more space for the bathroom. It also provides a spot to place the utility, a water tank, on top of the concrete bathroom (Figure 5.5, horizontal section and side views). This opening also serves as a side window for the front porch, providing air circulation and views of the neighborhood to the sides.

In terms of materials, the building primarily uses wood, concrete, and brick. On the first floor, the building is mainly made of concrete and bricks (brown shades in Figure 5.5). The structure is concrete, while the walls are brick. On the second floor, the bedroom's front and back walls are concrete and brick. The bricks on both sides of the walls are exposed.

The A-shaped roof structure uses only wood, with zinc plates as the roof covering. On the second floor, wood is also used for flooring, stairs, and all railings, both on the porch and the back balcony. Overall, this homestay presents a strong wooden image, evident in the A-shaped structures and the materials used throughout, especially on the second floor. The architect intentionally

exposed this wooden material to represent the owners' professions as wood experts and businessmen (Figure 5.8).



Figure 5. 8. Homestay Huta Tapian, exposing brick and woods. Photos taken by the author, 2024.

Huta Tinggi

House 1

The first case from Huta Tinggi is the house of a king. The king was known for his success and wealth as a gold trader. When visiting this village, the house stood out from the others. The distinction derives from the number of ornamental carvings on its façade and its colorfulness (Figure 5.9). In terms of colors, while the house uses the basic Batak culture's tones, including black, red, and white, there is also a noticeable use of yellow. It represents the wealth and higher socio-economic status of the owner, which are associated with gold and silver. "*Have you seen yellow color used on 'gorga' [carved decorations]? No, right? It is specific to our house only because our 'opung' [grandfather] is known for gold trading. Very successful, therefore, he put the yellow on the house decorations*," said the participant, who is a younger generation of the king's lineage.

Another significant difference between this house and others (documented during fieldwork) is that the spatial division inside the house is more defined. While other *Ruma Bolons* usually have one open space with temporary dividers such as plywood or curtains, this house has enclosed rooms inside the *Ruma Bolon* (Figure 5.9).



Figure 5. 9. 'Gorga' ornaments of House 1 in Huta Tinggi.

The Figure shows that at the top of *Ruma Bolon's* floor plan, there are two rooms: the smaller one, with a desk and chairs, served as an office used for accounting during the gold trade (yellow shade), while the larger room (red shade) was the King's bedroom (Figure 5.10, left). Before homestays, the family still used the bedroom. Inside, there is a bed frame made of a single wooden log that the king slept in, with compartments for storing gold.

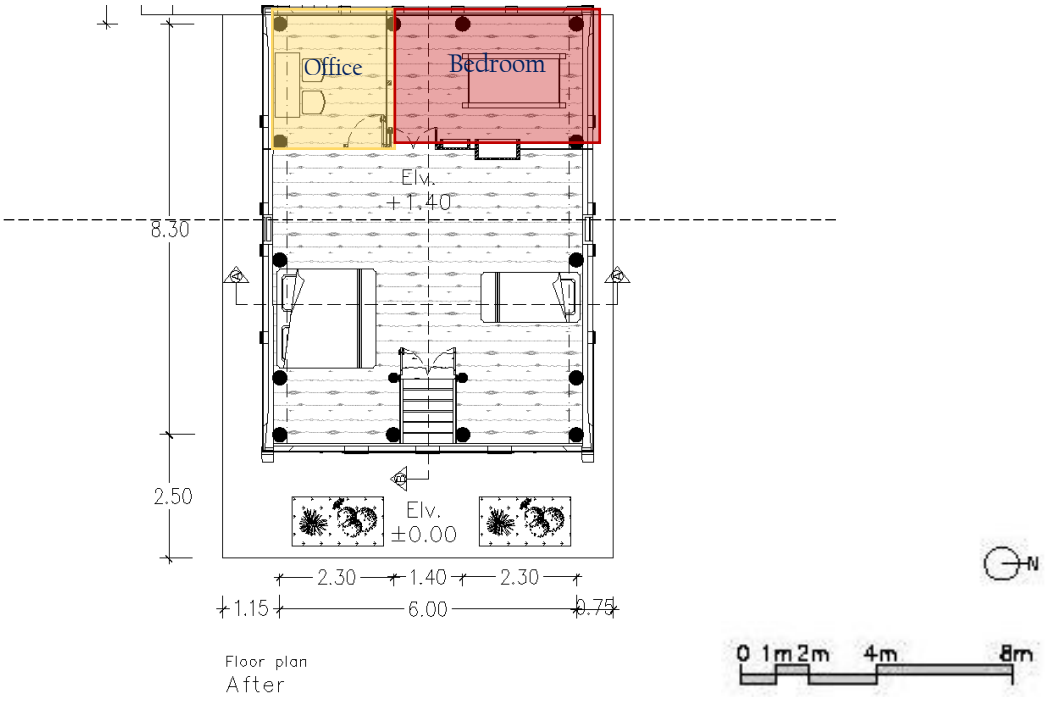


Figure 5. 10. Floor plan of the traditional *jabu* on House 1 of Huta Tinggi. Drawing created by the author.

Additionally, on the bedroom's ceiling, there is a secret door where gold, money, and other valuable items were previously kept. To reach this door, a stair leads to the ceiling (Figure 5.11, middle). On the bedroom's interior wall, there are two cupboards used to showcase the gold. Interestingly, the wall was built along the line of the cupboard.

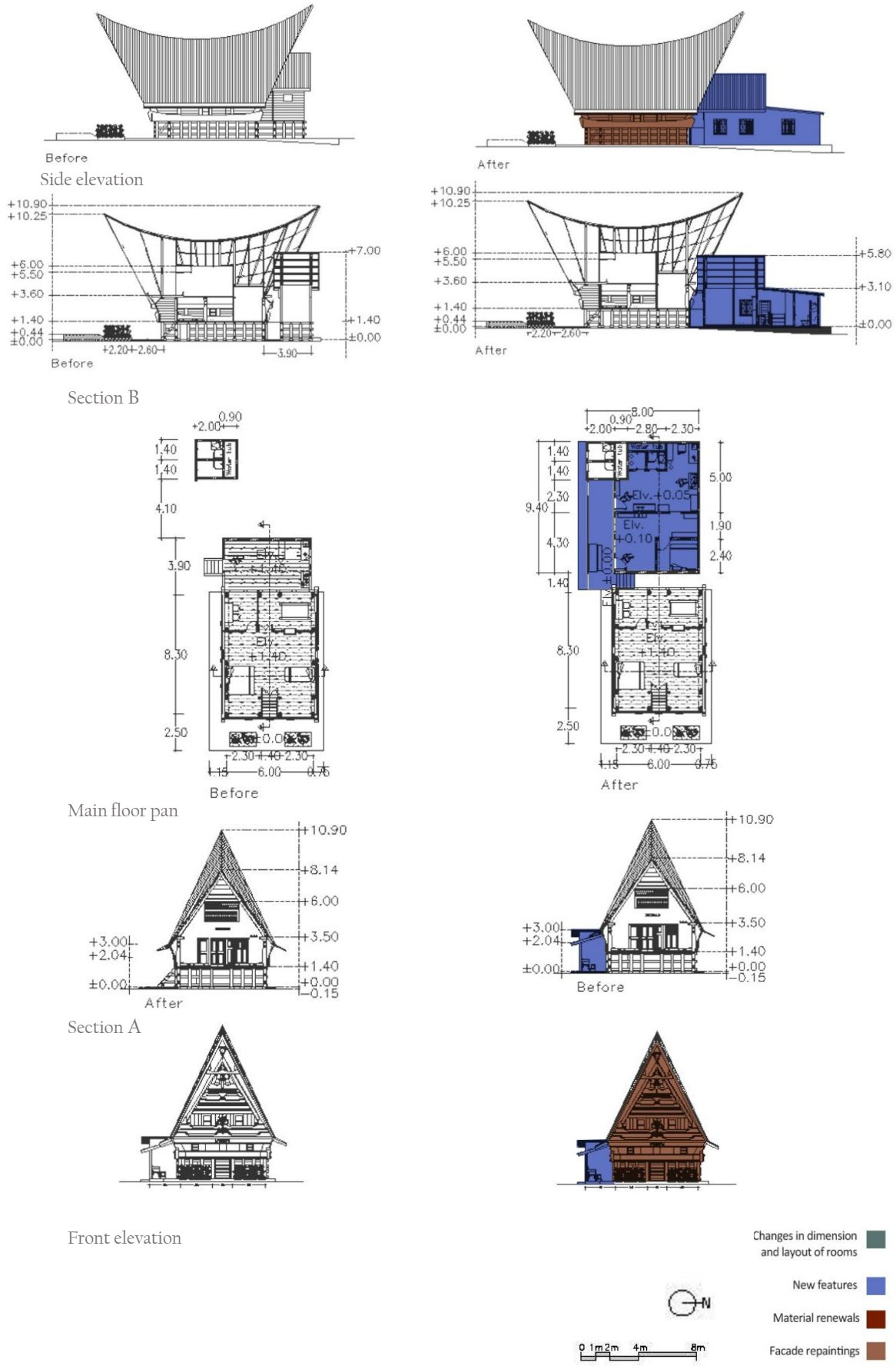


Figure 5. 11. King's bed frame (left), secret ceiling storage (middle), antique chandelier (right). Photos taken by the author, June 2024.

In addition, the furniture of the house also constitutes the wealth and glamour of the late king. In the living room, which is in the middle of the *Ruma Bolon*, there is an antique chandelier (Figure 5.11, right), for which, according to the owner, many foreign collectors are willing to pay a significant sum. During the visit, I also found the door handles, locks, and the tables and chairs in this house to be very antique. It was an interesting experience for me during the fieldwork to witness and interact with these antique pieces of furniture, which I believe adds value to the homestay experience for tourists.

During the homestay program, this front wooden *jabu* did not experience any significant physical changes. Unlike other *jabus*, the only change made was repainting the exterior walls, as shown in Figure 5.12, with a light brown shade in the elevation views. While there were common practices of replacing roofing materials in homestay units elsewhere, the homestay team in this huta decided not to do so for this house. It is because the house's roofing structure is more complex than others'. Instead of using nails to join the zinc sheets to the wooden structure, this house uses a hook system, which is uncommon in the region. Due to the risk of being unable to reconstruct the roof as is, the architect decided to omit it from the renovation. It allows for more funds to be allocated to the back house. Therefore, changes are mainly found in the back, extended house. Figure 5.12 shows changes in the house's conditions before and after the homestay program.

Figure 5. 12. Changes in House 1 in Huta Tinggi, comparison between before and after homestay. Drawings created by the author.



Based on the floor plans in Figure 5.12, it is obvious that the back house expands from a previous width of 3.9 m (12.8 ft) to 9.4m (30.8 ft). Initially, the back house was a wooden stilt house attached to the front house. The back house was initially for the kitchen and dining area, while the inhabitants used the front house for sleeping and other domestic activities. This usage pattern changed after the homestay program. They moved to the extended house and began living there, leaving the front house for guests.

Since the front house could not be changed as much, the homestay team redirected funding to renovate and improve the back house to create a comfortable living space for the residents. Therefore, the front house can serve as a full-fledged tourist accommodation.

Initially, the bathroom was 4.1 m from the house, and the house expansion connected the *jabu* to the outside bathroom, adding 4.10 m to the new house (see the side elevation and floor plan in Figure 5.12). The existing bathroom comprises two-room toilets, with a total area of 2.8 m x 2 m. Attached to these two toilets is a built-in water tank to store purchased water, as the huta faces long-standing water scarcity. This *huta*, being at a higher altitude, has unfortunately faced clean water shortages until now.

Moreover, attached to the wall of the two-room toilet is another bathroom accessible from inside the new house. Adjacent to this new inside bathroom is the kitchen, and in front of it is a dining room leading to the side door, which is on the same side as the front door of this extension house (see floor plan changes, Figure 5.12). From the front door, there is an open living room, and next to it is a bedroom. Although the homeowners have two children, there is only one bedroom in this house.

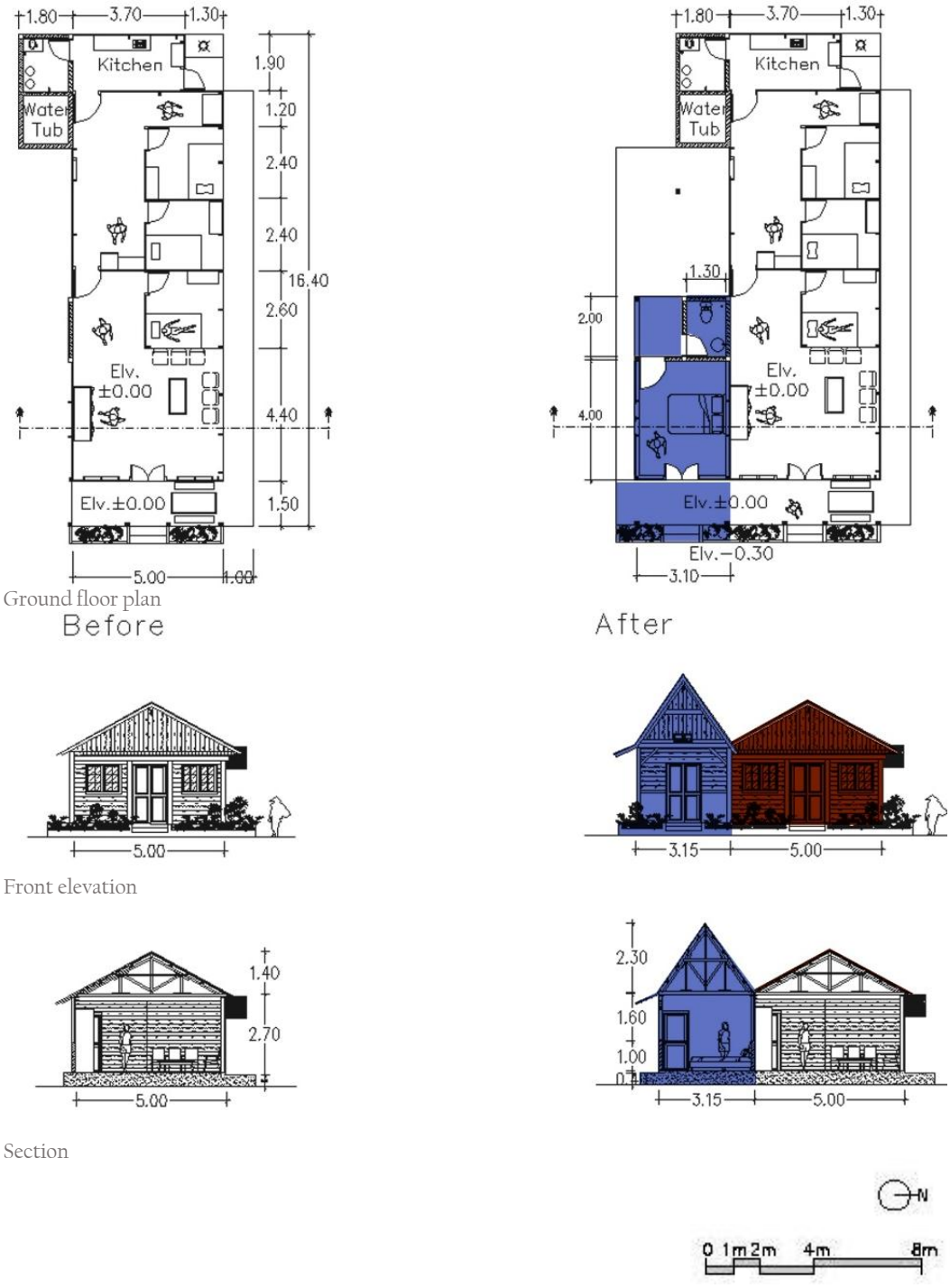
In addition, in front of the two doors on the side of the back house, there is a covered porch with a concrete floor. This porch begins at the stairs and extends to the front of the bathroom, connecting them. As the back house is separated from the front house by a 1.4 m gap between their exterior walls, the builders installed a flight of stairs to provide access to the back door of Ruma Bolon, which is +1.4 m (4.6 ft) above ground level.

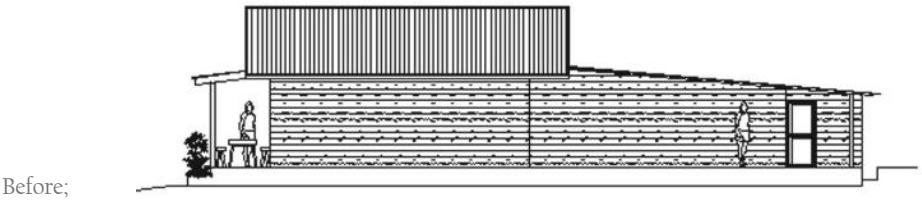
Moreover, from the section and elevation drawings in Figure 5.12, the back house is 'grounded down' (literal translation from the local term '*turun rumah*', which means lowering the elevated floor level to the ground. This newly landed house has a height of 3.10 m (-10 ft) from floor to ceiling, giving a total height of 5.8 m (19 ft) to the top of its roof, which was initially 7 m (23 ft) high. Finally, changes in this house also include a different selection of building materials for the new landed house. Instead of using wood as it was, this new house uses concrete and brick as its main materials.

House 2

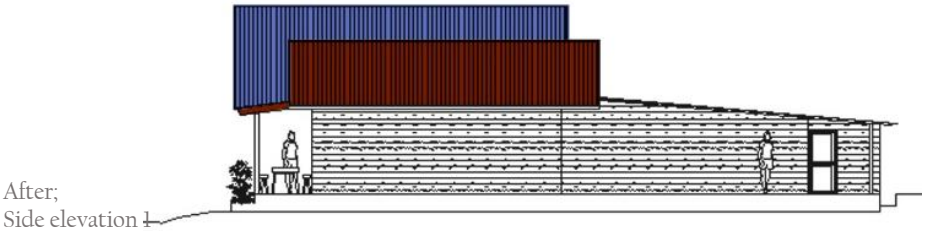
Changes to House 2 due to the homestay program are primarily a newly constructed building unit. Similar to House 1 in Huta Tapian, this homestay is separate from the residents' house and attached to the side of the existing house. Figure 5.13 shows this new structure in blue shade on the floor plans after the homestay construction.

Figure 5. 13. Changes in House 2 in Huta Tinggi: comparison before and after the homestay. Drawings created by the author.

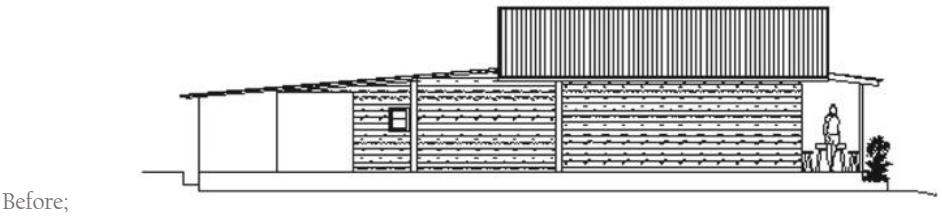




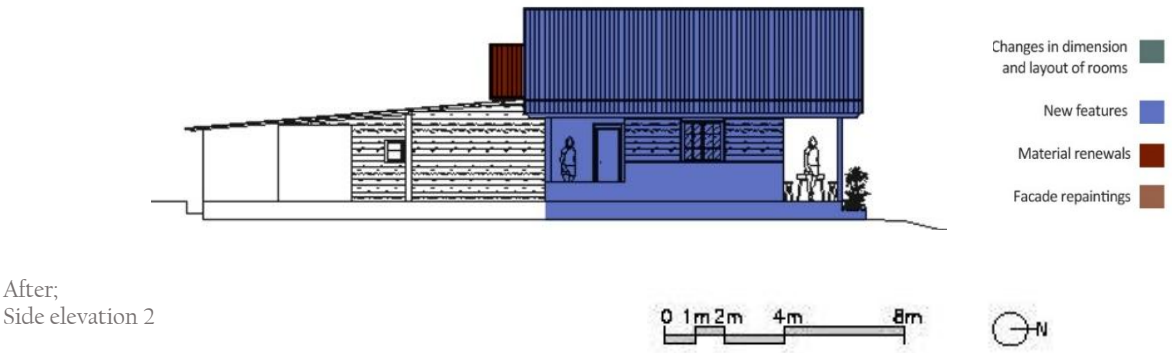
Before;
Side elevation 1



After;
Side elevation 1



Before;
Side elevation 2



After;
Side elevation 2

The homestay unit takes a spot on the empty plot of land beside the existing homeowner's family's house. The new homestay building, shown in blue in Figure 5.13, has a separate entrance to the unit and has no shared space or contact between guests and homeowners other than on the exterior, such as the porch or lawn. The separate entrance provides more privacy for tourists than a homestay in the owner's home. The porch is continuous with the existing porch of the house with no boundary or separation (Figure 5.13). While the porch of the existing house is an additional structure attached to the house, the new homestay's porch is an extension of the roof (Figure 5.13, side elevation views). With a higher, longer roof, the homestay appears relatively slimmer and taller than the existing one.

The front door of the homestay leads to a quite spacious bedroom, measuring 4 m (~13.1 ft) in length and 3.1 m (~10.2 ft) in width. While this room has extra space for bedroom furniture, it is not fully furnished. Inside the bedroom, there are only a couple of mattresses. This is due to limited funding for furnishing each homestay unit.

From the bedroom—the homestay unit—there is a door leading to the back porch. On the right side of the porch, there is a 2 m x 1.3 m (~6.5 ft x ~4.3 ft) bathroom with a seating toilet and a shower. Looking out from the porch, there is an open space and a small structure at the end, which is the owners' bathroom and water tub, accessible only from inside the house, not the homestay or outside.

The existing house, although it did not experience any spatial changes, was transformed, particularly in the materials used on the façade. As the existing house is not a *Ruma Bolon*, changes to the front materials were possible and affordable. The initial house is made of wood, including its structure and envelope. During the homestay construction, they replaced the materials of the front façade. They replaced the wooden planks with new ones and painted them in the same tone as the homestay's (Figure 5.13, front elevation).



Figure 5. 14. The front view of the homestay unit and the owner's house. Photo taken by the author, June 2024.

In addition, on the roof and the front façade, an 'Ulu Paung' was added to create an image of Batak House (Figure 5.14, red circles), mirroring the homestay's façade. Another change to the existing house was the replacement of the roofing materials. The new corrugated sheets, similar to those used on the homestay building, replaced the old zinc roof sheets.

Finally, the paint on both facades uses the same tone, brown (Figure 5.14). Given that the existing house is made of wood, the homestay was designed to maintain the same material. Hence, the homestay is made of half brick and half wood, with concrete/brick walls only 1 meter above the ground (see sections in Figure 5.13). In contrast, the rest of the building is wood. This adds some harmony to the look of the house and homestay as a whole, creating unity (Figure 5.14).

House 3

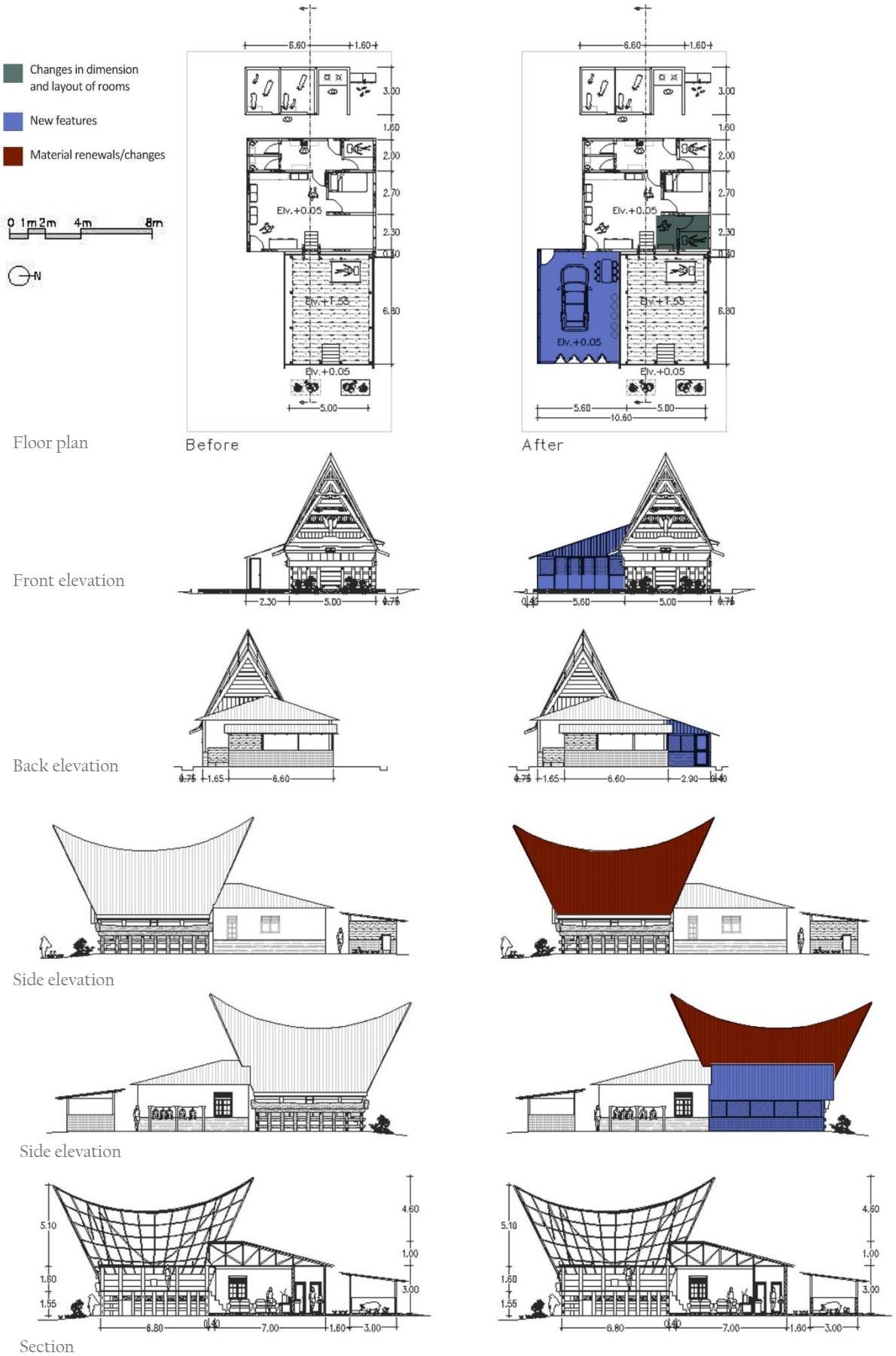
Like the other two houses that have undergone different changes due to the provision of a homestay unit, House 3 also experiences changes. The main change is the addition of a new feature to the existing house, shown in blue in Figure 5.16. The new structure is semi-open, with brick-concrete for the lower part of the walls and open walls for the upper part, covered only by wire mesh. This wire mesh allows air to circulate and provides sufficient comfort in the room, especially for a gathering area. This is a semi-outdoor gathering space, measuring 5.6 m (18.4 ft) wide by 6.8 m (22 ft) long, roughly the size of the traditional *Ruma Bolon*. While serving as a semi-outdoor living room for guests, this structure also serves as a car garage when no tourists are around, as was the case during my fieldwork. Because of this multipurpose function, the front door is a folding metal door to provide sufficient clearance for the car to enter and exit the building.

On the back wall of this structure, there are two doors: one leading to the backyard, where the pigsty and chicken coops are, and another leading to the existing back house, which opens into the living room (floor plan, Figure 5.15). Inside this existing back house, the only change was the creation of a new bedroom at the corner of the stairs leading to the elevated house, which, in this case, is the traditional wooden front *jabu* green (shaded in the floor plan, Figure 5.15). This bedroom is for one of the owner's daughters, bringing the total to three bedrooms in the house.

Initially, this was an open space used as a living room, just like the large open space to the left of the stairs from the *Ruma Bolon*. Other than this room, no other changes have been made to the existing back house.

As seen in the elevation view of the house in Figure 5.15, the back house is a landed brick house, while the front one is an elevated wooden *jabu*. The back house primarily serves family members, while the wooden house is intended for a guesthouse or homestay. However, for the bathroom, the two houses share the same units. It is located at the very back of the house, to the left side of the kitchen. Finally, another note on changes made to this house: replacing the old zinc roofing sheets with new corrugated ones. Other than this, no changes were made to the traditional wooden house.

Figure 5. 15. Changes in House 3 in Huta Tinggi, comparison between before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.



At the very end of the land plot (see floor plan in Figure 5.15), there are pigsties and chicken coops with only 1.6m (5.2 ft) apart from the house. A common practice among villages accepting funding from the government's homestay program is to avoid having farms within the *huta*. Many *hutas* in this regency, since the implementation of homestay, have moved any types of animal farming, such as pigs, dogs, and water buffalo, outside the village or have gotten rid of them altogether, as in Huta Parsaoran I and Huta Sitohang. However, this house maintains the pigsty and has experimented with a cleaner farming method.

The owner, working with the farmers' association, conducted extensive research on how to raise pigs and on formulating their daily meals and habitat to prevent the unpleasant smells associated with this type of farm activity, which became the main reason for their restrictions in the homestay villages. Regarding the water buffalo, there used to be a puddle on the side of the village's main entrance; however, since the homestay program, it has been moved to the back of House 2, outside the *huta*'s periphery. It shows that while the homestay program prohibits any form of farming within the village, it does not necessarily eliminate all farming practices, as farming has been part of local people's lives for generations. Consequently, many attempts have been made to negotiate this regulation with the homestay team.

Huta Sitohang

House 1



Figure 5. 16. Façade of House 1 in Huta Sitohang. Photo taken by the author, March 2024.

The first house I observed in this *huta* was very colorful on the façade, full of '*gorga*,' which means the Batak carvings on the façade of the house. They comprise brown, black, white, and a hint of red. Its grand façade is even more beautiful with the well-maintained three-tiered shelves of colorful, fresh flowers in pots (Figure 5.16).

The flowers cover both sides of the façade, leaving the concrete stairs at the center. The five-step stairs lead to the front door of the *Batak house* upstairs. The stairs look as if they disappear into the house, entering the house from beneath its elevated floor, which is one of the main characteristics of *Jabu Bolon.* Additionally, from the photo (Figure 5.16), the façade's paint looks fresh and new, which is one of the noticeable changes on the traditional *jabu* during the homestay implementation.

Regarding the house's transformation from before to after the homestays, Figure 5.18 summarizes the changes made. Elevation views in Figure 5.17 show changes in the façade paint of the wooden house, color-coded in light brown. Wall repainting is also applied to the interior walls of the wooden house, in the same shade as seen in the sections in Figure 5.17. On the interior walls of the wooden house, which is dedicated to accommodating tourists, the homeowner hung descriptions and explanations of the house's parts, including their original Batak-language names. Homeowners hope to share information about their culture and traditions with tourists staying in their *jabu*.

Moreover, Figure 5.17, particularly the elevation views, shows changes in material renewal on the *jabu*, which is shown in dark brown. It applies to the roofs on both the front and back houses. Similarly, a darker brown indicates changes in the types of materials used on other parts of the house. For example, the walls of the back house, marked in dark brown, were replaced with brick.

This also corresponds to the dark brown on the floor plan drawing in Figure 5.17, which circles the perimeter of the back house and covers both exterior and interior wall surfaces. In other words, the builders completely replaced the previous wooden materials for the extension house with concrete and bricks during the homestay construction. The changes affected the stairs connecting the front stilt house to the landed back house. The difference between these two floor levels is 1.50 m (~4.9 ft), with the wooden house higher than the new brick house.

Although the back house changed in materials, its perimeter, floor area, and the room's height remained the same. The owners described these similarities with, "In the past, the back was only made of wood, but all were the same size and shape as now. *Then, when there was a homestay [project], the back house was renovated, and the materials were replaced with concrete, so guests feel more comfortable using the bathroom than with wood. Yes, that's the goal.*"

Despite the same floor area between the before-and-after homestays, the comparison shows some changes in the room layout. Previously, there was only one bathroom on the extension house, located between the kitchen and the master bedroom. During homestay construction, an additional bathroom was added on the side of the stairs that connect the front to the back houses (blue shade in the floor plan in Figure 5.17).

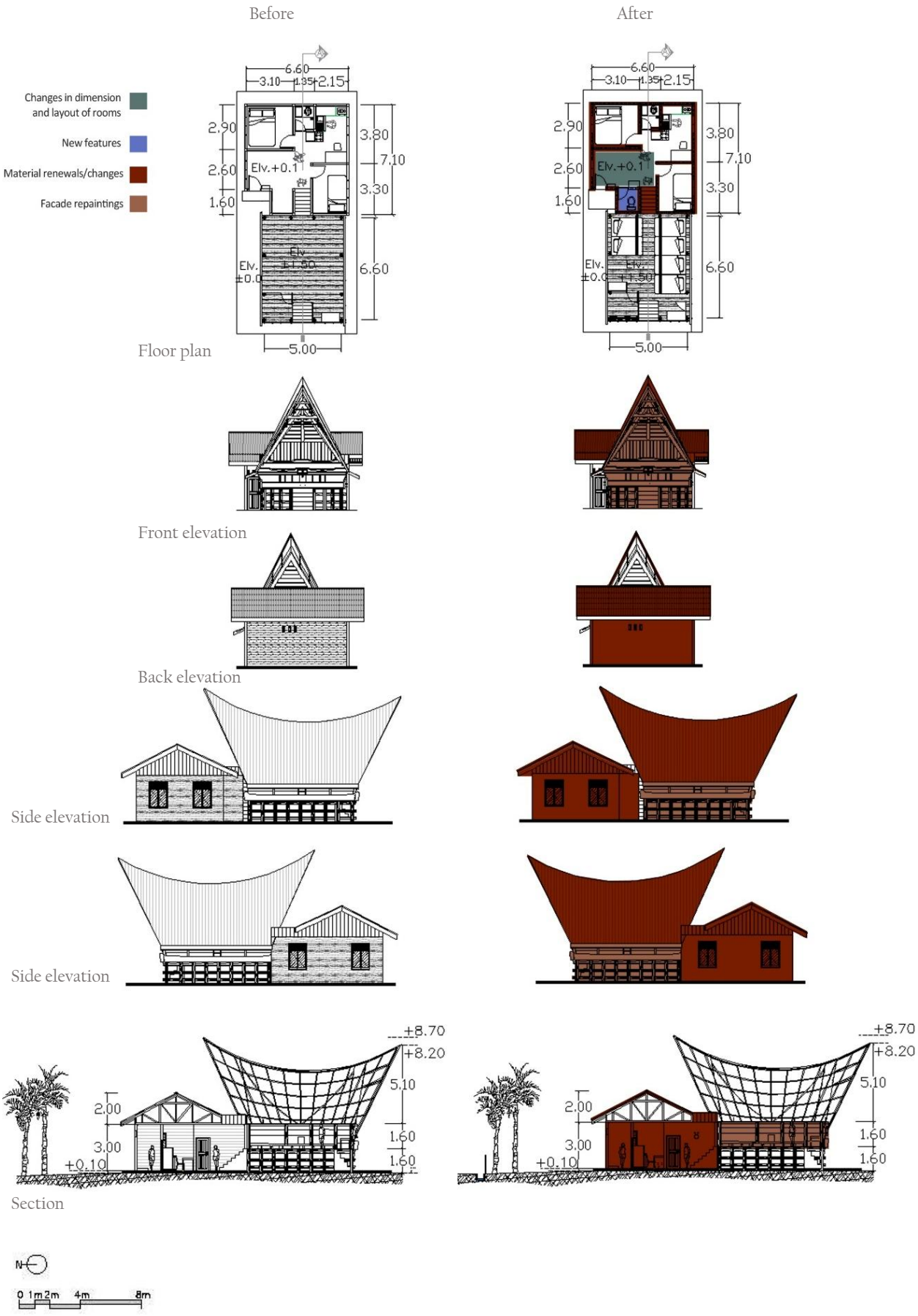


Figure 5. 17. Changes in House 1 of Lumban Sitohang, comparison between before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.

It consequently reduced the living room's area. The effective living room space decreased even more significantly, with circulation areas from the back door, around the new and old bathrooms, the two bedrooms, and the kitchen in the very corner. In particular, with the new bathroom door facing the living room, it makes an awkward transition, as right across it is a living room, which cannot avoid direct visual accessibility to and from it. The owners expressed concern regarding this:

> "*[That is why] I installed curtains [on the bathroom door], as it is not nice to be directly facing and exposed to [the living room] where people are sitting on the floor. [...] They [homestay team] do not see this [living room] as a seating area. To them, it is just an empty room, you know, some kind of entrance [or perhaps, a foyer].*"

Such a statement implies the homeowners' preference for how their house should be arranged to accommodate both domestic and tourist purposes of the homestay.

House 2

Like other *Ruma Bolons*, this house's *jabu* shows no significant changes after the homestays. The only part of *Ruma Bolon* that changed was its roofing materials. Material renewal is done to the roof and zinc sheets, as indicated by the darker brown color on the elevation views of the house (Figure 5.18). Meanwhile, inside the Ruma Bolon, nothing changes, not even the walls' paint. The interior looks very natural, with its wood tones and materials.

In addition to material renewals on the front house's roofs, darker brown is also evident on the roof of the existing extension house at the back, as shown in the side elevation views in Figure 5.18. While there is a change in roof materials, none is found on the body of the house; for example, the walls of the initial back house remain the same. Hence, no color codes are visible on the bodies of both existing houses, the front *jabu*, and the extension back house, as shown in the side elevation views in Figure 5.18.

Furthermore, based on the floor plan in Figure 5.19, the physical spaces and wall perimeters of the existing back house remain unchanged. However, the layout and organization of the rooms differ slightly. The existing back house's organization, as shown in the middle house's floor plans in Figure 5.19, consists of a living room, a bedroom, a small kitchen near the side door, and finally a bathroom at the very back.

After homestays, despite its similar boundaries, the layout changes slightly by removing the kitchen area and incorporating it into an extension of the living room. In other words, the kitchen, which was initially located between the side door and the bathroom, is moved to the very back of the house, which is the new addition (in blue, Figure 5.19). Moreover, this previous kitchen area now serves as a multipurpose space, functioning as a living room and, at times, a dining room.

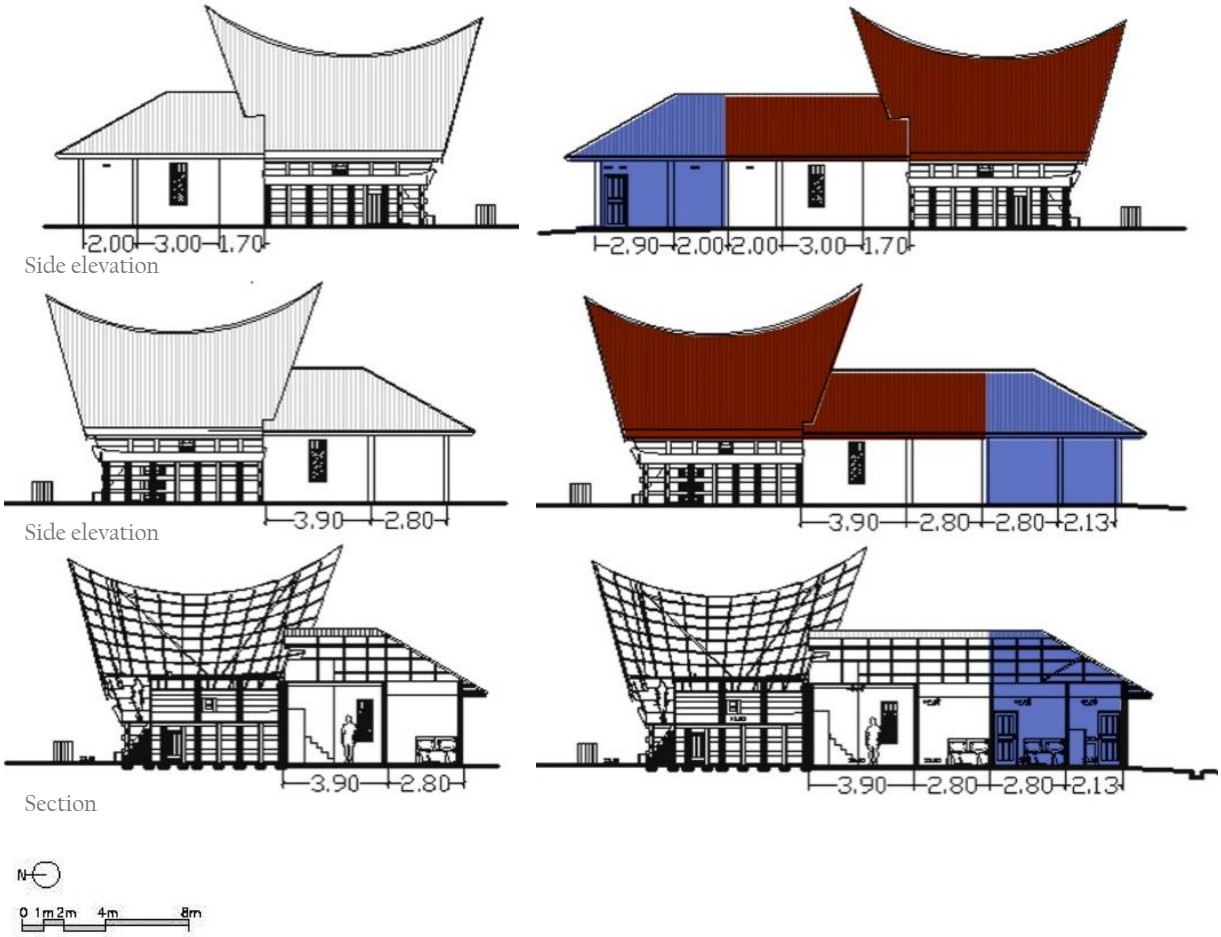


Figure 5. 18. Elevation and section of House 1 in Huta Sitohang, comparison between before and after homestays. Drawing created by the author.

Additionally, Figure 5.19's floor plan also shows the newly constructed house at the very back. The new part of the house extends the perimeter by 4.9 m (~16 ft) to the back and by 6 m (~19.7 ft) in width, making it as wide as the existing back house. This new extension area encompasses a bedroom and a bathroom, adjacent to the existing ones. This new extension house also includes a kitchen right beside the new bathroom and a dining room at its back, with dimensions of 2.9 m x 3 m (9.5 ft by 9.8 ft) and 2.1 m x 3 m (6.9 ft x 9.8 ft), respectively. Finally, near the kitchen, there is a back door leading to a large outdoor laundry area, 4.9 m (16 ft) long and 2 m (6.6 ft) wide, more than double the bathroom's size.

The outdoor laundry area is a new addition to this house in response to the need for more space to launder linens and blankets for the homestay's guests. This open, spacious laundry zone accommodates washing and drying, keeping fabrics clean and fresh for their upcoming guests. It allows homeowners to comfortably clean them without having to drop them off at the laundry service. It prevents the owners from spending money on the cost of using laundry services, which have begun to grow in the area: "*Yes, I do the laundry by myself, these heavy blankets, linens, all. Once the guests left, I washed them. I wash them by hand. Saving money already. [Because] to get the laundry done here, it is quite costly.*"

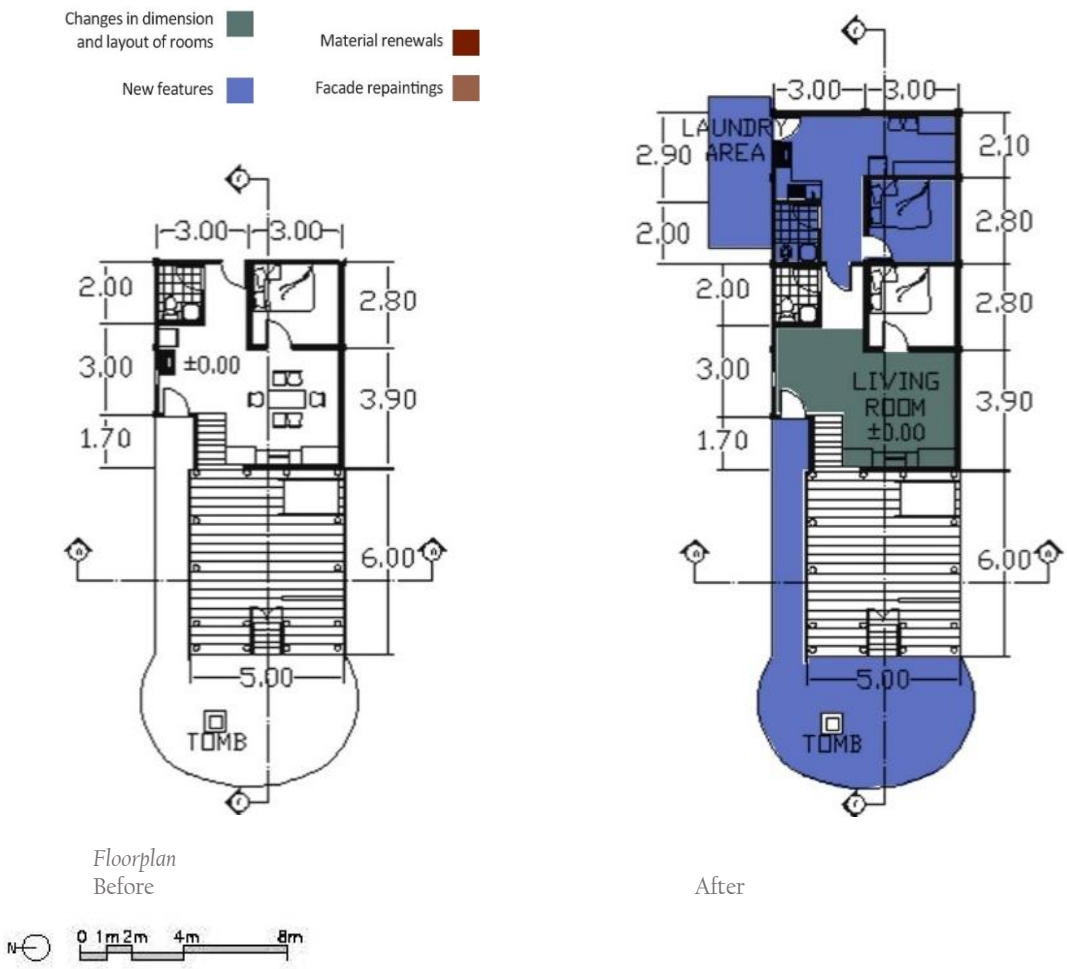


Figure 5. 19. Floor plans of House 2 in Huta Sitohang, comparison between before and after homestays. Drawing created by the author.

Similar to the laundry area, where the only part cast with concrete is its ground, there is a continuous uncovered terrace, starting from the front part of the side door, which is a door to the existing back house, going along to the front part of the wooden house in a circular shape (blue color on the floor plan drawing, Figure 5.19). Likewise, it is made of concrete cast on the ground circling the house on one side. It creates a concrete pathway from the side door to the front door, making it a free-muddy path from the *alaman* during the rainy season. This concrete cast ground also covers the surrounding area of the gated tomb at the front house. As seen from the side view of the house, the tomb is protected by the bars planted around it to prevent people from stepping on it.

Regarding the house's history, aside from the front wooden *jabu*, which has remained in the same condition for as long as the current owner can remember, no part of the house has undergone significant changes. As the owner recalled, the rest of the house, including the existing back house, has already been built with brick and concrete, and is landed rather than elevated, unlike the front wooden house. This part of the house was already built not long before the homestay program arrived.

Therefore, instead of renovating the newly built extended house, the owners and homestay team decided to use the funding to extend the house even further to the back. This addition aims to meet the homestay's programming standards, which require at least 2 bathrooms and 2 bedrooms. The new extension follows the shape and room layout of the existing one and uses the same building materials: bricks for walls, wood for roof structures, and zinc sheets for roof coverage.

House 3

In terms of front *Jabu Bolon* of House 3, the changes made include: 1) roof materials, by renewing them with new ones of the same type, and 2) repainting the exterior walls. Figure 5.20's elevation views show these minor changes, with dark brown for roofing material replacement and light brown for repainting the façade walls. Both changes are on the wooden *jabu* house.

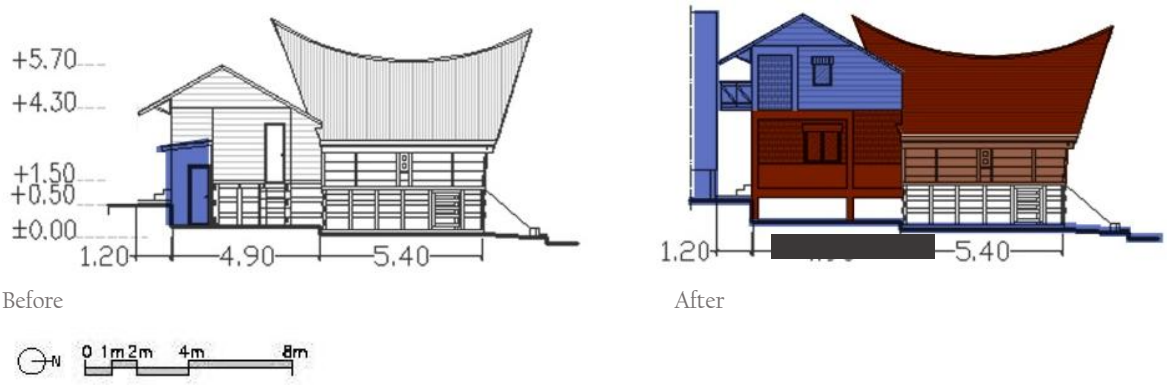


Figure 5. 20. Elevation views of House 3 Huta Sitohang, comparison between before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.

Another modification to the wooden house was adding a concrete floor to the ground where the wooden posts sit (Figure 5.20). In Batak cosmology, it is known as 'underworld'; in everyday use, it is called '*bara*'. While initially this '*bara* was used for livestock, housing them during the night, in recent years, especially since the homestay implementation, this room only functions as a storage. In this household, this '*bara*' sometimes also serves as a temporary kitchen when the main kitchen at the back of the house is occupied by guests or local tourists who have requested it as part of their paid rooms.

With the concrete cast on the ground of *bara*, it becomes a floor instead, replacing the mere soil ground as it was before the homestay program took place in this village. Unfortunately, this permanent flooring also impacts the flexibility and tectonic systems of wooden structures. It is due to the concrete floor, which firmly anchors the supposedly free/flexible posts in a 30 cm-deep concrete slab.

Unlike the *Ruma Bolon*, which experienced minor changes, the extension house, however, underwent major transformations. Although the perimeter of the exterior walls remains the same after the homestay implementation, the back house underwent significant changes.

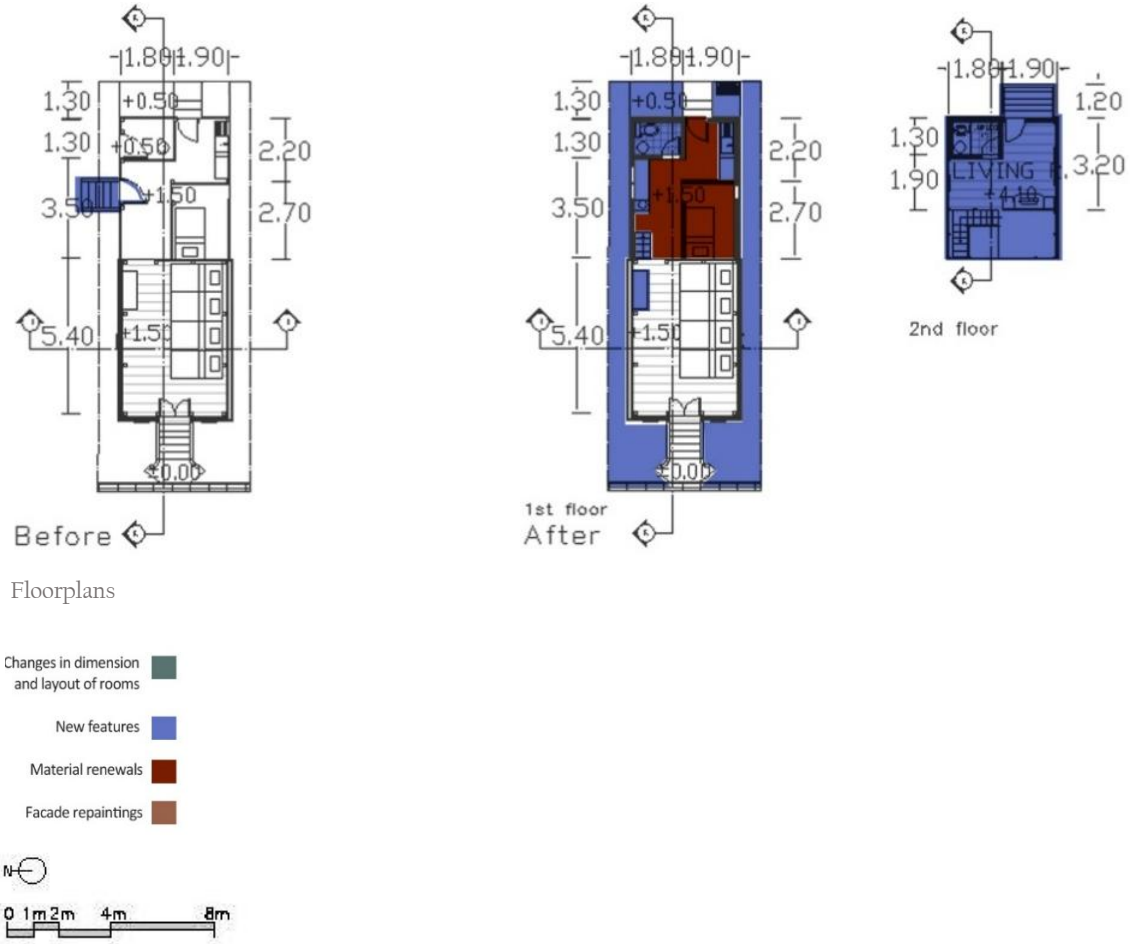
The first change is the ground floor of the back house, from an elevated house into a landed one (Figure 5.20, elevation views). The drawing in Figure 5.20 shows that the house was previously elevated, with wooden posts supporting the upper part of the house, just like the front house. Now, after the homestay, it becomes a landed house, with a thick concrete foundation. Regardless of whether the site is level or elevated, both floors are at the same level. Therefore, for the landed house after the homestay interventions, to maintain the floor's level, a significant amount of soil was added prior to casting the concrete foundation. Hence, although the new house's floor level is the same as the previous house's, at +1.50 m (around 5 ft), it stands on the ground, not supported by posts.

However, the case is different for the bathroom. The initial house had the bathroom outside, accessible from the backyard, as shown in the blue area on the 'before' drawing in Figure 5.20. When a bathroom was added to the house in the late 1990s, the owner decided to put it on the ground level, without lifting it to the same level as the rest of the house. Moreover, during the homestay construction, the bathroom was placed inside the house, with interior access, albeit in the same position.

Additionally, in the elevation views (Figure 5.20), a tall new building is shown at the back of the house, where the upstairs balcony is located. This new balcony touches the wall of this new building. This new structure is a shop located right on the street's sidewalk and is owned by *Tunggane Huta* of this village. After homestays were built in the *huta*, the *Tunggane Huta* decided to build this structure and opened a shop. However, during the fieldwork period, this shop was closed and claimed not to have been functioning for some time. The tall structure, due to its proximity to the house, meant the extension house had only a small second-floor balcony, measuring 1.2 m (4 ft) wide.

Based on the floor plan (Figure 5.21), there is a significant blue shade around the house, circling its perimeter. It represents the newly cast concrete terrace from the front stairs to both sides, extending to the back door. Other changes are also made to the side door, where the previous house provided access to the side near the old bathroom door. During renovation, they moved the bathroom door to the inside of the house, while they removed the side door altogether, creating space for furniture and a flight of stairs leading to the second floor.

Figure 5.21 also shows that the second floor is a new addition to the house, built to accommodate the required number of bedrooms and bathrooms for a homestay unit. It is due to the limited space on the land plot, with only 1.3 m available between the existing kitchen and bathroom areas at the back. In the kitchen, additional built-in fixtures, including a sink and cooking table, are added, along with kitchen cabinets. In contrast, in the previous design, they were only unfixed or portable furniture.



Floorplans

Figure 5. 21. Floor plans of House 3, Huta Sitohang, comparing before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.

As the house is relatively small compared to others, it still needs an extra set of bedrooms and bathrooms to be a homestay. To accommodate these needs, the house had to extend vertically rather than horizontally, unlike other homestays. Hence, the second floor. This second floor contains one bathroom, right above the existing one downstairs, and a small living room that occasionally also serves as a bedroom (Figure 5.21, floor plans). In addition to the second-floor configuration, there is another small bedroom (1.7 m x 1.9 m) facing the stairs, with no wall on this side.

Another major change in this house is the change in materials (shown in dark brown on the elevation drawings in Figure 5.20). The material changes mostly reflect the replacement of the house's first-floor extension, initially from wood to concrete and brick. The dark brown on the front *jabu* also represents material renewals, which occurred on the *jabu*'s roofs, replacing the old zinc sheets with new ones of the same type. Finally, the most recent change to this house is the exterior paint on the front façade, which is similar to that of other homestays in this village (elevation views in Figure 5.20).

Huta Sosor Nangka

As a pattern of changes across *Ruma Bolon*—the front wooden houses—has begun to emerge, with only minor changes made to these houses, the same is also true for houses in *Huta Sosor Nangka.* And in this case, it includes House 1.

House 1

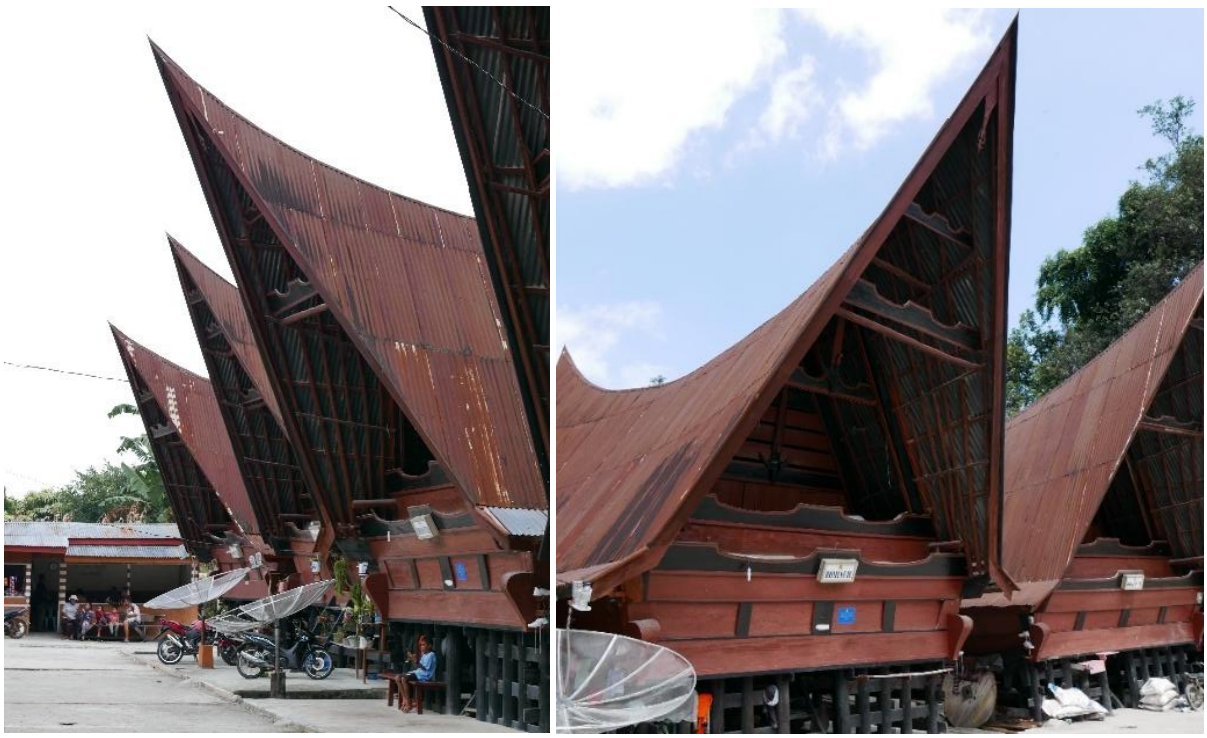


Figure 5. 22. Views of the houses in Huta Sosor Nangka. Photos taken by the author, March 2024.

Figure 5.22 shows the conserved buildings in *Jabu Bolon*, Sosor Nangka. It also shows the same colors of these buildings' facades. The exterior walls of the front *jabu* are painted dark brown, with lines of black paint on parts such as posts, stairs, *loting-loting, paung, sokkar*, and the frames of windows and doors (Figure 5.22). Inside, the walls are painted with a combination of white and pink: pink on the posts and white on the interior walls. The color pink is chosen to match the new building at the back, which is pink. Other than repainting the walls, no physical alterations have been made to the traditional house. Unlike most homestays in other *hutas* that replace at least the roof covering materials of the *Ruma Bolon*, this village does not change them. No *jabus* changed their zinc sheets, as shown in the elevation view in Figure 5.23, so the *jabu's* roof is not color-coded.

Although not permanent, the layout of the front house is occasionally changed by moving the bedroom furniture, especially the mattress and sleeping mats. The owners rearranged and moved them between the front *jabu* and the newly constructed bedroom in the back house. This change was to accommodate visitors' requests for the type of accommodation they want during their stay. If the guests specifically asked for a stay with *jabu experience*, the owners moved their mattress and mats to

the back house. Otherwise, they remain in the front house. As a standard, this household dedicates the back house to guests and the front one to their everyday use.



Figure 5. 23. Elevation, House 1 in Sosor Nangka, comparing before and after the homestay. Drawing created by the author.

Regarding the back house, there are significant changes. As shown in the before-and-after floor plans for the homestay in Figure 5.23, the extension house's footprint remains the same, but the layouts are significantly different. It covers room organization and furniture placement throughout the house.

Regarding the room layout, more permanent changes are made to the house, beyond just adding furniture or fixtures. Figure 5.23 shows that in 'the before homestay', the back house had more space for circulation, connecting different parts of the sides, such as the kitchen on one side, dish racks on the other, stairs to the front house across it, and the back door to the left of the floor plan. The stairs connecting the back house and the front part were parallel to the front door. However, they later changed this, moving the connecting door slightly to the left side of the wall. It moves the new door 1 m (3.3 ft) to the left and places it right in front of the new bathroom (floor plan after homestay construction, Figure 5.24).

Furthermore, the bathroom is a new feature of the house. Prior to the homestay program, this house, as well as other houses in this *huta* did not have a bathroom or toilet inside. This is due to difficulty in pumping water to reach the elevation of this village, which is relatively higher than that of its surroundings, as explained in the first part of Chapter 4, 'Selected Hutas'. To accommodate basic hygiene needs, a local university provided a two-room public toilet as a part of its outreach programs. The public toilet helps villagers with their basic needs, while for bathing and laundry they rely on Lake Toba. They created two open-air bathing spots by the lake, one for males and one for females. These bath areas were made of a line of large rocks as a base for standing and doing laundry.

The arrival of homestays, besides introducing new economic value to households, also brings the long-overdue provision of in-house bathrooms and toilets for the villagers. In this house, *House 1*,

the bathroom is located between the back door and the stairs to the front house, measuring 1.7m x 1.7m (5.6 x 5.6 ft), as shown in the floor plan (Figure 5.24).

On the after-homestay's floor plan, to the right of the connecting stairs, a small kitchen is located by the wall directly across from the bathroom. It is a very small kitchen. To use the kitchen, one must occupy the circulation area near the connecting stairs. The kitchen is for cooking only, without a sink for cleaning. In fact, the owners do the dishes in the bathroom after cooking.

Moreover, perpendicular to the kitchen, right in front of the back door, there is a large table set up to lay out clean dishes for drying. It serves as a dish rack and a dining table, where dishes are served before being taken to the front house for the family to enjoy.

Another significant change made to the back house is the division of rooms. Initially, the previous house was one big open space, with no separations. Now, the back house is divided into two main rooms (marked by the red line on the floor plan in Figure 5.24). The first consists of the bathroom, the kitchen, and a small area around the table that connects to the second main room (the green-shaded area on the floor plan after homestay in Figure 5.24).

The second room is a small bedroom with only 2.3m x 2.9m. As if it is not small enough, a spiral staircase to access the second floor is placed in this room, right in the middle of the wall. This staircase, the door leaf, and the circulation space between them take up most of the room. Consequently, it leaves only roughly a quarter of the area effective for occupancy. It obviously does not fit its stated purpose as a bedroom. Hence, in everyday practice, the owners use it as a connecting room and a place to put their small cabinet.

Focusing on the second floor, it is a new feature, a newly constructed structure, added for homestay accommodation. This floor comprises one bedroom, one bathroom, a balcony, and a living room, all connected to the center (yellow shade in Figure 5.24). In other words, the living room is between the balcony and the bedroom. The staircase, located next to the living room, connects the bedroom downstairs and the living room on the second storey.

While the bathroom is next to the living room, access to it is only from the bedroom. In relation to the downstairs bathroom, the one on the second floor is located diagonally across from it (both locations are shown in the purple dashed line in Figure 5.24). While technically it is not impossible, careful construction is essential to account for potential leakage. In fact, there is a leak from the 2nd-floor bathroom into the room below, making it unfit for occupancy. This leakage, coupled with the limited habitable space in this bedroom, means it failed to fulfil its intended purpose: serving as an additional ground-floor bedroom to meet the 2bedroom-2bathroom homestay standards. Another point I want to raise here is the cost-effectiveness of building two parallel bathrooms in a small, budget two-storey house; it is not financially sound. This critique opens the door for more concerning critique of other elements in other homes, such as inserting a second floor in the historic wooden home and its impacts on the feeling of space or excavating dirt to allow for a

usable lower floor but with only a ~5 ft ceiling, which is hardly livable, or actually having the homeowners live on the lower level where the animals used to live.

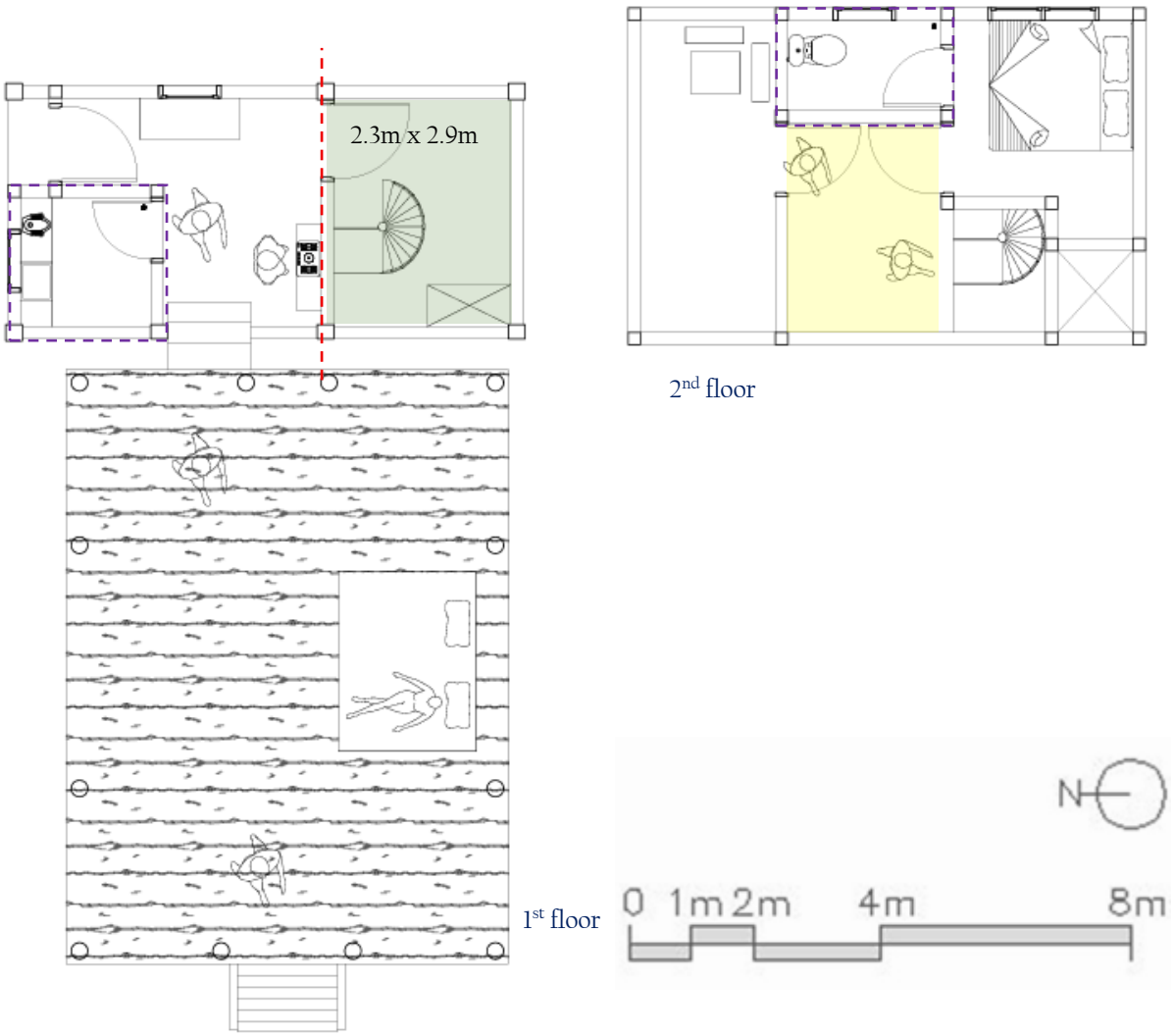


Figure 5. 24. Floor plan of House 1, Huta Sosor Nangka, after homestay implementation. Drawing created by the author.

While the second floor is a brand-new unit in this house, the ground floor of the back house is not. It initially existed with the same dimensions, though its spatial organization was different from what it is now. The difference lies in the materials used to build this floor. Figure 5.25 shows that after the homestay, there has been a material change to the back house's first floor (the dark brown area in the figure). The material change happens from wood to brick. This new material is also used for the second floor. Therefore, another major change in the back house, besides the addition of a second floor, is the replacement of wood with concrete and brick.

Lastly, looking at the new house after the homestay (section drawing in Figure 5.27) and comparing the 1st and 2nd floors, the floor area on the 2nd floor is larger than on the 1st. It extends

out to almost 1 m, beyond the back wall of the first floor, as shown in Figure 5.27. This overhang provides the terrace in the back door area, a nice, small, intimate transitional space from outside in.

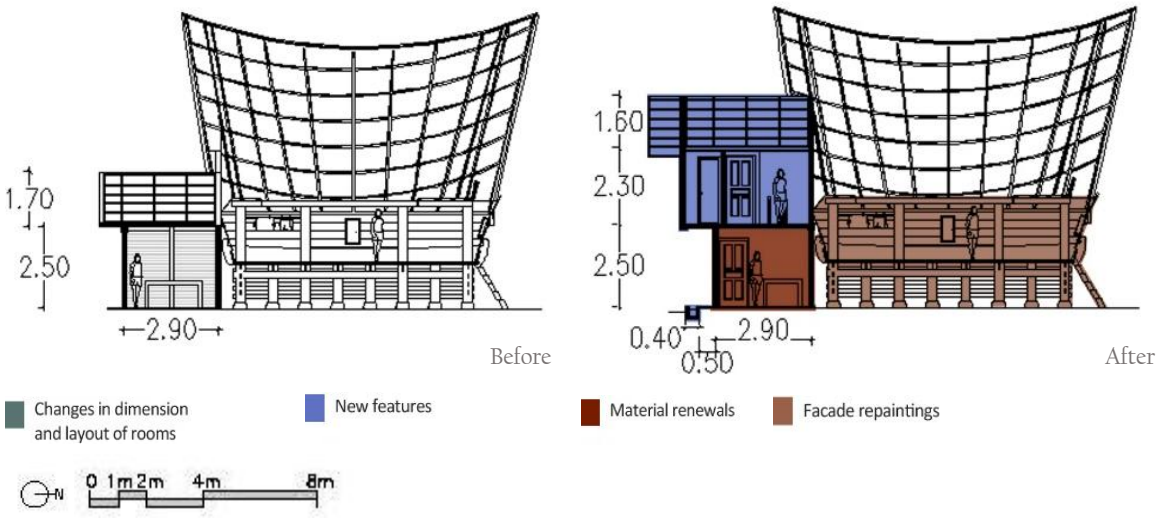


Figure 5. 25. Section, House 1 Huta Sosor Nangka, comparing before and after the homestay. Drawing created by the author.

House 2

Figure 5.27 compares the floor plans of house 2 in Sosor Nangka before and after the homestay. It reveals significant changes in the spatial organization of the back house's existing rooms. An addition of rooms also takes place at the back of the house. In terms of room layout, while the kitchen and dining room remained in the same locations, which are right by the back door and on the corner, the dimensions of these rooms changed.

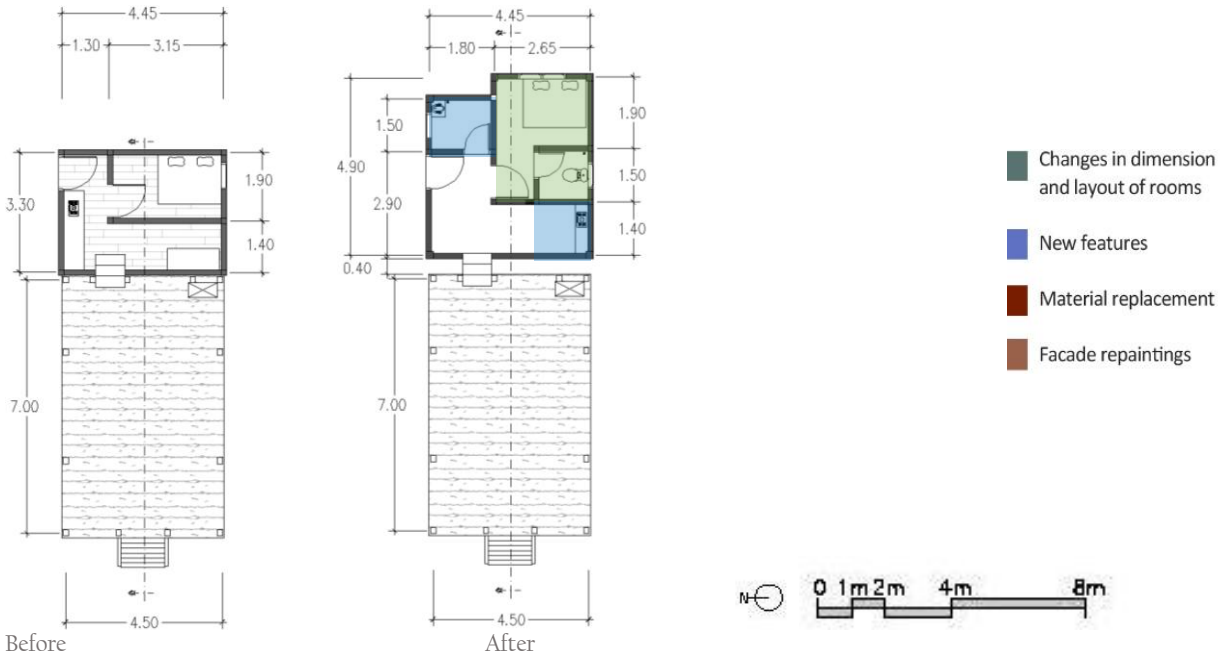


Figure 5. 26. Floor plan, House 2 Huta Sosor Nangka, comparison between before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.

The initial kitchen before homestay, with only 1.3 m of excess space between the back door and the bedroom, was a squeezed, shared space with circulation. Across the kitchen, to the side of the front house, was the dining area. It was at the corner of the house, 1.4 m wide, extending across the house toward the kitchen, about 1.8 m long. In the new house after the homestay, the physical space of the initial kitchen and dining room remained the same. However, their functions are now different: the dining room has become a cooking corner, and the kitchen now serves solely as a circulation area around the back door, the bedroom, the stairs to the front house, and the door to the new bathroom (Figure 5.26).

The after-homestay's floor plan also shows that the bedroom changes in size. The new bedroom extends further to the back of the house. Its width increases significantly, from 1.9 m to 2.4 m. In total, the new bedroom measures 2.4 m by 2.65 m. As part of this expansion, they added a small bathroom inside the bedroom. With its door right in front of the bedroom door, this small bathroom is intended only for guests staying at the homestay. Its dimensions account for roughly 1.50 x 1.50 m2. Another bathroom unit, as required by the homestay team for a 2-bedroom-2-bathroom, is on the side of the back door. The bathroom sizes are similar, which are around 1.5 m x 1.8 m. The second bathroom is to accommodate the homeowners. Therefore, the fixture inside is a squat toilet, whereas the guest's bathroom has a seated toilet.

Another change in this house is the connectivity between the back and front houses. Previously, the two buildings were wall-to-wall with the same wooden materials (Figure 2.27). After the homestay, however, the two were separated with the gap between the two houses now around 0.40 m. Despite these changes, the stairs remain in the same position, connecting the two houses' doors and creating a short connecting hall. In addition to this separation, the back house is now made of brick rather than wood.

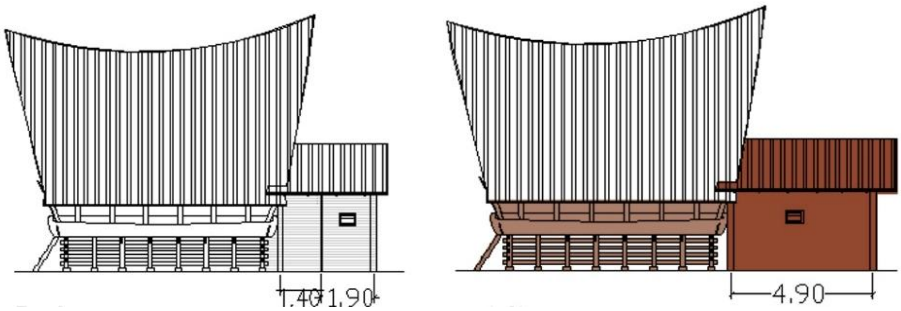


Figure 5. 27. Elevations, House 2 of Sosor Nangka, before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.

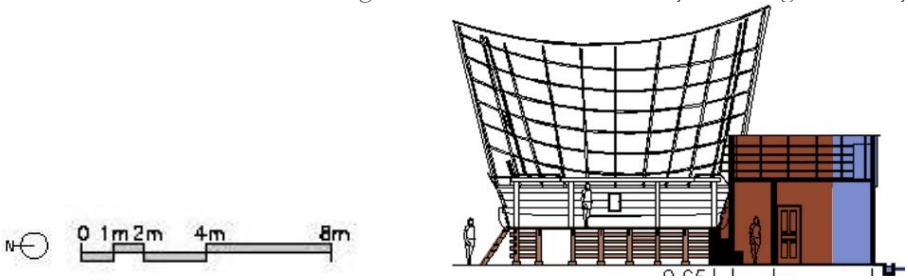


Figure 5. 28. Section, House 2 of Sosor Nangka, before and after homestay. Drawing created by the author.

Such material replacements are also shown on the elevation views, with a dark brown (Figure 5.27). Meanwhile, in the elevation views, the lighter brown on the front of the house indicates a change in the exterior wall paint color. Using a similar color selection to the previous houses, as discussed, the front wooden house had its exterior walls repainted (shown in a light brown shade in elevation Figure 5.27). On the other hand, inside the house (as seen in the section drawing in Figure 5.28), the interior walls are not painted, except for the posts on which the house stands.

House 3

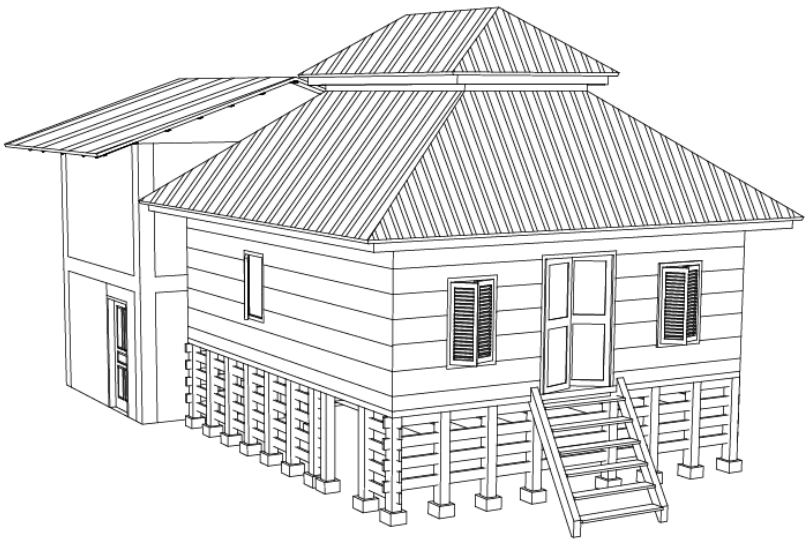


Figure 5. 29. House 3, Sosor Nangka, with *Rabung Lima* roof type. Drawing created by the author.

The last case from Huta Sosor Nangka is a house with the *Rabung Lima* type (Figure 5.29). This house is not considered a traditional Batak house, *Jabu Bolon.* People see this house as a regular one, with no relation to the king of Batak. There are 11 out of the total of 23 houses in this *huta in the* form of *Rabung Lima.* This *huta* is the largest among the other hutas under study. However, my decision to use this house does not take these different types into account as much. Instead, it is due to its active efforts to attract tourists. According to the homestay coordinator I interviewed, this is one of the most frequently selected houses for hosting guests in the *huta*, after the coordinator's house itself, which is titled House 1 in this section.

In terms of treatments given to the house by the homestay team, the front house, regardless of its type and its less strict conservation requirements, does not experience significant changes. Like other units, the front house only undergoes a few changes. Figure 5.30 shows that the difference between before and after is the wall paint, which is a light brown shade in the elevation view. The homestay team repainted the house in the same color as the other houses, combining black and dark brown on the exterior wood surfaces of all exterior walls and posts.

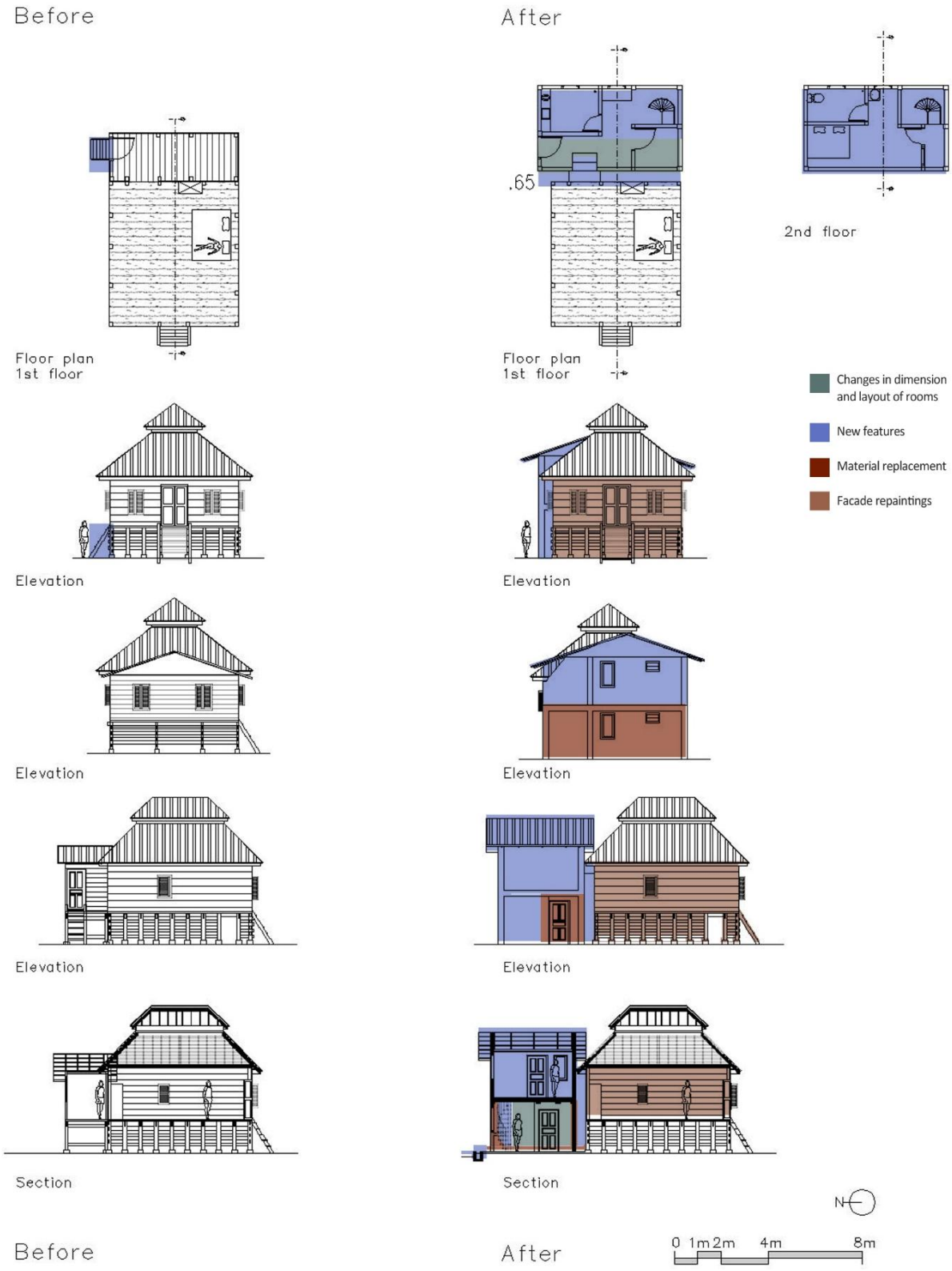


Figure 5. 30. Elevation and section, House 3 Huta Sosor Nangka, comparing before and after the homestay. Drawing created by the author.

In contrast, the back house shows more significant transformations. Elevation and section drawings (Figure 5.30) illustrate that changes to the extension house include material replacement (coded in dark brown), an extension of the back house, and an additional second floor (both in blue shading). The elevation view also shows changes in the dark brown shade, illustrating the replacement of wood with brick. Similarly, the second floor and the extension part of the back house are also made of concrete and brick.

Looking at the elevation and section drawings of the existing house (before homestay, Figure 5.30), the back house was initially built of wood and raised to the same level as the front house, at 1.3 m (4.3 ft) above ground. This condition also results in the removal of the previous stairs at the back door—as shown in the side elevation drawing before homestay construction—whereas the after-homestay drawing shows no stairs there.

Regarding the extension, Figure 5.31 provides further details on the dimensions. Additionally, on the floor plan after homestay implementation, there are significant changes in room arrangement and the extension of the house, as shown in the green and purple shading in Figure 5.31. They added a 1.7 m (6.6 ft) extension to the back of the house to meet the room requirements set by the homestay team, enlarging the back of the house from 1.8m to 3.5 m (as shown in the green area on the floor plan, Figure 5.31). In this room, in addition to the kitchen, circulation to the back, and the connecting doors, they also added a bedroom and a bathroom. With the same intention, a second floor was added to this house.

In terms of room layouts, while the back house initially served only cooking and dining, it now supports a variety of activities, including a circulation area—for the back door and stairs to the front house—a small bedroom, the kitchen and stairs area, and finally a bathroom (Figure 5.31). Across the circulation area is the small bedroom measuring 1.8 m wide by 2 m long. The architect did not plan this bedroom; rather, it was a homeowner's request. Initially, it was a room for the stairs, as in House 1.

The owner explained that they requested the builders to make it a small room during construction: "*Instead of making a room of the stairs, it would be much better for a person, as we have two kids here.*" In the original design, there was no wall between the stairs and the bedroom. This change, by adding a wall between them, although minor, makes the room more useful and functional than in other houses that followed the original design, for instance, House 1, as described previously.

Another addition to this house is the bathroom. The distribution is 1 unit per floor. On the ground floor, the bathroom is on the left when entering through the back door, measuring 2m x 2.5m (6.6 ft x 8.3 ft). Across this bathroom is the kitchen, and in the corner is an all-steel spiral staircase leading to the second floor.

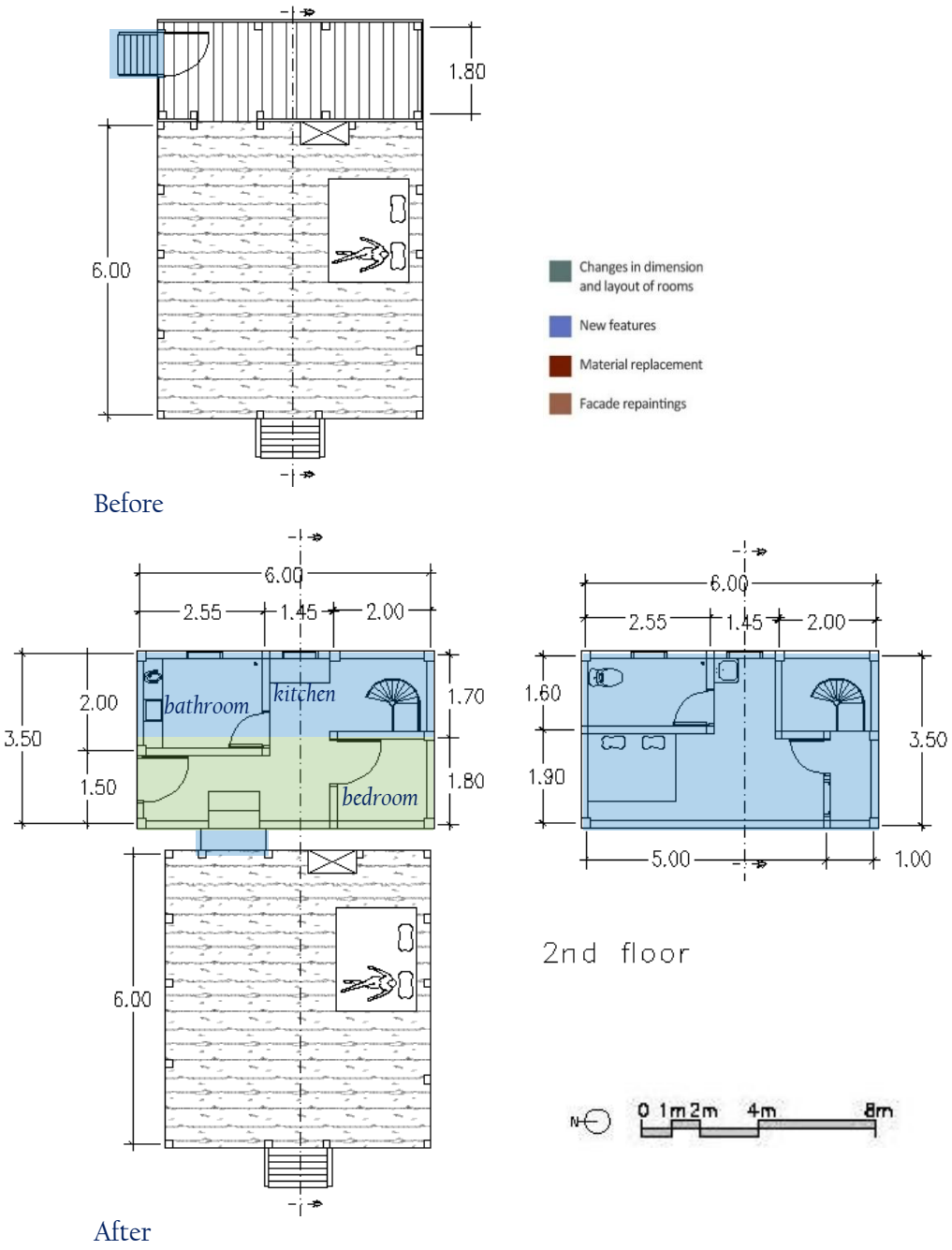


Figure 5. 31. Floor plans, House 3 Huta Sosor Nangka, comparing before and after the homestay. Drawing created by the author.

Going up these stairs leads to a small balcony measuring 2 m x 1.0 m, the only way to access the second-floor interior. Compared to House 1, the proposed initial design also features a different layout for the second floor. Instead of the stairs arriving in the living room, this unit has them land on the balcony. It prevents significant dead spaces in the second-floor interiors, compared to the initial designs. From the balcony, a door leads to a large room measuring 5 m by 3.5 m, providing sufficient space for a bedroom, a bathroom, and a spacious circulation area in between.

The second-floor bathroom is slightly smaller than the one on the ground floor, measuring 2.55 m x 1.60 m, 0.40 cm shorter. Although slightly smaller, the upstairs bathroom is located directly

above the downstairs bathroom, minimizing damage to other non-bathroom parts of the home that can occur if the upstairs bathroom leaks, unlike House 1. These changes—proposed by the owners—further enhanced the building's functionality and efficiency, unlike the arrangement of the bathrooms in House 1.

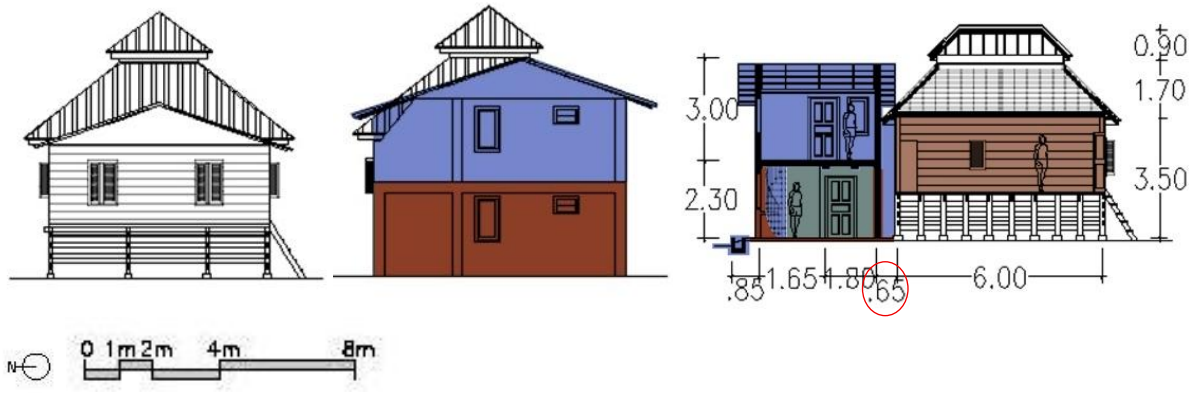


Figure 5. 32. Elevations and section, House 3 Huta Sosor Nangka. Drawing created by the author.

Finally, changes in material use indicate the replacement of the wooden back house with a brick one. The transformation also includes lowering the elevated house to ground level, as shown in the back elevation views in Figure 5.32. This, coupled with the roof shape—the *Rabung Lima*—and the additional second floor (in blue), made meeting at the front and back houses impractical. It is due to the additional height of the back house, which adds about 1 m to the previous condition. Therefore, to make it work, the houses require a gap between them (see section Figure 5.32). The gap between the two buildings is about 65 cm (2 ft). To bridge the gap, doors are provided on each side, and due to the height difference between the wooden houses and the brick house (1.3 m higher). This description is also illustrated in the floor plans of Figure 5.31, marked by a small blue area around the connecting stairs.

MAPPING TRANFORMATIONS: A SYTHESIS

Based on detailed descriptions highlighting changes made to the selected houses in transforming homes, '*jabus*', into homestays—an accommodation set in Batak *hutas*—this second part of the Design chapter focuses on synthesizing the physical transformations of the houses and how these changes impact the lives of the houses.

As previously mentioned, one of the main guidelines called for a minimum of 2-bedroom units for homestay designs within the existing living vernacular houses. To accommodate these, the homes did need some changes. Figure 5.36 summarizes the impact of accommodating such requirements on the houses' current conditions.

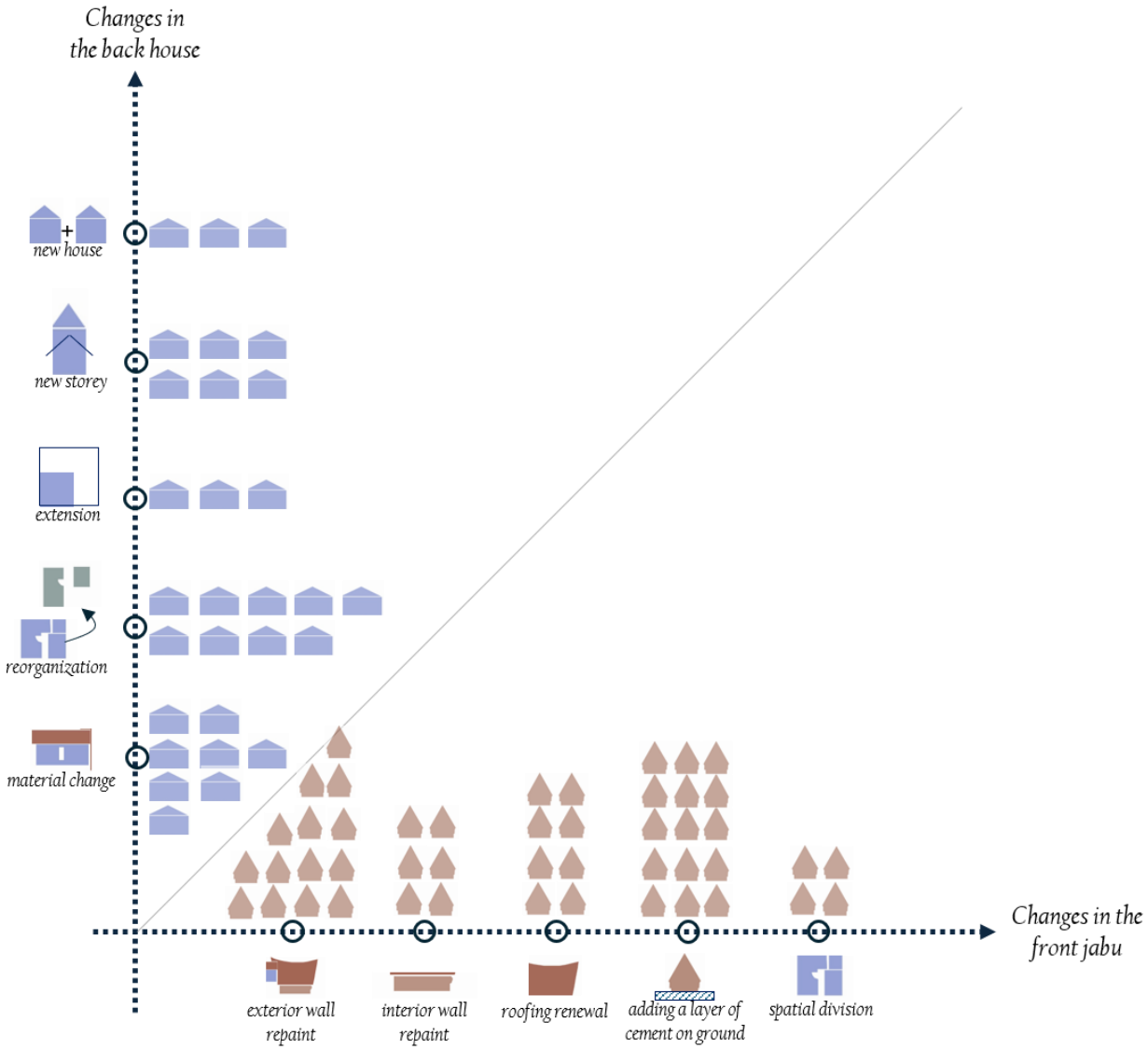


Figure 5. 33. Matrix of houses' transformations, by categories of changes, by parts of the houses. Graphic created by the author.

The graph shows the occurrence of changes made to the houses. I use two considerations to categorize the changes. The first is which house they are in: the front 'traditional' house or the back extension house. The second is the type of changes made. Regarding the first, the X-axis represents the categories of changes made to traditional *jabus*, while the Y-axis shows changes in the extension houses.

Referring to the color-coded changes in the previous part of this chapter (dark and light browns, blue, and green), I categorize the changes to traditional wooden houses into 5 groups. They are, from left to right, 1) exterior walls repainting, 2) interior walls repainting, 3) roofing renewals, 4) concrete-casting the ground, and 5) spatial divisions. The positions of these changes along the X-axis

reflect the degree of permanence or significance of each change. The farther it is, the greater impact on the house.

Likewise, the Y-axis applies to the same logic. The higher it goes, the more significant the changes on the back house/extension house. The Y-axis begins with material changes—from wood to concrete or to renewal of roofing materials—from bottom to top, followed by interior layout changes, extension of the house perimeter, and an additional story. The last category is an exception and applies to cases where the homestay units were built completely independently of the existing houses. While this pattern does not affect the existing houses as much, their physical presence as a new structure creates a significant impact on the *hutas*.

Based on the graph in Figure 5.36, for the traditional house, the most significant changes were observed in the external wall repaint, roofing material renewal, and ground casting groups. The application of color to the external walls is an attempt to beautify the houses and create visual harmony for guests, using specific Batak colors. Similarly, the material replacements on the roofs of the *Jabu Bolons* aim to reduce the ageing effect on the houses and project a fresh image. I argue that although these types of changes have a minor impact on the conservation of wooden houses, they are relatively successful at creating the impression of harmony and freshness. However, it is only accurate if the perspective is that the mundane use of the beautiful traditional structures in locals' everyday lives should not be promoted. Based on case studies of the houses investigated, it is safe to say that this is the perspective the homestay team used in completing the projects, hiding the everyday objects and messiness of the houses.

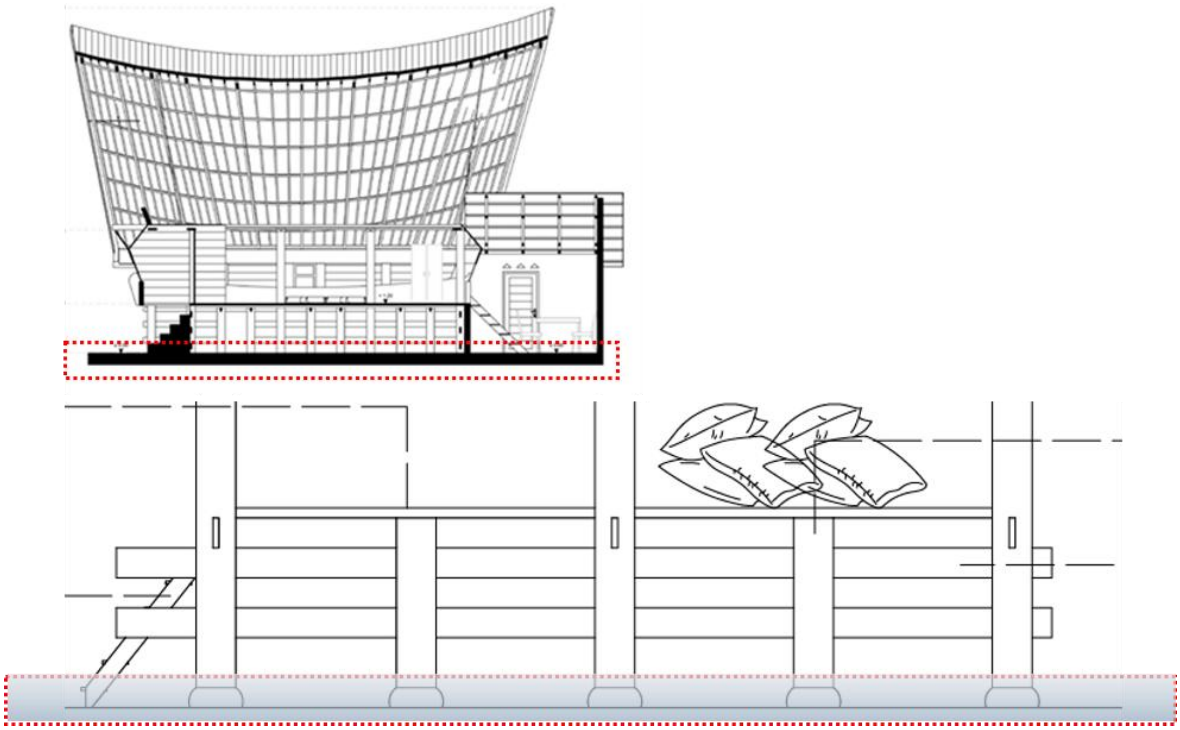


Figure 5. 34. The application of concrete on the ground of the traditional *jabu*. Drawing created by the author.

On the other hand, casting concrete on the ground — either to floor the *bara* (the room underneath *jabu*) or to create a terrace surrounding the houses —significantly affects the buildings' structural integrity. The application of concrete on the ground of the front *jabu* is as shown in Figure 5.37. The left part of the drawing shows the cast floor, while the right part shows the terrace surrounding the house. Adding such a fixed, rigid element ties up all the wooden poles and disrupts the tectonics of *Ruma Bolon's* wood structures.

Ruma Bolon, with its wooden structures relying on traditional timber joints and using no nails to connect the parts of the house, allows the house to move in response to the pressure and forces applied to it. The flexibility of its wooden structure distributes pressure evenly across the building, preventing it from breaking or collapsing (Citraningrum et al., 2025). It has become the signature of *Ruma Bolon's* structural excellence. As the nail-free joints allow the structure to 'move' slightly when there is pressure, like an earthquake or strong winds, instead of breaking (like a rigid nail or concrete joint), the house 'dances' following movement (Nababan, 2025). This principle is the same as that used in Japanese pagodas and other traditional houses in earthquake zones, including Indonesia, which sits in the Ring of Fire.

In this regard, a participant I interviewed in Huta Parsaoran told me about his experience during the strong earthquake that struck the west coast of West and North Sumatra in 2009. Recorded at a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter Scale, the earthquake caused severe damage and resulted in more than 1,100 deaths (BPBD, 2019). The participant, while explaining the structure of his *jabu* recalled his memory about the earthquake:

> *"... those wooden poles that look like they sit on the stones, they actually do not. They will when pressure or weight is applied. It makes this Batak house very resilient to earthquakes. During 2009's earthquake, I remember sleeping in the house when it hit. The house was shaking very strongly, to the point I thought it would topple or somersault. But until the end, the house stands still. Concrete and brick houses across this island did not survive it. That is why we want to keep this house. It is a very smart house. You can't argue about it. It is not a mere theory; I am the living proof."*

Therefore, by adding such a fixed, rigid element of concrete tying up all the wooden poles, I believe, disrupts such tectonic qualities. It further raises questions on the very basic purpose of homestay programs, which is stated to help conserve the endangered Batak Samosir's architecture. However, treatments made to the houses do not reflect this aspect. Although this concrete casting does not alter the house's visual or distinctive shape, it changes its structural system and tectonic principles in a more significant way.

While the state's goal of homestay is to conserve the local architecture and therefore "*no changes made to them [traditional jabus],*" the state did not provide detailed guidelines to the architect to

design these homestays. "*No such thing as documents given to us, no. But the guideline is clear, no major changes to the houses,*" said an architect during an interview.

Moving on to the changes listed on the Y-axis in Figure 5.36, the most frequent changes in the back house are material replacements and room layout changes. The material change shows that the back houses were initially built of wood and often elevated, like the front house. During the homestay construction, they switched to concrete bricks while rebuilding the house. This is because the replacement is more affordable and longer-lasting than the initial materials, as the wood used for traditional houses is not mass timber; it is logs harvested directly from the forest.

Moreover, room re-layouts often occur in the existing back house to accommodate the 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom requirement. All the existing back houses, as described at the beginning of this chapter, remained largely the same in their overall perimeter or footprint. However, to accommodate the 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom layout, repurposing the rooms is unavoidable. In doing so, some changes are necessary, including reorganizing the rooms, reassigning their functions, and readjusting their measurements. Although these changes seem minor, they are quite intricate and sensitive. This is because of its complex function in serving both inhabitants and guests, which draws attention to the composition of private and shared space. Another reason is the specific needs of each family, which the homestay team often overlooks in favor of universal, ready-made designs. Here, I feel the urgency to raise questions about the design process that led to these built spatial programs. The following chapter on the Process will address this concern.

Following the Y-axis categories, changes such as house extensions and adding a storey are also used as strategies to fulfill the 2-bedroom-2-bathroom units. The frequencies of these types of changes are relatively low compared to the initial two. The graph shows that extensions to existing homes only occured three times. It is because most houses in Batak hutas have limited land on which to stand, as they were close to one another and to the property lines at the back. Consequently, since the requirement is a 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom, adding another level to the house is the best option. However, families with significant additional land had the flexibility to use it to build a new homestay. This case is rare, as shown in Figure 5.36, which occurred in only three houses. In these cases, the existing houses were non-traditional structures, which gave the architects in charge more room to experiment with their design choices, as shown by Huta Tapian and House 2 of Huta Tinggi.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on an understanding of homestay implementation, this chapter shows how it affects the built forms of homestays in Samosir villages. As previously elaborated, to understand the impacts on local houses, I compare the conditions before and after the homestay across all houses under study and categorize the changes. I find that the types of transformations differ by part of the house: the front, a traditional wooden house, or the extension at the back. The changes are shown in Figure 5.37 above.

These categories of changes show that the back houses underwent all major alterations to accommodate the homestay, which is all good, as the goal is to maintain the originality of the wooden vernacular houses. However, this type of change does feel secondary and is very focused on the house's visuals and appearance. This change especially involves sacrificing the inhabitants' comfort of living, as further demonstrated in the study of the inhabitants in Chapter 7.

While the homestay project focused on preserving the front house's authenticity, the back house's design, unfortunately, does not receive the same attention (Figure 5.38). Emphasizing the beauty of the front wooden house, the architects relied heavily on the extension house to support the homestays. In fact, they packed everything into the back house, including services for both tourists and residents' everyday lives.

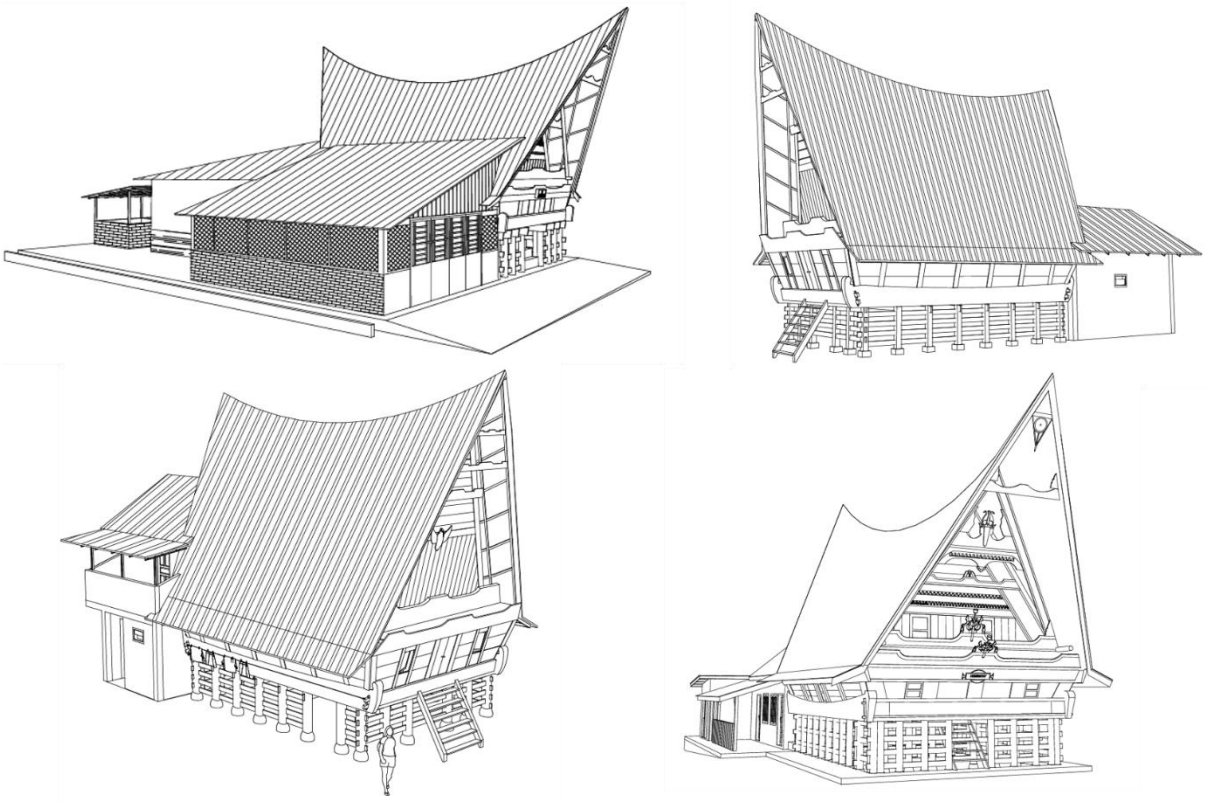


Figure 5. 35. A variety of designs of the back houses, an extension of the front vernacular houses. Drawings created by the author.

Additionally, two main bedrooms are added to the back house to accommodate the state's 2-bathroom and 2-bedroom requirement, despite the already small space there. As a result, the designs of the back houses, which are the whole construction of the so-called 'homestays', are far from satisfactory in terms of visual or spatial qualities. Figure 5.38 illustrates this argument.

Figure 5.38 shows a series of homestays with a view of the back houses. The designs illustrate that the back house's massing is very bulky, with no attempt to create harmony or correlation with the vernacular one. In fact, in some cases, the extension is built alongside the house (top-left drawing in Figure 5.38), with no clear indication of how it contributes to or enhances the beautiful front of the

wooden house. Neither does it help with the homestays' program as accommodation, since it serves as a semi-enclosed garage and/or a gathering space, raising questions about the program's goals and purposes.

Furthermore, the remaining houses in Figure 5.38 show that the extensions of the back houses vary, including a two-storey house, a large one-storey house, and a side house. Besides criticizing the quality of these designs, I also want to draw attention to the connections between these two very different building types—the wooden and concrete, vernacular and the modern, the beautiful and the mundane.

In these buildings, the designs of the connections between them are nothing but poor quality. Not only the way they attach to each other, but also the quality of workmanship. Many aspects of the connection are in poor condition. Not only does it show low-quality construction, but it also gives the impression of being completely incomplete and of very poor design, as shown in Figure 5.39.



Figure 5. 36. Conditions of the back houses. Photos taken by Gunawan (middle top) and the rest by the author.

Overall, it is clear that the homestay designs overemphasize the beauty of vernacular houses, romanticizing and fetishizing them. I argue that this is not a good design approach. Because over-reliance on the vernacular houses caused undermining of the rest of the houses, which, unfortunately, are as crucial as the vernacular parts. This approach, however, does not improve the village or *huta* as a whole neighborhood unit. Instead, it creates a new predicament for local communities by casting the extension building as the "back house."



Figure 5. 37. The contrast to the beautiful front village. Photos taken by the author.

The "back" refers to something secondary and to a service zone, unlike the front, which deserves maintenance and aesthetic attention. This arrangement can be seen by comparing Figure 5.39 above and Figure 5.40. The comparison shows contrasting images of the village's front and back. The contrast creates the image of the back houses as an area not worth attention, something that needs to be hidden from the public's eyes, not least the tourists. Finally, despite the initial idea of homestays to promote local architecture, in practice, it turns out to be "Othering" the everyday architecture of the host communities. In other words, the design approach that hyperfocuses on preserving the front house without enough attention to the back house marginalizes the everyday architecture of locals, vis-à-vis the ordinary, mundane structures and spaces, and instead manufactures the 'staged' beautiful parts of it for tourists to experience.

CHAPTER 6
PROCESS

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the design decisions made for the houses and their manifestation in the built homestay structures I experienced during data collection. The trace is to understand the actors involved, the dialogues and negotiations that occurred, if any, and who makes the final call on the design decisions. This chapter consists of three parts that cover 1) the way of communicating the proposed top-down designs, 2) design negotiation, 3) proposals made to change the design, and 4) a summary.

COMMUNICATING DESIGN

The government centralized the design process and hired the architects to design the homestays. However, the design considerations and decision-making varied among architects. The hiring of architects is based on a combination of factors that inform design possibilities specific to the villages. Although varying across *hutas*, the combination includes architects' vision and experience, the *adat* and its socio-cultural dynamics within the given communities, and homeowners' degree of agency. To capture the complex dynamics among multiple actors involved in the design process, I will use several cases to illustrate these dynamics.

In this chapter, I capitalize on the design's potential to serve as a contact zone for various agencies and actors. Their roles and involvement in the homestay projects both shape and are shaped by the program. To respond to Robinson's (2001) argument that many Indigenous-based tourism development projects ignore the possibility of host communities' involvement in the commodification of their traditions and culture, I argue that design is an important part of this homestay project. This is because the project takes place in domestic spaces and on the community's private property, thereby strongly asserting the owners' authorship and agency throughout the process. Therefore, I begin with the phases in which local communities were involved in the design, namely, understanding the proposed design.

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, Section 2, 'Implementing Homestay', the government hired the architects for the homestay team using a top-down model. The state assigned and distributed the hired architects to the *hutas*. Through the provincial architects' association, the

government announced its need for architects to participate in homestay projects. In response, many local architects in the region expressed interest and decided to participate in the design of the homestays in Samosir. According to an architect I interviewed, among those interested, the state prioritized architects of Batak origin. The goal is twofold. First, this approach empowers local architects, aligning with the association's vision; second, it streamlines implementation on Batak lands.

Regarding the latter, the model serves as a stimulus for connecting the strangers (the architect) with the clients, the Batak people, who highly value family and clan ties. While the state believed that it might help develop the relationship, a more important consideration, regarding the architects' expertise and experience in dealing with indigenous designs and buildings, I argue, should be given more attention than the architects' origins. It is due, firstly, to the fact that, with more experienced architects from the Batak community and their structures, an understanding of their social and economic contexts would have improved the design approach. Secondly, as this is a centrally controlled program from the get-go, the practice relied heavily on top-down design. It indicates very little communication with the homeowners prior to construction.

Moreover, many of the participants I interviewed described the design stage with, "*They [architects] drew the drawings directly*," "*they came, looked around, left, and made it [design], then they came back and asked if we liked it.*" However, the drawings shown were not the initial designs; instead, they were the final ones, rendered and accompanied by detailed drawings and BEPs. It gave very little room for discussion with the homeowners or for considering changes.

The homestay team presented proposed designs to the local communities. The handouts shown to them were the homestay team's first and only official means of communicating the homestay designs. It raises concerns about the effectiveness of these pages of rendered drawings as a means of design communication between specialized experts and laypeople with little experience with architectural drawings and representations. Here, the use of architectural drawings in the Batak homestay production process warrants attention.

Architectural drawings in such well-rendered, measured, and highly detailed qualities were printed on pages of professionally formatted paper, showing the name and signature of the architect in charge and the head of the national team leader. The homestay team handed out pages of drawings to every homeowner who had agreed to participate in the homestay project and had obtained the family's permission. Although many believed that receiving the drawings was standard procedure, a few said they did not receive them physically. In fact, some said that the drawings were briefly shown to them through one of the homestay teams' cellphones. The quoted conversation below, between a participant who is a homeowner and me, speaks about this issue:

I: Do you still have the drawings?

P: Of course not.

I: But did you see them?

P: Ah, I did. But they were not given to me; it was [only shown] through their phone, that day: "This is your house will be, later, like this," they said.

I: Who showed it to you, Sir?

P: Well, the guy, of course, the architect.

For those who received a copy of the complete drawings, however, very few still keep them. In fact, of all the houses I measured and studied, only one provided me with a physical copy of the drawings. The rest claimed not to know where they might have ended up.

The existence and use of drawings are crucial to assessing the level of incorporation and involvement of local people throughout the process. The question I raised in this investigation was whether the use of drawings helps mediate communication and form a common understanding of anticipated designs between locals new to such specialized drawings and the designers who produced them.

In addition, as the relations between architects and clients were not well developed during the initial design process, given the top-down nature of the project, which left little room for architects to communicate with the locals, the supposedly final designs presented to them were unfortunately poorly communicated as well. Unfortunately, the choice of design communication did not make the process easier. At least not in the way through which local people learn and understand the designs.

During my interviews with the homeowners, when discussing their interactions with architects and the drawings, it was very often mentioned that they had no experience or sufficient knowledge to read them. A few statements given during the interviews regarding this issue are presented below:

[1] "Especially people like us, 'orang kampung'[11] like us, we have no idea about [reading] those pictures. Right!? [followed by a few laughs] But you know, the pictures they showed were so great! It [the second-floor balcony] was finished with metal bars, iron fences, all finished, all colorful, all shining, all looking luxurious, not like this at all. When I saw those pictures, my mind went, 'This is how my house will be? Cool! Settle this down already, it's my house!'... But then, eh(!), you know, when it's done, it is like that [pointing to the house]. Very incomplete. Far from the picture."

[2] "The ministry came and showed us the drawings. They said, 'The picture [design] is like this.' But, you know, because people here don't know how to see [read] them [the drawings], right, so it was kind of useless. We just nod along and agree, too. [It is] because others did.

[11] The term 'orang kampung' literally translates into 'village person' or 'villager'. However, it is often used to refer to a clumsy or stupid country person, which is what the participant meant.

These excerpts show how alien architectural drawings are to their local clients. The drawings are very foreign and distant to the locals; the renderings make it very flashy and isolated, like something out of a magazine, which makes it very difficult for the locals to relate to and comprehend, and hence to express their opinions.

The unfamiliarity of drawings as a medium to communicate building plans and construction, coupled with the flashy rendering that was somehow unrealistic and too fashionable, *"like houses in magazines,"* as one homeowner said, created a gap and distance to the realities understood by the communities.

While some showed limited comprehension of the drawings, others demonstrated passivity and a lack of agency at that stage. Excerpts from an interview illustrate this aspect by saying things like, *"What can you say. I did not know any better. [I] just accepted it, and trusted it to turn good,"* and *"Well, us villagers, should be just grateful, not being a pain in the neck with all questions and complains, that's how I felt,"* and *"We trust the government, they know better than we do on how to do it."* These excerpts illustrate the correlation between homeowners' lack of involvement in the design process and the design's medium and communication methods.

Feelings of distance and detachment resulted from the use of ineffective design media, creating disillusion and misinterpretation of what the local people know as reality in their everyday environment. Here, I argue that using defined and specialized drawings as such to be the main, and perhaps, the only designated means to communicate designs to the community creates distance and detachment between them and their own space and home.

Additionally, using architectural drawings as a medium to obtain homeowner approval is not part of their building tradition practices, nor is it familiar to them. One of the participants admitted that he never opened the drawings handed out to him: *"Nah, I never looked at them, not once. 'These are the drawings, Bang [Brother]' he said, and handed it to me. I accepted. That's it."*

The lack of communication, or even an attempt to find a common medium to communicate designs and land on a shared understanding of the design, has distanced Indigenous people from gaining their own agency in defining their homes. Unfortunately, very little attention and awareness have been given to mediate this gap in understanding between the two groups. It has significantly reduced the possibility of homeowners' involvement in the design process and the reconstruction of their own houses.

Consequently, it caused them to lose their authorship in the process. It also failed to create a safe space for locals to engage with the designs and understand the planned changes to their property. A safe room is an opportunity, a forum, a discussion, or a medium where homeowners can process what is presented in front of their eyes, without feeling guilty for having too many questions, or feeling inferior for not understanding, or feeling less of a citizen for being '*orang kampung*' who cannot read architectural drawings.

Community-based design indeed requires a lot of time to be able to involve local communities in the design process. Del Gaudio et al. (2017) further argue that misfits often hinder the process. I believe two of their three points applied to this homestay project. They are the difference between 1) design process timing and the time required for the social environment to evolve, and 2) the speed of the designer's actions and the speed of community participation. Point number two resonates well with the issue of the different speeds between architects and homeowners in the design process, as previously explained, due to their different backgrounds and familiarity with the process.

Meanwhile, the first point, the difference between the process time and the expected results from the communities, represents another aspect of the homestay project, which was the time limit. The pressure to execute the design immediately, due to the one-year fiscal deadline set by the central government for the entire homestay project across the country, did not allow enough time to gather homeowners' aspirations or to implement a bottom-up design process. In other words, with a very limited understanding of the realities of the designs provided, coupled with the highly time-sensitive nature of the project, many people decided to *just* agree and carry on with the government's timeline; otherwise, the state would cancel the project. Hence, the owners accepted, and construction began.

Moreover, given the disengagement of local communities from the design process, it is important to understand their ways of working. The common practice of building tradition in these communities does not require a specified design period or the role of architects. Rather, the practice of building a structure seems to be more organic. In everyday situations, when locals need to do some simple construction—not the *Jabu Bolons*—they mostly do it themselves or hire '*tukangs*' or local builders.

The hiring process is mainly based on two things: recommendations and lineage. If there are *tukang* in the family line or those who share the same main clan group, that will be preferred. For instance, if one wants to build or renovate a house, one will hire local builders to do the work, usually recommended by other family members or still family related under the same clan's group or *marga*.

To this community, *marga* influences many decisions, not only everyday life matters, but also economic and even political decisions. Trust tends to go to people with the same *marga* even though they do not know each other or are unrelated, except for having the same *marga*. The decision on selecting builders, while on a smaller scale, follows the same logic: a family with *marga* Sitohang would likely hire builders with *marga* Sitohang, or subclans within the same group, such as Nainggolan and Sitohang. Based on such considerations, it is common to find that the relationship between builders and clients, who in this case are the homeowners, is usually very personal.

The structure of builders working on a project usually consists of a builder head, or '*kepala tukang*', who is the leader and considered more experienced in the construction business, and three to five other regular builders, called *anggota*. The lead builder will communicate with the clients and

grasp their expectations for the building. The discussion often occurred on site, and communication relied mainly on verbal explanations and hand gestures to describe the design, with existing conditions added to illustrate the idea visually. Not seldom do they use examples from the surroundings, referring, for example, to neighbors' houses, and then also visit the reference. In other words, 3D real-life visual aids, verbal descriptions, and on-site-specific descriptions served as the main channels of communication for the design idea.

This practice of construction, without drawings, is, of course, more applicable to a modern house, such as the extended house, not the traditional *Jabu Bolons*. For *Jabu Bolon*, however, very few builders are capable of taking responsibility. During an interview with a master builder specializing in Jabu Bolon, he made a point that local builders very rarely, if at all, use drawings to guide the construction process. Although for *Jabu Bolon*, its form, structure, and building process are a set of established and shared knowledge within the communities, the approach to knowledge transfer in building practice remains the same as for the modern brick '*batu*' house.

For one simple house project, a head builder will have 3 to 5 members assisting him. In the interview with one of the local builders, when discussing his experience in building practice, he explained his process by taking me to the existing house and using it as a model. In addition, a hand drawing was helpful to provide details of the house parts. Figure 6.1 is the architect's hand-drawn explanation of his work on one of the recent *jabu* he built in the *huta* nearby.



Figure 6. 1. Hand drawings of a local builder, explaining structural elements of a *jabu*. Photos by the author.

The drawing was spontaneous and sufficiently informative to explain the structure's configuration. As the builder seemed very handy and comfortable with the drawings, we discussed his background further. He claimed he never had a chance to pursue any formal training or education to do so. He learnt doing so through his practice of building houses, starting as an *anggota* for years before finally becoming the lead builder and even a master builder for *Jabu Bolon*. The latest is a very

challenging title to obtain in the region, especially due to the need for social and cultural trust and approval from his communities. A master builder is an *adat* builder, an un-institutionalized profession with a highly specialized set of skills required to build a *Jabu Bolon*, the traditional house of the Batak. In local terms, this master builder is known as '*na malo ni tangan*', which literally means 'good with hands,' someone with gifted hands.

Although the master is familiar with drawing, using it as a medium to transfer knowledge and communicate his design to his team, is something he claimed he never used in his practice, "*...when building houses we [I] do not draw, we [I] remember everything by heart. Therefore, no drawings needed.*" Here, construction practice heavily relies on the builder's familiarity with and understanding of common building types. Moreover, drawing has never been a part of the community's building tradition, from the *Jabu Bolon* tradition to contemporary brick buildings, mushrooming in the region over the last few decades. As a lead builder, he is responsible for explaining the construction plan to his *anggotas*, based on his understanding of what the client shared during the initial discussion. Instead of using drawings, the lead builder would guide his *anggota* orally and with hand gestures on site and in real time. During construction, the lead leader gives instructions to the teams, using verbal commands, such as, "*...we [I] give instructions to them, step by step. For example, I said, 'you do this, you chisel a hole through this' and so on, so forth, according to what is needed at that time. That's how they learn, not by drawing on paper. That is more difficult.*" In this sense, the process is very concentrated on the figure of the lead builder. In fact, this is where the relationship between the lead builder and the clients is very pivotal and therefore is highly needed in such specific social constructions and dynamics.

Connecting this knowledge back to the practice of homestay production, this is where the chain of human connection and flows of understanding is missing due to a new, strange figure of the so-called 'architect' taking control of planning and designs. Having an architect in charge of the designs takes away some of the planning from the owner. In addition, the architect assigned to them is not someone of their own choice. The state randomly chose and assigned architects to the villages.

To handle this regional-scale project, the government hired several architects and assigned them to all selected villages for homestay projects. One architect oversaw around 15-20 houses distributed into one to three villages or *hutas*, depending on the size of the *huta*. Given the number of houses the architect had to deal with and the pressure of a deadline to complete the project on time, the design phase was very short.

Having these restrictions inevitably limits the room for design exploration and iteration, especially when it comes to incorporating the owners' aspirations and needs. Therefore, the strategy to address this situation was to offer the locals a one-for-all design for all the houses under the same architect's responsibility. Alternatively, some architects provided three design variants for the owners to select.

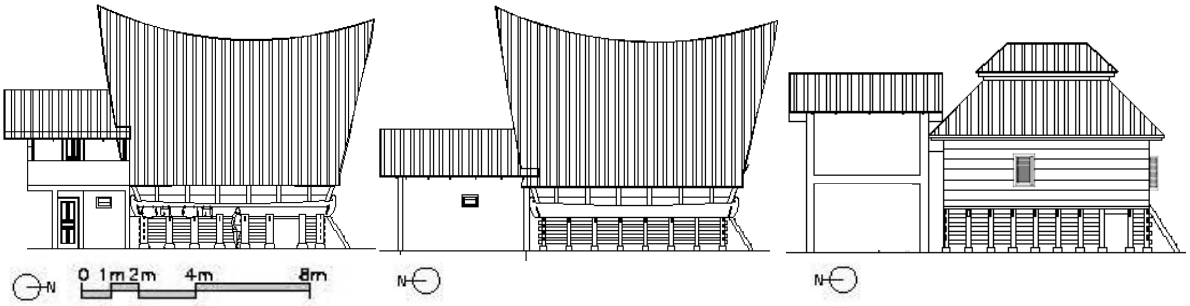


Figure 6. 2. Design variants offered in Sosor Nangka. Drawings by the author.

Sosor Nangka *Huta*, for instance, received three design options: a two-storey house, a one-storey landed house, and a one-floor elevated house (left, middle, right, respectively in Figure 6.2). Each homeowner could choose the design they wanted for their house. Each design, based on interviews with the homeowners, received roughly the same amount of funding for construction. While this raised questions, the locals did not have space to discuss the issue and therefore chose what appeared to be the most suitable or profitable for them.

One of the homeowners who chose the design of a two-floor landed house explained that, "*Of course I chose this, this is more expensive, there, there is a second floor. I would never be able to build such a house on my own.*" In contrast, another owner who got the one-floor elevated design for their house, claimed that they did not have any options, they just got the design sicne the beginning, "*Really, no idea, they gave us this. I would like to get the two-floor one, but they did this instead.*"

Another interesting example came from Huta Sitohang, which initially had only two options: a one-floor landed (left Figure 6.3) house and a tilt house (right Figure 6.3). Instead of giving homeowners options, the scenario was different. The homestay team assigned the design based on the row where the house is located. The landed house was designated for units on the row on the interior side of the village, while the tilt one was designated for the exterior row on the side of the road. The tilted design was made to accommodate the height difference between the street and the village, as illustrated in the left drawing in Figure 6.3.

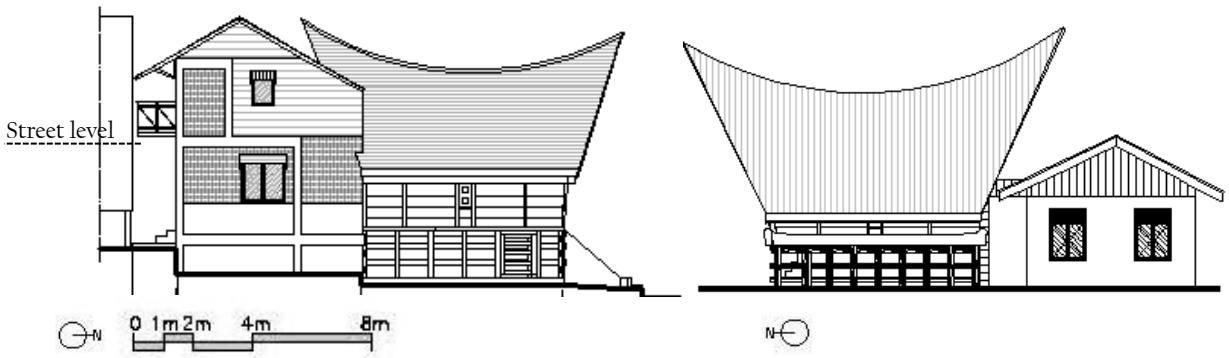


Figure 6. 3. Design options for Huta Sitohang: raised house (left), landed house (right). Drawings created by the author.

NEGOTIATING DESIGN

While employing a range of homestay designs helps accelerate production, this approach cannot account for the specificities of individual cases, which architects or designers should address separately. Considerations such as the physical condition of houses and lands, as well as the social and economic dynamics within individual houses and *hutas*, could not be solved by simplification and controlled decision-making in the design process. These approaches ignore the intricate needs of everyday and domestic space specific to one's needs.

In this sense, it is unavoidable that the proposed designs needed some adjustments and adaptations to meet the needs of the inhabitants. Regarding this, I will continue using one of the examples previously mentioned, the Huta Sitohang, to help elaborate on the design changes, from the provided universal design to the one that ended up being built. Here, I delve deeper into the negotiation process that accompanied the design. I also pay attention to aspects such as the people and actors involved in the process, including the articulation and accommodation of aspirations and changes, and how the implementation of the negotiation to achieve the final design, which was then approved for the construction stage.

In some villages, design decisions were not only in the hands of the architect and the homeowners' acceptance, but, more importantly, required the approval of the landlords, the head of the *huta*, the *Tunggane Huta*. To demonstrate the dynamics among these actors, I focus on the design negotiations, the homeowners' initial responses, and the subsequent dialogues and negotiations. Therefore, I examine the construction stage during which most homeowners' design negotiations occurred.

Right after a set of drawings was handed out to each house in the village, construction began. Building materials were transported to the locations, and builders from outside the region, including Medan and other cities in Java, began to arrive and settle in the surrounding areas. They began the work immediately. While it was mentioned that during the design delivery, questions such as "*Is it suitable or not [to your expectations]? If it's not, what do you want it to be like*?" were asked of the homeowners, no design discussion happened at that time.

In fact, the dialogues mostly took place during the construction phase. The locals felt more comfortable talking to the builders and discussed the possibility of changing some parts of the initial design. This is, as previously stated, because they were used to such a process that designs laid out on the actual construction site provide a more tangible visualization of the anticipated building than drawings do. This method allows the local community to understand the design better.

Therefore, it was not surprising to find that the initial construction occurred when questions and requests to make changes arose. Owners began to voice their confusion, express their needs, and request revisions from the builders working in the field. Based on the type of requests, whether minor or major, the builders then passed them on to the on-site project manager, or, if possible, responded to directly by the builders.

Responses to homeowners' requests for design changes varied. In some cases, they were accommodated; in others, the team discussed and then denied for various reasons. Some other interesting examples of major changes happened in *Lumban Sitohang*. I will present two contrasting cases here from Sitohang to demonstrate how requests received different responses within the same socio-cultural contexts.

The two selected cases for this are Houses 3 and 1 in *Lumban* Sitohang. House 3, on a plot of land that is bordered by the intercity road, Pangururan-Simanindo. With a significant difference between the street level and the village, and a limited extra room on the remaining plot to the back of the house, the architect designed the houses on this side by elevating the first floor and providing a flight of stairs extending the body of the back house to the side instead of to the back. Figure 6.4 shows the house location (red rectangle) to the main street at the back of the *huta*.

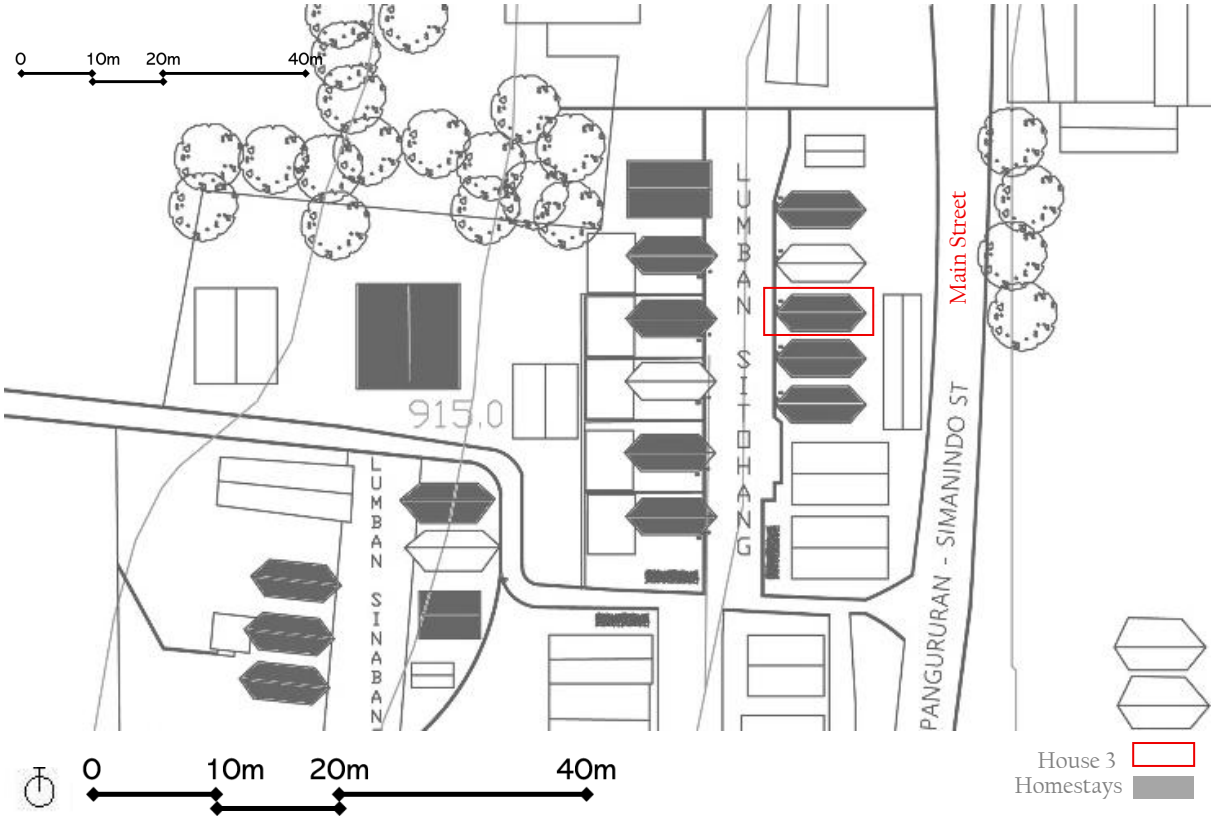


Figure 6. 4. Location of House 3, in *Lumban* Sitohang. Drawing created by the author.

Due to limited space in this part of the plot, expanding the house to the back was not an option, nor was expanding to the side, as the distance between houses was only sufficient for accessibility (Figure 6.4). Compared to houses on the other side, as shown in Figure 6.4, the distance between houses on the street side is relatively smaller, which prevents expansion to the side. Unlike the other row, expansion to the side is possible.

Therefore, the homestay units in this exterior part of the village could only accommodate one bedroom, instead of two, and two bathrooms in the extended house. Additionally, the new design also raised the house to the same level as the front house. This way, the extended house would not sit on the lower ground, thereby reducing the height difference between the road and the village. As mentioned before, extension to the side, like houses on the other side, was not feasible due to the narrow alley between houses. In other words, houses on this row suffer from space restrictions that prevent expansion in both directions, back and side. They have less flexibility compared to units in the other row. This predicament is where design negotiation becomes an interesting case.

In some cases, however universal a design intent, it just does not work out, especially when concerning the most intimate lived space one can have. Residents, having lived in the house for generations, have different needs and require solutions tailored to their conditions. Therefore, they ask for some adjustments and flexibility in the design. However, when dealing with this homestay project, combining the indigenous community and the state, it is also important to note how the homestay team accommodates this flexibility, and how key figures from the two social constructions negotiate and make decisions, and how the aspirations of the individuals make their way to the ears of power holders. I will address these aspects by demonstrating cases from different *hutas.*

In House 3 Lumban Sitohang, for instance, a family received a homestay design with one bedroom, two bathrooms, and a floor elevation to accommodate a street on the back. As it was intended to be universal and given the project's accelerated timeline due to time pressure, the focus was on aggregability and avoiding potential conflicts that could slow the process, so that the homestay construction could go smoothly.

However, as one invades others' private property, some changes and adjustments were highly needed and, in fact, sometimes unavoidable. It is to ensure that the family can remain functioning while accommodating tourists in their home. This is the case for House 3. The family is one big multi-family living in the house. The family consists of seven members, including a husband and wife, and their four children. Two of the children are young adults: the female is the eldest and the male the second; the other two are female teenagers. The oldest, who married at a young age, now (during fieldwork) has one 3-year-old son. Hence, seven people.

Considering the size of the family, with seven people inhabiting the house daily, adding homestay facilities to the structure does not seem reasonable, unless there are some exceptions specifically made for this family. To make it work, the homeowners clearly need more space to accommodate both tourism and their everyday lives. The homestay team supported the idea of expanding the house vertically by adding a second floor. As there is not enough space to allow two bedrooms and two bathrooms at the back of the house, changing the master design for this unit became the only solution. Therefore, the design changed from a one-floor elevated house to a two-floor elevated house.

The *Tunggane Huta* also approved such changes for this specific unit. In fact, this design is an exception for the village, with the only house being a two-storey homestay unit in the *huta*. The homeowners said that while it was necessary to add the upper floor, the decision-making process, especially on how the design evolved, did not involve them as much. The proposal did not involve the inhabitants, as the homeowner explained:

> *"I didn't say anything; that person [the architect] himself drew it. My thinking [position/attitude] at that time was like, 'you guys have decided it like this, you want to build it, then do.' Because if one backed out, for example, I said I did not like it, then the whole project in this neighborhood would be cancelled. Not only in this huta, but also in our neighboring huta, Sinabang."*

This statement demonstrates how limited the room for discussion provided was for the homeowners. Moreover, in addition to time pressure and the alienating media used to communicate design, the restrictions also came from the pressure to maintain unity among the homestay recipients: a unanimous agreement. The implication is that when one rejects, the whole neighborhood project fails. It puts a lot of pressure on individuals who want to voice their aspirations and negotiate their designs. In other words, the local community believed being more accepting and less critical of the designs to be for the greater good of all, putting personal benefit aside and their dream home aside.

With limited design iterations and options, the concerns of the owners revolved around the basic elements of space, such as the dimensions of the room, and whether it would be sufficient to house the family members. This was particularly the concern expressed by the homeowner during the homestay implementation in *Lumban* Sitohang, "*I did not say much except 'Aren't the rooms too small? It would be great to expand it a bit to the side. I have kids in this house.' Although the architect, himself, agreed with me, we just could not do it, because Tunggane Huta said 'no'.*"

While in most *hutas* the design process was mainly in the hands of the architects and, of course, with the approval of the homestay teams, Lumban Sitohang offers a unique case of how all involved made design decisions. There was significant involvement from a figure other than the appointed architect. In this case, the role of *Tunggane Huta* in saying the final words for the chosen design was quite pivotal. Restrictions and controls from *Tunggane Huta* defined the built/final design in many ways.

For example, still in House 3, as previously described, *Tunggane Huta* restricted the house extension a little bit to the side, which caused the back house to grow vertically. Although the distance between House 3 and its neighboring house was limited to allow for additional expansion, placing the door as secondary access to the house would leave a lot of space at the back for extension, where the door is now. It requires a circulation area on the back to access the door. Allowing it would have provided greater flexibility in the interior dimensions, including the kitchen, bedroom,

and the circulation area between them and the stairs to the second floor. It would have been more comfortable for the inhabitants, as the current interior space is narrow and crowded—a concern of the homeowners from the beginning. The participants expressed their disappointment during one of the interviews, as follows:

> *"They [Tunggane Huta] allow us to have an upper floor, but it is not wide enough. I said fine, I can't argue with that. You know, it's very difficult here. That day, I told them I wanted a terrace upstairs. They [Tunggane Huta] rejected, 'no need to do it', he said. I pursued further, 'I just ask for a small one. Can't I?'... We got it eventually, but it is so small. It [balcony] was only about 150x150 cm. Too small. That, even, we had already argued a lot. They made excuses so we could not have a bigger one. They said, 'I plan to do this and that here... I want to make a shop here, so no more [balcony].' They later did build the shop, back-to-back with the balcony, blocking my terrace, but it [the food stall] is never open. Clearly, it is just out of their pettiness.*"

Another challenging aspect of the design discussion was the floor level of the back house. Still using the same case, the homeowners had requested that the house be lowered to the ground, so there was no need for poles like the wooden house they previously had. While *Tunggane Huta* approved of no poles, the house still needs to be on the same level as the front house, the *Jabu Bolon.*

The request was for the house to go down so the kitchen and everything else on the back would stand on the ground, lower than the elevated wooden front house. Such a change, which is a little bit different from the previously existing back house they had, is not allowed. It further increases the frustration of the homeowners, as shown by the following excerpt: "*Even if [the house] went down, it would be exactly the same size as it is now; it is just a matter of elevation. But that's it, in their minds it's already different, we can't do anything about it. We're just temporary residents.*" In the end, the house remained at the level of a wooden house, yet without poles. It required the house to use more materials and took longer to construct the foundation and build on it.

Concerning the elevation of this extended house, an interesting discussion ensued: changing it by allowing the house to sit on the ground, making it lower than the Jabu Bolon, has been a long-standing issue. It turns out that it is not only for the Lumban Sitohang but also for other Batak villages. It is rooted in the villagers' practice of temporary living, with the only permanent residents being the family of *Tunggane Huta*. However, it is undeniable that the massive homestay projects on the lands of the Batak have significantly challenged the understanding of 'temporary living' and the dynamics of the relationships between landlords and their 'temporary' residents.

Here, *Tunggane Huta's* involvement and control over the houses are becoming increasingly significant. In fact, during the homestay project, every change needed to go through the *Tunggane Huta. Tunggane Huta* himself emphasized the importance of his roles during the design discussion and construction phases of his *huta*. During one of the interviews, he explained that there was another

house, right next to House 3, that also wanted to have a second floor, just like its neighbor. However, he decided to reject that request because, as he explained, "*...it is also [about] the funds, we look at the money too. And the priority. The family is small, not as big as this one [the House 3]. If I were convinced, I would let them do it.*" He continued giving more examples of rejections he made to other homeowners who proposed changes, and further explained the reasons behind his decisions.

Another example was from House 1. While some houses, as previously explained, have issues due to land limitations on their plots, other houses stand on larger plots, especially those on the row across. This row is where the *Tunggane Huta* family's house is. The plots on this row are bigger with more spare land left around the houses, as shown in Figure 6.4. It gives homeowners more flexibility to extend their house either to the side or to the back. Hence, no need to add a second floor.

Regarding this extra land, House 1 requested a design change to extend the house in both directions —side and back. The intention was to add a couple of rooms to the house, in addition to the government-funded homestay unit. The homeowners had also planned to dedicate additional rooms to tourist accommodation. In terms of costs, the homeowner had agreed to cover any additional expenses arising from the additional construction and materials from their own pockets.

The homestay team supported the idea, which aligned well with their goals. It was also seen as a promising sign of the locals' acceptance and support for the idea of homestays. While the government was willing to accommodate such ideas, the final words still needed to come from the *Tunggane Huta*. As *Tunggane Huta's* approval is mandatory before carrying out such requests, the homestay teams went to *Tunggane Huta* to discuss and get his permission. *Tunggane Huta*, however, rejected the idea. He offered an explanation as follows:

> "*I approved all the drawings for these houses. They [the homestay team] showed me the drawing and asked if it was all right. I went 'Yes, appropriate' or 'This is a no, no need.' For example, that house [pointing to House 1] asked for so much [adding a few meters] from what was in the drawing. I said 'Nope. Reduce'... They also asked to extend a little more to the back, they said, 'I asked for 1 more meter, Lae [Brother],' I did not allow it, 'No more,' I said. [Then] I confirmed to the consultant, 'The building is limited to this drawing... Needs to be like this, that is it.'* "

During interviews with homeowners, when discussing the reasons behind Tunggane Huta's rejections of the requests they proposed, homeowners often mentioned that this was due to pettiness, increased competition, or the realization of the growing value of their property. It consequently provokes dynamics among communities, including control, respect, and the need to reaffirm the position and power of the *Tunggane Huta*.

In comparison, an interview with *Tunggane Huta* provides an insight into the restrictions and controls he imposed on the villagers. The desire to keep the keep the Batak village harmonious and beautiful drove some of the design request rejections. He plans to keep the houses in his *huta*

relatively the same size and form. Another important point emphasized by *Tunggane Huta*, basing his rejections on houses extension beyond the proposed designs, was his way of ensuring his future generations have the chance to live and dwell in the *huta*, "*...because we, of course, will have descendants, right? We do not know what their future will be. So, in case our children want to build a house here, they can use that extra land at the back of that one [House 3], for example, to build a small house.*"

In other words, the limitations on the houses' expansion beyond their existing perimeters followed on *Tunggane Huta's* vision for his future generation, to help ensure some form of land availability for them. It sounds reasonable, considering the rapidly increasing land values in the regions that obviously concern him. It is also worth noting that *Tunggane Huta's* future includes the current *Tunggane Huta's* children, as well as the children of his brothers and uncles on his father's side. This is because the title of *Tunggane Huta* is passed down from generation to generation under the patrilineal system.

In addition, the footprint restrictions were sometimes loose, especially House 3 and other houses in the *huta.* In fact, it became the design norm for all houses in this *huta*. Moreover, the increasing involvement of *Tunggane Huta* since the arrival of homestay programs not only controls individual units, but also the general design applied to all units, which I will refer here as the 'design template.' *Tunggane Huta* claimed that his involvement in the design began with his own house. Once he observed the design, initially, it was slightly different from what is built right now. Figure 6.5 shows the changes made in response to *Tunggane Huta's* request.

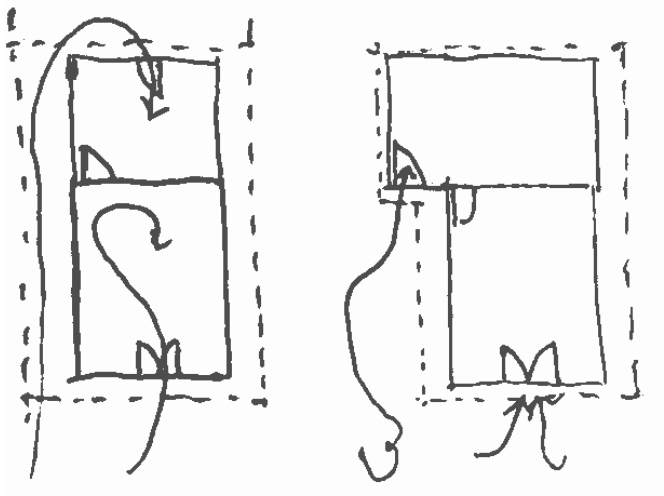


Figure 6. 5. Design template based on Tunggane Huta's home. Drawing by the author.

The left drawing was the original floor plan of the homestay unit. The right one is the one proposed by *Tunggane Huta*, which is being built for all houses. The main change is extending the back house to the side to allow secondary access to the house. The door is on the side, instead of on the back. This change helped homeowners easily enter the house when they host guests, without having to go all the way to the back.

"It started with this one [pointing at his own], I asked to extend it to the side so that there is a side door. [The way] they drew it, it [the side door] didn't exist. ... Just one door from the front and another one is on the back, straight to the back. Now, all have side doors. That's me who proposed it. When I saw the picture, 'Ah, it's not good like this,' I said. 'Add a meter [to the side], can't you? Are the funds enough [for such a change]?' They calculated, then 'Enough,' they said. 'That's it,' I said, 'make all [houses] like that.' So, it makes it easy for us. If there are guests like this time, we don't have to pass from the front, nor do we need to go around the back. The side is very convenient."

Once the architect applied the side-door design to all homestay floor plans in the huta, the homestay teams began working on and revising all the drawings. It caused changes in all aspects, including budgeting, material calculation, and detailed drawings. The revision phase took longer than expected, as stated by the *Tunggane Huta*. In fact, he claimed that the wait for all the adjusted drawingsaccording to his instructions was quite long. These then would be the final drawings for the homestay projects in this *huta*.

Once they were ready, the homestay team then distributed to all homestay recipients for the signature session. Of course, the signing session only happened after the *Tunggane Huta* approved all the drawings and signed them as well. After being overhauled and approved by the *Tunggane Huta*, homeowners could then sign them to confirm their acceptance of the designs and their agreement to carry them forward into the construction stage.

Finally, as these changes focus on the roles of the *Tunggane Huta*, it is clear that the landlords' increasing roles are mostly relevant to villages with strong, highly dedicated individuals. On the contrary, in villages with less involved *Tunggane Huta*, the designs became the architect's concern. Examples for this case are Huta Parsaoran I, Huta Tapian, and Huta Sosor Nangka. The design-related decisions depend heavily, if not solely, on the architect.

In these cases, although *Tunggane Huta* did not control his neighbours' homestay designs, they usually enjoyed privileges compared to his fellow villagers. Often, *Tunggane Hutas*' houses become the priority of homestay teams. It was usually manifested in significant design changes compared to other houses. An example of this case is Huta Tapian, Houses 1 & 2, which had a new whole structure built for the homestay. Another case is House 1 in Parsaoran 1, which added a whole new floor under the *jabu* to have more rooms.

Finally, *Tunggane Huta* in Sitohang, besides his strong roles, also received homestay funds for 2 units, for his house and his mother's. It was one of the conditions given by *the Tunggane Huta* to receive the program in this *huta.* Although he had two of his family's houses renovated through homestay projects, only one is hosting guests.

TRACING HOUSES: WHOSE DESIGN?

The ideal construction process should follow the final designs approved by the architect, the *Tunggane Huta,* and the homeowners. This commonly perceived practice of architecture, however, is not always the case, especially in the *hutas* of Samosir. In the Indigenous Batak community, traditions are organic and flowing, rather than fragmented into segments with a designated person-in-charge for each. The Batak community faces many limitations in adopting modern architectural practices, including the use of highly specialized drawings and a centralized hiring process for designers and builders. They are all foreigners or unknown to the locals, which eliminates interpersonal relations among them.

Due to limited interaction with locals during the design phase and the lack of design mediation and socialization, the homeowners found it easier to engage with the design at the beginning of the construction process. Dialogues began to take shape at this stage. Very often, homeowners make time to be present during the day-to-day construction period, building trust and a relationship with the builders. Through these interactions and communication, a better understanding of the design began to form.

During this interaction, it is natural for homeowners to offer feedback, share their aspirations, and even request changes to the plans. In fact, it was the period when homeowners' responses to the proposed designs were most vocal. This was the period when the homeowners engaged in the project and helped shape their own private environments. In other words, it demonstrates that homeowners were more comfortable and open to communicating their aspirations to the builders on site, using actual media rather than to the architect-in-charge, *Tunggane Huta,* or the beautiful drawings.

To the locals, the builders, or, in local terms, '*tukang*', are the direct bridge that can help translate the design or the proposed building to them. '*Tukang*' is perceived as the person who could accommodate and, somehow, had the final say, as they are the ones who would actually build. While the locals were aware that the *tukangs* would only do what the drawings said, witnessing the step-by-step construction, along with daily interactions with them, made it easier for the homeowners to request changes here and there to parts of the design. I argue that relationships between homeowners and *tukangs* developed more productively than those with architects.

Here, *tukangs* played a crucial role in mediating the tension between homeowners' hopes and dreams and the design restrictions applied to their houses. It was often noted that *tukangs* would likely accommodate requests if there were no significant changes to the material allocations or the budgeted funds for the given household. In other cases, even when the requests impacted the allocated funds, meaning the change requested was relatively major, the homeowners felt that *tukang* was their bridge to the architect and project manager. *Tukangs* would talk to the homestay teams and deliver the homeowners' aspirations to them. Commonly, *tukangs* would also share their perspectives

on how such requests would make, or not, a significant difference to their labor. Therefore, locals generally perceive a good relationship with *tukangs* as very important for helping them obtain some degree of authorship over the design of their house and making it their own. One of the participants made comments on this aspect and compared the outcome of a well-maintained relationship with *tukangs* to one of their neighbors who did not perceive it as important, as follows:

> *"They [next door neighbors] weren't approved of the same request as ours. Look, I could add a small [terrace], but they did not. I talked to the tukangs every day. They are Javanese [not Batak], and since I spoke their language, we connected easily. I'm good at winning their hearts. I watched them work and made them snacks, even though it was not our responsibility. But I did it as a thank you, so they feel appreciated."*

On one hand, it was meaningful to have such good relationships between homeowners and their *tukangs*. It provided locals with a platform and a mediator to voice their aspirations. It also helped them navigate the complex, foreign process of such a rushed, top-down development project.

On the other hand, unfortunately, such dialogues and requests for design changes were unintentional. The requests were not a part of the plan, and of course, it was in the timelines for the homestay project's completion. This was not anticipated, as that period was expected to cover only the construction phase, in accordance with the drawings, with no changes foreseen afterward. While it carried the mission of a one-year fiscal completion set by the governments, it unfortunately did not align with how local communities operate and practice their building traditions.

Therefore, design discussions and dialogues with the homeowners, as evidenced by their requests to change the house's design, kept surfacing. I took notes on such requests during my fieldwork. Regardless of whether those requests succeed or not, I believe it is necessary to discuss the aspects of the designs that the homeowners want to change. It will help to offer perspectives on the inhabitants' livelihoods and their understanding of their personal and spatial needs as they accommodate a new function: tourist accommodation.

Of the 16 houses and families surveyed and interviewed during the fieldwork, various change requests surfaced by homeowners. Given the wide range of requested changes, I am using some interesting examples to discuss in this section. They are House 2 Huta Parsaoran 1, House 3 Lumban Sitohang, House 1 Lumban Sitohang, and House 1 & 2 Sosor Nangka.

Safety & Privacy: House 2 Huta Parsaoran 1

The owner of House 2 *Huta* Parsaoran 1, Mr Nainggolan (anonymous, as is the clan's name, and most of the village population), requested changes to some parts of the planned design for his house. As he had just built his back house a couple of years before the homestay project came along, the homestay team decided to expand it to the second floor, which Mr Nainggolan welcomed with open arms.

To connect the three parts of the house, the front wooden house, the back, and the upper, the team decided to put the stairs in the existing location. Using the existing stairs, they planned to extend them to the second floor in the same direction by continuing them straight up. It would have created long, straight stairs with an intermediate landing. The landing is right in front of the back door of the wooden front house, which would have connected all parts of the house at one point.

During construction preparation, Mr Nainggolan realized the type of stairs to be built at his house. He then requested that the stairs be reoriented for safety reasons. The house is a family home; therefore, it will serve as a gathering place for all families for special occasions such as weddings, funerals, and holidays. It should be able to accommodate the needs of the clan members whenever extended family members who have migrated to other regions need to come and stay in the house. It is obvious they would bring their children. In fact, the owner himself is a grandfather to his five grandchildren. For this reason, to prevent further harm in the event of a fall on the stairs, Mr Nainggolan believed that other types of stairs are safer and provide greater control over this issue. Therefore, he proposed that an L-shaped stair is preferable to a straight one.

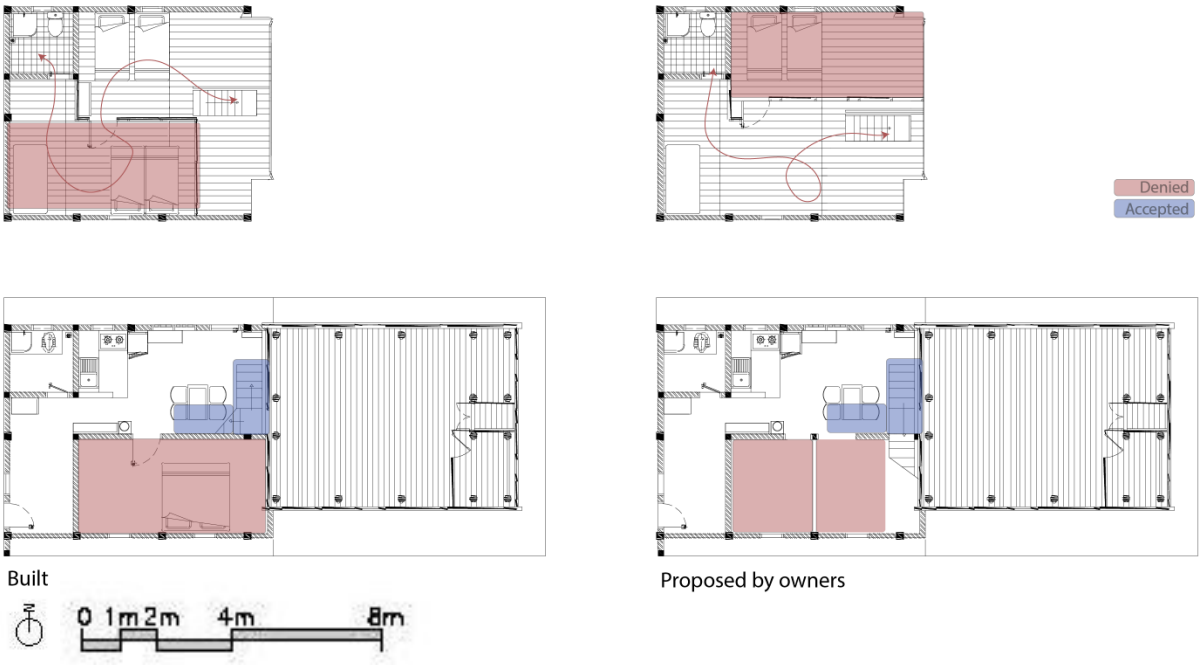


Figure 6. 6. Proposed vs built designs, House 2 Huta Parsaoran 1. Drawings created by the author.

Figure 6.6 compares the floor plans between the built and the homeowner's proposed plans. The colored shades, the dusty pink, represent rejected changes, while the blue shade represents accommodated changes. The staircases, initially designed straight in blue, were later built in an L shape at the owner's suggestion.

Another request made by the owners, as shown in pink shade in Figure 6.6, was to keep the two downstairs bedrooms separated. Mr Nainggolan mentioned that he built the two bedrooms with the idea that one would be the master bedroom for him and his wife, and the other for his daughters when they visit him. However, during the initial homestay observation, the team argued that the bedrooms were too small. Therefore, they decided to merge the two into one large main bedroom. Despite the owner's preference to keep them separate, the team proceeded with their design, tearing down the wall between them and creating a single spacious bedroom.

Figure 6.6 shows this comparison: the pink-shaded area at the bottom of the 1st-floor plan. During my interview with Mr Nainggolan, he expressed his disappointment about losing one of his bedrooms, saying that,

> *"We want this ground floor to be for our family, not a homestay. Upstairs is, yes, for guests. They took away my daughter's room. They said, 'If two, they are too small. [Now] this is good.' Guess what, it is too much [big] for me. We do not need such a big bedroom. Only to sleep. Enough for a bed and a small dresser, that's all we need."*

Although by accepting the homestay unit, they have additional rooms in their house, in this case, the second floor, Mr Nainggolan does not see it as something the family would use daily. The separation between two functions projects into the division of spaces and their inhabitants. Signs of ownership he frequently mentioned during interviews include 'this is mine,' 'this is for my families,' 'this part is not [funded by] homestays.' In other words, the idea of ownership is being challenged when homeowners consider their satisfaction and opinions on how the house functions. It blurs the distinction between 'mine' and 'theirs', 'families' and 'guests' as the injection of government homestay into one's private space occurs.

Lastly, the owner requested the layout of the second floor. The pink shades on the second floor, both in the built and proposed drawings in Figure 6.6, illustrate the difference. The built floor plan (the left drawing) shows that the private zone on the second floor, the bedroom, is in the lower part of the plan (in pink). Meanwhile, a more public zone, the living area, is on the upper part of the floor plan (uncolored). The request was to exchange these two so that the bedroom would be on the upper part of the floor plan and the living room on the lower part (proposed drawing, right, Figure 6.6).

The reasons behind this are twofold. Mr Nainggolan argued that, by exchanging positions between the two, the first benefit of the current arrangement that cannot be offered is that the bathroom would be accessible to everyone, as it can be accessed not only from inside the bedroom, as

it is built now (see the pink arrows). It provides more circulation to the bathroom and increases privacy in the bedroom. The second consideration was to put the bedroom downstairs across from the one downstairs—not on top of each other. While for a concrete building, having bedrooms with positions that are continuous vertically across floors is reasonable, Mr Nainggolan said this is not the case for buildings with wooden-plank flooring.

The construction of floors with solid wood planks is a unique case. As the planks in the market are usually 20 cm wide, arranging them to create an even, tight floor would inevitably leave small gaps between the planks. These gaps open, allowing air to circulate through the floor and enabling some aural exchange between the two floors. This is especially concerning for Mr Nainggolan, as the rooms connecting the first and second floors are both bedrooms. It compromises the privacy of users, inhabitants, and guests alike. In the end, regardless of how important it was to him and how strongly Mr Nainggolan felt about it, the homestay team decided to move forward with their plans. Even though Mr Nainggolan expressed that he was willing to cover the extra cost caused by changes he requested, as follows;

> *"I was willing to cover the remaining costs for the changes I requested, but under one condition, [it] should be transparent. Not the way they did it. [...] Finally, I thought, 'whatever, just build the way you want, no use of me asking them anymore; just get it done already.'"*

Additionally, this excerpt shows his frustration with the lack of communication and transparency between the project team and the homeowners. Not only regarding finances, but also about feeling unheard in the process, not least in matters closely related to their personal lives and property. Furthermore, last remarks from Mr Nainggolan commenting on the rejections of his aspired house-homestay unit are as quoted below:

> *"In the end, it is okay. When I have more money, I will renovate it and improve it. [As] a homestay, I will add one more room upstairs, bringing the total to two bedrooms. That open space [upstairs living room] is too large and doesn't make sense to me. So, I will make a bedroom instead. Then I will provide access to the bathroom from the outside, not from the inside bedroom as now. That way, everything will be more efficient, no waste, unlike now. That's how it should be."*

Finally, despite the overall disappointments and criticism of the homestay designs, the owner remains positive about the future of his homestay. It is fair to say that it is what the government aims to achieve, to help start the motor and let an individual homestay grow and develop further.

Balcony & Elevation: House 3 Lumban Sitohang

House 3, Mrs Sitohang, shared her experiences in designing homestays. She proposed a balcony, and after a long discussion to gain the landowner's permission, the builders finally built it. However, the size was not as she expected. There was initially no building directly in front of the balcony; the homeowners hoped to have a proper balcony facing the street (Figure 6.7, right, proposed drawing), where the family could hang out and relax comfortably in a more private place, without disturbing guests.

It is also because the gathering space they use—the stairs to the Jabu Bolon and the seating area at the corner—will not be freely accessible to them when guests are around. Most of the time, the guests will also use these spaces to relax and interact with the villagers during their free time. It makes family members reluctant and uncomfortable using the space, out of respect for and comfort of their guests.

However, the hope of maintaining their everyday space and routine while also ensuring their privacy, regardless of the presence of guests, did not align with *Tunggane Huta's* vision. Consequently, during tourists' stays, some negotiation and behavioral adaptation must occur. This is particularly impacting this family, concerning the large number of its members. It consists of seven people: one toddler who needs a large room to play, and three teenagers who need privacy or enough space to be comfortable together. Unfortunately, the limited space on the newly built balcony does not help with this situation (Figure 6.7, left, the built drawing). The balcony is too small for gatherings, not least because there is no view; right in front of it is the tall wall of the newly built shop owned by *Tunggane Huta*. Hence, it does not offer another alternative for the family to hang out as the *Jabu* and front staircase areas do.



Figure 6. 7. Proposed vs built designs, House 3 Huta Lumban Sitohang. Drawings created by the author.

Another proposal made by the homeowners was to lower the back house to ground level so its floor would be below that of the front house (pink-shaded area on the ground, Figure 6.7). Putting the house on the ground would save a lot of trouble regarding the construction, materials, and funds. The homeowners were unclear about the reasons for rejecting this request—no cultural or economic

reasons were given for why it was not a good proposal. The back house was expected to be lower than the front house, while being on the same level is also culturally acceptable. The only problem is if it is higher than *the Jabu*. Therefore, they felt that it was not well thought out. In fact, Mrs Sitohang argued that if it were lowered to the ground, the extra costs incurred to achieve that elevation could have been reallocated to other improvements to other parts of the house. It identifies that the owners have their own preferences and priorities on how their house transforms as part of the renovation. If only they had had more voice and involvement in decision-making, the house could have been more personalized and tailored to their specific needs.

Room Layouts: House 1 Lumban Sitohang.

Mrs Situmorang has quite a different experience requesting design changes. As shown in Figure 6.8 below, the *tukangs* denied all requests. It is due to the controls imposed by *Tunggane Huta*, as I discussed in the previous part.

The family living in this household consists of a married couple, whose children are all grown-ups and live in other regions. Having this background is important to note, as the family's profile and dynamics significantly inform the extent to which they are dedicated to the additional function of their house: tourist accommodation. Regarding this, since the beginning of the homestay program, the Situmorang family has planned to fully capitalize on the momentum to build and renovate the house. They foresaw the potential of the homestay business and aimed to have the *Jabu* fully function as a lodge. The family relied on this occasion and hoped to have their back house renovated, as part of a funded development by homestay programs, well-designed and well-tailored to their needs and goals. Hence, it is reasonable for the family to request changes to the proposed one-for-all design for their back house to better pursue the goals of their house: accommodating their daily lives and providing services to tourists.

Some key changes Mrs Situmorang and her husband expected in their house were mainly related to the layout of their back house. Figure 6.8 illustrates the proposed changes through the pink-shaded areas, comparing the built drawing with the owners' proposed changes.

The first element hoped to be different was the position of the second bathroom. On the built drawing (top), it is located side by side with the stairs connecting the *Jabu* and the back house. Before construction, Mrs Situmorang asked to move it to the top-left corner of the floor plan instead (bottom drawing). It would have put the two bathrooms in the same spot, and she argued that sharing the wall would make the plumbing more efficient than putting them far apart.

More importantly, the request meant ensuring privacy for those entering and leaving the bathroom. Mrs Situmorang explained the awkwardness resulted in this spatial configuration: "*If we sit there [in the living room], we can see this through [the bathroom] right away. It's not very nice, you know, to be directly right in front of people sitting there the second you are out of the bathroom.*" As shown in Figure 6.8, the top drawing, the built design, the bathroom door is facing directly to what is supposed to be 'a living

room' for the family, to replace their initial living room on the *Jabu*, which is now used for the tourists' homestay.



Figure 6. 8. Proposed vs built designs, House 2 Huta Parsaoran 1. Drawings created by the author.

The discomfort resulting from such direct visual access between the two contrasting rooms, *the very private bathroom vs. the public living room*, not only impacts on the tourists when they use the bathroom but also affects the family members. It causes them to use the space barely, and it has now become a circulation area only, especially when they have tourists staying in their *Jabu*. Therefore, to solve the problem, they put a chair and a side table on the small terrace in front of the door where they sit and relax worry-free. This is where they would sit and wind down after work.

On the other hand, by moving the bathroom to the other side of the room, Mrs Situmorang believed they could have a nicer living room with sufficient circulation space. For the bathroom, everyone would be more comfortable using it due to its greater privacy and its location at the back, close to the kitchen area.

Reflecting on this dynamic, while homeowners are excited to host a homestay in their house, they hope to maintain a comfortable life in the back, which will require providing alternative spaces for the homestay and allowing them to maintain their lifestyles and habits as they did before the

homestay's arrival. Here is where the discussion about design and construction should be more open, involving, and collaborative. This is to allow homeowners to organize themselves and their architecture as needed.

The second request is to extend the house to the rear by approximately 1 meter (pink shading around the side door on the proposal drawing, Figure 6.8). This request emphasizes the need for similar privacy and comfort for the inhabitants. As the back house was initially mainly for service, such as the kitchen and toilets, converting it into a fully functioning main house for the owners obviously requires certain improvements in the house's physical and spatial qualities.

Extending the house by 1 meter to the back would provide more room inside. In the built drawing, the interior feels so packed and narrow, with only a very small circulation area among the designated rooms. Expanding the house by 1 meter would give each room more space. It is shown in Figure 6.8 of the proposed drawing. The proposed kitchen looks more spacious, and the circulation area connecting the kitchen, bathrooms, bedrooms, and stairs is better articulated.

Additionally, the extension would provide enough space for the back house to have a nice living room without disrupting circulation to the side door. It would resolve the issues they are currently facing, as shown in the built drawing, which shows insufficient space for a living room. By providing a nice seating area inside, right in front of the side door, they could have avoided using the corner of the small terrace as a relaxation spot. It would let them sit and look out through the open door, and occasionally communicate with neighbors passing by.

These proposals, while incorporating relatively small design changes, are, in fact, very well considered by the owners. It was how they envisioned and planned to manage their everyday lives and their house without relying on the *Jabu* for daily use anymore. Mrs Situmorang described her experience in expressing her requests for these changes:

> *"I told them my opinions, that I wanted the bathroom at the back ... [and] right next to each other, and the kitchen would be moved a bit to the side [illustrated in Figure 6.8, proposed drawing, bottom]. I explained these clearly to them. In fact, they said they agreed to follow my suggestions. They said it was reasonable. I was happy. But in the end, it turned out like this. What can you do?"*

Once Mrs Situmorang felt that she was being heard, she trusted the process and let the construction begin. However, despite their efforts to voice their aspirations and participate in designing their home, the reality hit them hard. The one built is the one initially proposed by the homestay design, with no input from Mrs Situmorang taken into account. She further elaborated her surprise as follows:

> *"I somehow forgot how it became like this [back to the way it was], and they completely ignored my requests. When we [she and her husband] realized it was already too late. My husband and I could not oversee the daily construction work, because we had to work. If only we could. But here we are.*

We just try to make the best of it. See, that's why I installed curtains [in front of bathroom door] because the position is right in front of this seating area."

This excerpt shows that their efforts in making their home comfortable and tailored to their needs were somehow lost in the process. However, it is worth noting that the owners made some beautification and final touches to improve elements that did not meet their expectations, improving their quality and functionality. In many cases, like this house, they somehow bring out the owners' creativity to maximize the home's unexpected conditions.

Spatial Efficiency & Connectivity: House 1-2 Sosor Nangka

Another example demonstrating the fluid nature of homestay designs was from House 2 of *Sosor* Nangka. The Sijabat family, the main clan in this huta, owns the house. However, at the time of the fieldwork, the family members who live in the house are the daughter of Mr Sijabat, rather than the son, as tradition would have it. Therefore, I will refer to the participant as Mrs Sijabat.

Mrs Sijabat and her husband have lived in the house since 2013, after living for a few years with the husband's family, which is more culturally acceptable. Currently, the couple has a daughter and a son who also live with them at home. Having two small children put the couple in a position to see the house as a place to nurture and raise their kids. Therefore, in addition to prioritizing the homestay function, the parents aspired to prepare the house to accommodate their current and future needs. While the homestay design template may work for other families, this family seemed to think otherwise. Therefore, during initial construction, they proposed some changes to the *tukangs* and presented their case convincingly. Given that the requests would not fundamentally change the master design but are highly significant to the users, they were accepted. Hence, the construction took place accordingly.

The requests involve three elements of the initial design, which I refer to as 'design template' in Figure 6.9. Meanwhile, the one with changes requested by the homeowners, I refer to as the 'built' one, as it follows the requests of the owners. The first element being changed was the placement and position of the circular stairs leading to the second floor.

The design template, based on the first floor's plan in Figure 6.9, placed the staircases in one big room across the bathroom. Having the door far from the kitchen corner and placing the stairs relatively in the middle of the room. This placement left excess space around the stairs, making it difficult to manage and use. In fact, in other houses such as House 1, this room ended up being unused or used as a storage, "*what a waste of room*," as the owner said.

Mrs Sijabat and her husband understood this consequence and therefore proposed to make it a bedroom instead. They supervised the builders working on their house daily and, at the right moment, asked them to add a wall to separate the stairs from the remaining room (see Figure 6.9, the built drawing, 1st floor). By doing this, they made a small bedroom out of it that could accommodate one person, one of their kids, as Mrs Sijabat explained:



Figure 6. 9. Proposed vs built designs, House 1-2 Huta Sosor Nangka. Drawings created by the author

> *"We asked the 'tukangs' if it was possible to have a room here; a small one would be okay. A room for the children, you know. If [they said] possible, thank God; if not, that's okay too...It just so happened that they were willing to do it. We were very grateful. ... And yes, the downside is it's [the room] very small, but at least we aren't wasting anything here... So, they built this room, separate from the one with the stairs. Our house is the only one different; the rest are just like the architect's proposal."*

Although the owners were very proud to be the only house with two functioning bedrooms in their homestay, they acknowledged that their proposal was accepted because of the very insignificant difference it caused: "*Actually, it's just slightly different from others...merely adding a wall.*" However, despite such an insignificant change, other homeowners did not have the same functioning house as they would have expected.

An example best demonstrating this case was the homeowner of Homestay 1 in the same village, Sosor Nangka. The owner, Mr Sijabat, explained that he had the same design template as the one given for his house. However, he mentioned that he could not get it adjusted to his expectations. He described his experience as follows:

"That's a waste of space. Even though we said, 'Eh, how can this be like this? What kind of place is this?' They [builders] answered, 'Well, yes, that's it, that's how the model [drawing] is.' So, there it is, now we use it to stuff things, better than just leaving it empty and unused."

Furthermore, the second element approved for change was still related to the stairs, namely, reorienting and relocating it. Rotating it 90 degrees counterclockwise has moved the stairs closer to the exterior wall on the opposite side, rather than the interior one. This change could not be accommodated without adjustments on the second floor. Therefore, based on Figure 6.9, when climbing the stairs, instead of arriving in the living room on the second floor (as shown in the design template, Figure 6.9, left), one will reach a balcony (as shown in the built drawing, Figure 6.9, right).

From here, the second floor's room configuration changed significantly from the proposed design. Rather than arriving at the homestay's interior living room, which connects the bedroom and the balcony, the proposed changes lead visitors to the exterior balcony before entering the homestay's private rooms, including a bedroom with a spacious extra room. Here, rooms in the homestay unit are more connected and less segregated than in the initial design, with clear physical divisions between rooms.

In addition, with more connected rooms, Mrs Sijabat argues that it prevents one from having to enter the bedroom only to use the bathroom, which again highlights privacy and comforts:

"[It] feels better like this [compared to the initial design], right? The room feels more spacious, and one does not have to bother someone who is sleeping in the bedroom when they need to go to the bathroom."

Finally, the homeowners' third concern was the airflow on the first floor. Moving the stairs' position and orientation, in turn, addresses this concern. Comparisons between the first-floor drawings, initial and built, in Figure 6.9, show the difference in movements to access the stairs. Instead of entering the corner room where the staircases were and then going to the center of the room to reach the first step, the proposed design simplifies and streamlines the process. One could now go directly to the stairs in the open room near the kitchen. The circulation is illustrated by the dashed blue lines in Figure 6.9, where the built design shows more connectivity and flows more smoothly.

The impacts of such decisions on the stairs, coupled with separating them from the bedroom next door, also provide a clearer view of the pathways to the house elements dedicated to everyone in the house, compared to hiding the stairs inside a room with a door. Finally, together, these changes give a sense of a larger kitchen area, with no walls between these rooms. Compared to the initial design, with too many walls separating the space, this combination creates a spacious kitchen and bathroom.

REFLECTION ON DESIGN PROCESS

The decision to use modern media and conventions, such as rendered drawings, architectural preliminary drawings, and construction drawings, to communicate designs to the indigenous people, in this case, the Batak community, in my opinion, could not be more negligent or unjustified. The media used prevented any possible connections between the authorities and local people willing to welcome the government's projects into their homes.

Given such limited communication, coupled with other restrictions imposed by another authority, such as the *Tunggane Huta*, the locals were further disconnected and alienated from the system of power that operated within the government-imposed program. It further weakens any agency left in the heart of the indigenous people's fight for their rights in shaping and organizing their own livelihood while actively participating in the state programs.

Interestingly, as a form of resistance, the homeowners found an opportunity to regain some agency during an unexpected construction period. During the preparation and early stages of construction, discussions about designs began to emerge. In this period, many of the homestay recipients' aspirations and ideas surfaced. Here, the *tukangs* played an important role in mediating designs and incorporating homeowners' design requests.

Although the design dialogues and the requested changes were incidental and the project's official timeline did not anticipate them, many marginalized voices surfaced. However, the homestay team did not fully listen to them. As no fixed procedures were in place to accommodate them, the team handled the cases individually. In fact, all seemed incidental to professionals' eyes. However, this stage was more appreciated by and more relatable to the homeowners, and I argue that it is the most important part of the design process, making it part of local communities' projects as well.

Regardless of the outcomes—the responses—to the homeowners' design requests and aspirations, they reflect expectations and a better understanding of spatial efficiency and connectivity within the house. The owners reflect on their needs and understand the spatial implications better than one-size-fits-all designs from the homestay team can. While the homestay concept is "two in one"—combining two functions in a single structure and sheltering two distinct groups under the same roof—the meeting of economic and domestic purposes calls for special attention to the spatial composition, arrangement, and physical qualities that serve these complex functions.

The need for domestic spaces is complex enough to be accommodated within the house, given the different needs of family members. Homeowners' requests to modify their proposed homestay designs align with this argument. Based on previous discussions, physical changes align with the spatial qualities that homeowners aspire to in their homes. It is not only for their domestic everyday spaces, but also for rooms intended for and shared with guests when they stay on their property.

Therefore, there are three main concerns commonly expressed by homeowners that the initial proposed designs often fail to address. The first is the connectivity between the existing and added parts of the house, including the use of stairs, which is important to highlight. Either the type, the direction, or the dimensions do not meet the conventions. The second is that the proposed homeowners' changes show a growing understanding of privacy, driven by awareness of strangers' presence in their private space. Although some homestays have private rooms that owners can lock off, the space available for this is very limited, because only one room is available for the whole family when they host guests. Such a growing understanding of privacy increasingly moves away from the communal lifestyles the community has practiced over generations. It created more division within the house and more disconnected (less communal) rooms.

There is growing recognition of the spatial sufficiency needed to accommodate one's domestic life. The need for a sufficient number of rooms with appropriate dimensions aligns with their growing recognition of the efficiency of using and reassigning their spaces. Efficient use of the house within limited space forms the basis for most homeowners' requested changes, which emphasize making the most of every available space.

Finally, however minor and insignificant these traced negotiations, proposed changes, and solutions expected by the homeowner on their houses are—such as extending a meter away, rotating the stairs orientation, exchanging the locations of two bedrooms, and adding a door, and so on—if compared to the scale of the project, I strongly argue that they are deeply rooted in the culture and habits of the inhabitants in inhabiting their everyday 'habitat'.

If I refer to Heidegger's legacy here on Building, Dwelling, Thinking (1971), looking at the relationship between 'building' and 'dwelling,' these small requests represent the 'thinking' process. Here, as Heiddeger offers, thinking is the conceptual bridge between building and dwelling. Given the intimate nature of one's dwelling and building, and the rushed, top-down implementation of homestays, these minor proposed changes are crucial. This is where the 'building' portion for homeowners lies, which, unfortunately, the state largely overlooks in the homestay program.

Given the progress of my dissertation so far, as I have covered the design aspect, the physical and social negotiations of the building, I would now like to turn to the dwelling aspect of this project. I question how the designing, building, and thinking that occurred in the process of homestay production, as explained in detail up to this chapter, reflect on the inhabitation of the home(stay) by both the permanent inhabitants and the temporary ones as they come to visit the 'habitat'.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the design process largely excluded the homeowners, even rejecting their attempts to engage. Another interesting finding here is that in cases where homeowners sought minor yet critical changes to their designs, such as a small room expansion, a room layout, or the placement of stairs/doors, it is the *Tunggane* who decides. And most of the time, *Tungganes* rejected the requests. Some examples of this are shown in Figures 6.6-6.9, as explained in the previous section, with pink indicating rejection and blue indicating approval.

This process complicates the relationship between the *Tunggane* and the residents, transforming their initial mutualistic relations. As homestays operate in and are closely a part of the everyday lives of local people, they, in turn, influence and reform this generation's perceptions of *tungganes* and residents' relations. And somehow, the changing relationship overlooks their long history of mutual relations and understanding, which will be further explored in Chapter 8.

Another aspect I wanted to highlight, reflecting on the design process, is that its impacts on the built homestays are significant. With the *Tunggane*, or landlord, intercepting input from owners and architects' lack of engagement with users, homestays cause emotional dissatisfaction and some spatial discomfort for owners, such as awkward room layouts, inefficient use of the already limited space, and even safety issues, as elaborated above.

In fact, only a very limited design exploration was conducted to transform these vernacular homes into tourist homestays. This is where studying design and spatial behavior specific to Samosir is important, but it is absent from this process. More importantly, I cannot emphasize the importance of homeowners' direct involvement and active engagement in the design process enough. Incorporating owners and users' perspectives and understanding of their own spaces, homes, and lives may significantly enhance the design's qualities.

PART III

HOME + COMMUNITY

CHAPTER 7
INHABITING

All of efforts that I have described up to this point occupy only a short window in the lifespan of homestays. Given this, Chapter 7 follows the process of spatial inhabitation of the interventions discussed in the previous chapter.

Clearly, inserting homestay units into local houses results in some changes to the houses. The goal of the design guidelines, for example, for house transformation in the homestay program is to accommodate the spatial needs of both guests and inhabitants. These minimum spatial requirements, as explained in previous chapters, inevitably lead to physical transformation and affect the house's spatial configuration and inhabitation.

Below, I will elaborate on two aspects related to inhabitation: 1) types of physical changes made to the house and 2) temporal changes, relating to the presence of tourists. The chapter delves into how families inhabit houses across different situations, accommodating and integrating their domestic and economic activities in order to discover the inhabitation patterns in which domestic and touristic functions are somewhat intertwined and complementary within the everyday lives of locals. While the patterns vary from case to case, I draw a generalization based on the similar flows of spatial inhabitation and the interactions and spatial coordination between the user groups: guests and inhabitants.

I categorize the pattern into five groups based on the relations and combinations between the domestic and touristic portions of the house.

PATTERN 1: NEGOTIATING DOMESTICS

This pattern reflects the house's spatial configuration, in which owners negotiate their domestic spaces to accommodate the function of tourist accommodation. The changes between before and after the homestay implementation help show how much the extension of the house informs the inhabitants about organizing their daily activities. An example of this type of inhabitation comes from *Huta* Sitohang, a family of 7 living in one *jabu*. Before delving into the spatial behaviors of inhabitants, I offer a brief look at the family's profile.

The current owner of the house is the third generation of the Situmorang family clan. Historically, this family's generations have lived in the village since its establishment, as the then *Tunggane Huta* welcomed them there. As described by Mrs. Situmotang, the landlord-temporary residents' relationship was mutual, as quoted here, "*Please come here, we need you and your family to live here and help us populate this newly opened huta.*" After two generations, the current owner, the husband of Mrs. Situmorang, inherited the house from their father. They moved to the home 2014 and have lived there ever since. Now, they have four children: two adults, a male and a female, and two female teenagers. From their oldest daughter, they have one 3-year-old grandson. In total, 7 people live in a house measuring 10 m by 4 m (33 ft by 13 ft).

To capture how this big family negotiates their domestic lives to accommodate the homestay function in their small house, I compare their spatial inhabitation across homestay timelines: before and after.

Before Homestay

The house was initially fully for domestic purposes. Generally, the family lived in the *Jabu Bolon* and used the back house only for services, such as the kitchen and bathroom. In the case of the Situmorang household, with such a large family, the house before the homestay was relatively small given the number of its occupants. Initially, there was only one specified bedroom, one bathroom, and a kitchen in the back house, and one open space in the front wooden house, as described in Chapter 5 Design on 'Homes vs Homestays' (House 3, page 159).

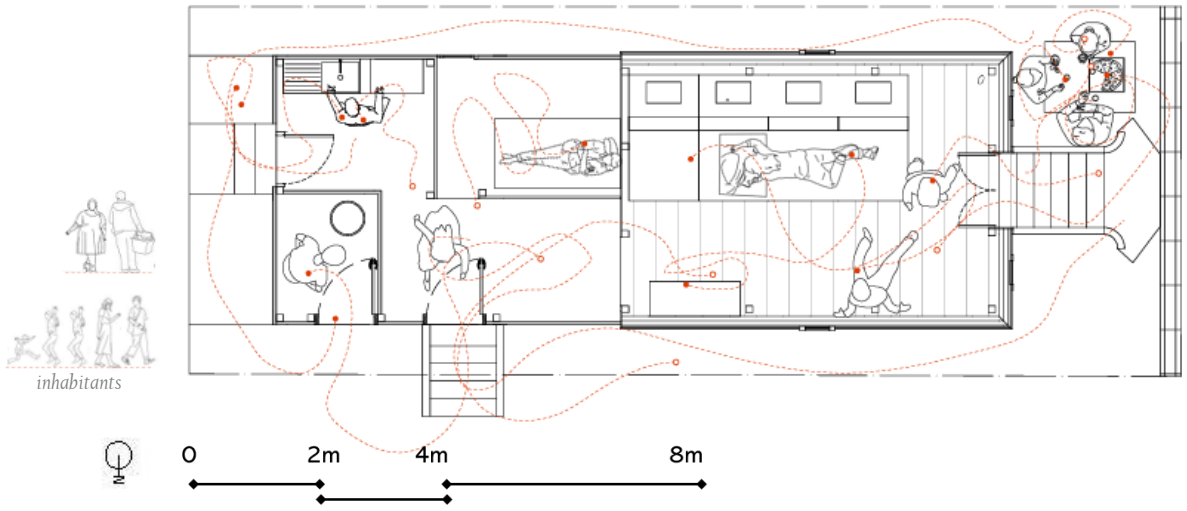


Figure 7. 1. House inhabitation before homestay. Drawing created by the author.

As the large family occupies the house with very limited private space, the family members usually organize themselves so that they do most of their activities in the front *jabu* (Figure 7.1). These activities include the family's mealtimes, the kids studying and doing homework, hanging out and gathering, sleeping, and babysitting with the three-year-old. This is largely because the front *jabu*'s

room being more spacious, well-lit, and well-ventilated than the other rooms in the house. Likewise, this living pattern is also because of their culturally rooted habits, passed down for generations, that the front *jabu* was the living house, while the back was for services. Therefore, before the homestay, the other rooms, such as the kitchen and the bedroom at the back, were typically used only for cooking and sleeping by the three-year-old and his mother, respectively.

As for the family's meals, they would need more space; they do it in the front house and sit on the floor. It is the only room with enough space to accommodate everyone. It is also worth noting that meals and all utensils are brought from the kitchen, and once they are done, the room will be cleaned and prepared for sleeping. The sleeping arrangements were set up, lined up along the side walls (Figure 7.1). Mattresses were laid out and lined up for family members to sleep on, and in the morning, they would fold or roll everything up and store it in the corner of the room or along one side of the ceiling.

Moreover, for the same reasons, for gathering and hanging out together, the family also uses the front *jabu*. Another option for socializing and a gathering place for the family is in the front yard, right by the flight of stairs. A table and two wooden benches were placed there to facilitate this need (Figure 7.1). Often, during the day or late afternoon, family members relax and hang out there while also interacting with neighbors who pass by. Finally, regarding circulation, there were three entrances to the house: the front stair leading to the *jabu*, the side door to the bedroom, and the back door leading to the kitchen, with the main access and the most frequently used being the front.

Overall, it is the basis for spatial inhabitation in this house. They, of course, will adapt and change once the homestay begins. I divide the period after homestay into two categories, with and without tourists.

After Homestay: No Tourists

As a requirement, homestays shall provide additional rooms in the house. In the case of this family, while the ground floor remained the same, the homestay team added a second floor above the back house with a living room, a bathroom, and a small balcony. After the construction ended, the family members have more space to accommodate their daily lives.

During low tourist seasons, the family occupy the entire house, including the wooden house and the second floor. Figure 7.2 shows the use of all rooms by family members when no tourists are present. It shows that most domestic activities still take place in the front house, including gathering, relaxing, studying, dining, and sleeping. Meanwhile, the kitchen and bathroom on the first floor still function as the main service rooms.

On the other hand, the second floor's rooms are less favored and only populated by the inhabitants when they do not have any other choice, such as for some alone time. Often, it is used by the second child, or a male young adult use this space since it offers more privacy than the rest of the house.

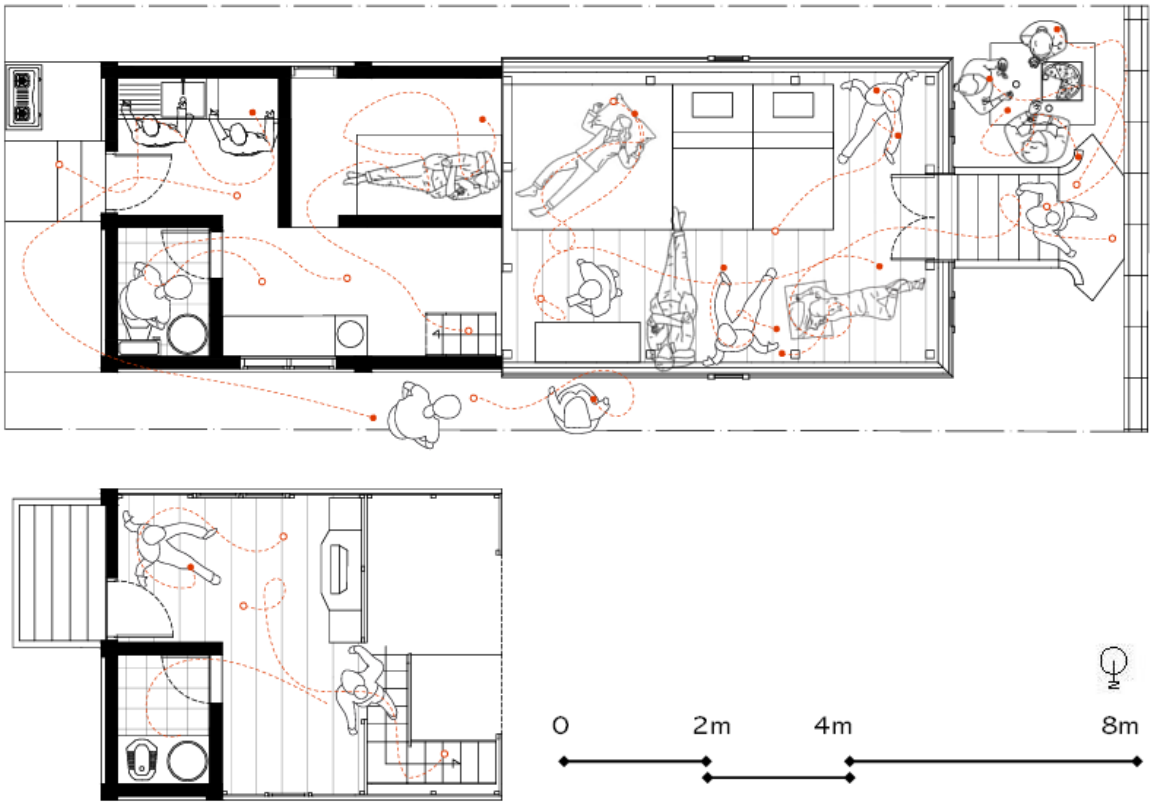


Figure 7. 2. Movements of inhabitants after homestay, with no tourists. Drawing created by the author.

In terms of sleeping arrangements, the family divides the house into two: the downstairs bedroom for the 3-year-old and his mother, and the upstairs bedroom for the males, including the father and the young adult son. Meanwhile, the front large room is for the female members, including the mother and two teenage daughters. Commonly, husband and wife do not have a designated private bedroom, as the communal lifestyle plays a greater role in shaping locals' domestic space organization. On special occasions, such as when other family members visit, they will share the front room with the inhabitants to sleep. This front room is also where all family members, including extended family, could gather for activities such as family meetings, '*musyawarah*', or other ceremonies. It is one of the reasons why the house is called *Jabu Bolon*, the Grand House, representing its noble function as a place to unite and return to the roots, as locals say, '*mulak to huta*'.

While dining and family gatherings still take place in the front house, as before the homestay, all cooking and cleaning are done in the kitchen. In the morning, all mattresses, rugs, and blankets will be folded, and the room will be transformed into a dining room for mealtimes and a living room for the family to relax and interact afterwards. In addition to the gathering space, the family also provides a front seating area for socializing. In fact, it is common to find locals sitting on the stairs as an extension of the house, connecting the interiors with the outside seating, and using it as a place to gather. The front staircase also functions as the main entrance to the house (Figure 7.3).



Figure 7. 3. Stairs as a social space. Photos taken by the author.

With the side door removed during homestay implementation, the secondary entrance to the house is the back door from the kitchen. With this change, circulation through the side of the house—where laundry is usually done and hung (as shown in Figure 7.2, the movements back-side house)—concentrates on the back door. This addition, as more spaces become available in the house, gathering activities are distributed more evenly across the front of the house, the staircase area, and sometimes the second floor. It provides more options and privacy for family members.

However, this configuration is only temporary, and these spatial patterns begin to change when homestays host tourists. When tourists are present in the house, the inhabitants reorganize their lives accordingly. Although daily inhabitants still mainly occupy the front house, when hosting guests, they move to the back house and live there temporarily.

The mark of the transition period to reorganize space is the reservation. Once they receive reservations from the homestay coordinator, who manages and markets homestay units on the website provided by the government to promote homestays across the country, the family members will clean the front house, take all their belongings to the back house and/or upstairs, and prepare all mattresses and necessary bedding for the tourists. As this transition requires time and effort, homestay owners usually need a few days to prepare the homestay unit before guests arrive. They also often ask for a down payment to show goodwill on the part of the guests.

After Homestay - with Tourists.

As a part of cultural promotion, the homestay provides a local experience of authentic lodging to the tourists. An approach to achieve this goal is by dedicating the front house, the well-known Batak traditional house, for tourist homestays and sterilizing it from any domestic signs for the guests.

Hence, the owners would clean and prepare the main front room for the upcoming guests. In the case of tourists' visits, the owners will empty the front house, bring all their belongings such as clothes, kids' toys, and other personal stuff they will need during the visits, and move them to the small bedroom in the extended house and the second floor. Figure 7.4 shows the circulation and spatial distribution of guests and inhabitants, with blue lines representing tourists' circulation and red lines showing family members' movements within the house.

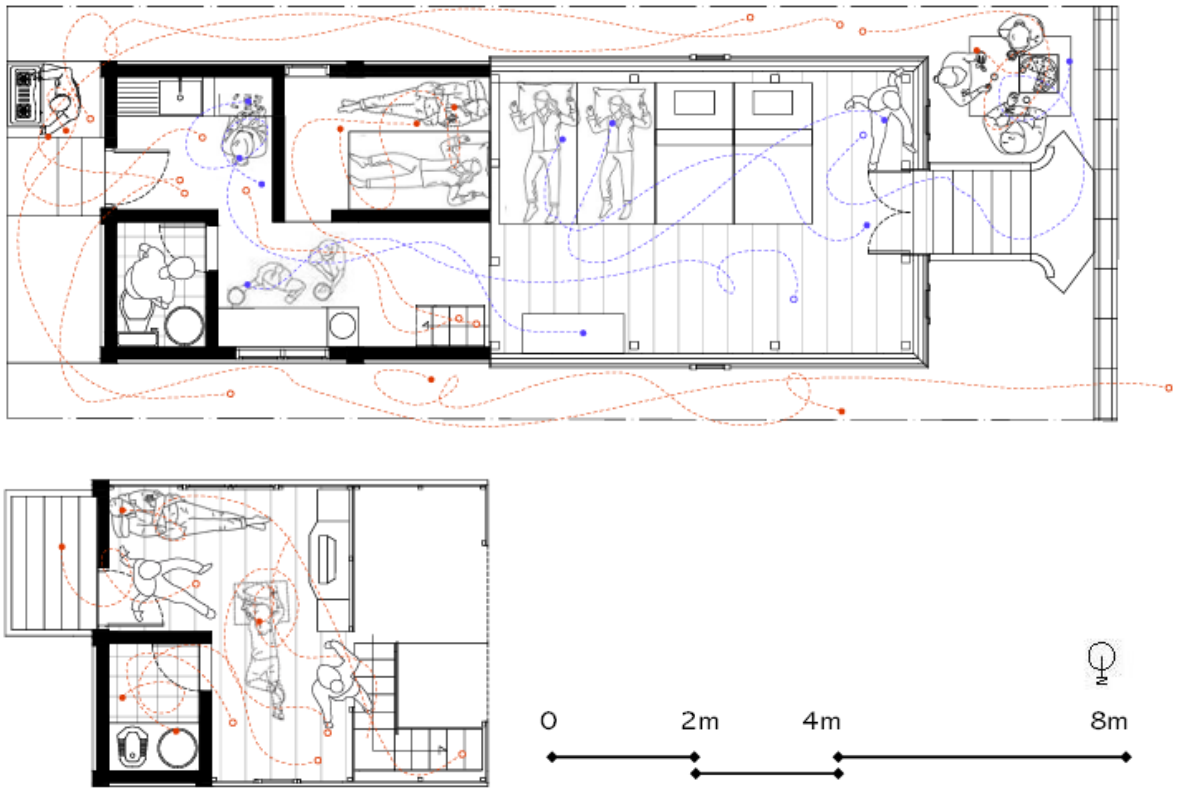


Figure 7. 4. Movements of inhabitants after homestay with the presence of tourists. Drawing created by the author.

Figure 7.4 shows that during the period of tourists' visits, the house is divided into two: the front house serves as the guest room and the extended one, with both floors, for domestic use. The front room, occupied by the tourists (in blue lines), cannot serve the inhabitants while tourists are present. It includes restrictions for the children entering it. This also applies to the front door being dedicated to tourists only, which implies that the inhabitants will no longer be able to use the front door.

While there is no private access to the house, unlike hotels where guests hold onto the key, the owners keep the room private for tourists only during their stays. No domestic activities occur in this room. The *jabu* supports tourists only. Consequently, when hosting tourists, the inhabitants must use the back door, the second entrance. Therefore, many movements occur on both sides of the house, leading to the back door and into the kitchen area. These movements are more pronounced than those observed prior to the homestay (Figure 7.1) or after the homestay without tourists (Figure 7.2).

While access to the house is separated between guests and inhabitants, potential contacts and interactions between the two groups occur in the back house, especially around the bathroom and kitchen areas (shown in blue and red dashed lines in Figure 7.4). This is mainly for circulation: the inhabitants go downstairs to the bedroom, walk up the staircase to the second-floor bathroom, and then to the owners' living room. Contacts with tourists often occur in this area, as the owners provide a bathroom and, upon request, a kitchen and utensils.

In some cases, when the village is far from the city and has very limited restaurant options, the homestay also offers guests the use of a kitchen for an additional fee. In this situation, where the guest requests to use the kitchen as part of the service, the owners would 'give up' their kitchen for the guests and temporarily move to the backyard, right outside the back door. During this move, the owners also remove the extra cooking utensils they have stored under the front house and bring them to the temporary kitchen. The temporary kitchen is the excess room between the two exterior walls of the building, with a distance of only about 1.2 m.

Figure 7.4 shows the crowd movements in the small extra space on the back. This temporal-spatial arrangement marks an area where cooking activities occur in the outdoor space at the back of the house when tourists are around. The same thing happens with using the bathroom downstairs. Even though the family mainly uses the first-floor bathroom, during tourist visits they would dedicate it to guests and use the one upstairs instead. Likewise, the family room and gathering space will also move upstairs during tourists' presence.

Later, when the guests leave, the inhabitants slowly take over the guests' rooms, including the front house, the 1st-floor bathroom, the kitchen, and the outdoor seating area. Gradually, things go back to the way they were: everyday activities in the wooden house, cooking in the back house, and the front benches for socializing and relaxing. Such temporal actor-based inhabitation patterns keep rotating between periods with and without guests. It becomes a pattern of spatial strategies to accommodate both tourist and domestic needs, especially in houses with limited space but large family sizes, such as this one. It is most common in houses with large families, with more than 4 people living in the house and limited space in the extended house. Meanwhile, for families of smaller sizes, between 2 and 4 people, which is the typical nuclear family, the temporal use of space described as such tends to gradually prompt owners to establish more permanent guest zones, which introduce the second pattern.

PATTERN 2: CEASING DOMESTICS

Just like other homestays, this unit also began with an inhabiting pattern that adapted to the presence of tourists. The inhabitation changes depending on their presence or absence. Over time, the pattern slowly begins to take shape. In this scenario, the frequency of rotation between with and without tourists becomes an important factor in the house's spatial occupation.

This corresponds to three phases of the process of integrating domestic and tourist activities. Chronologically, it began with the pre-homestay period (before 2020), followed by the beginning of homestay incorporation (around the end of 2020-early 2021, right after its construction was completed), and the current occupation, which is into the third year of homestay operation (mid-2023), during which I conducted this study.

Basic Pattern: Sinabang House

To elaborate on this pattern, I chose the Sinabang family as an establishing case study. The Sinabang family consists of four: two parents, an 8-year-old son, and a 6-year-old daughter. Even before the homestay, the initial extended house was quite spacious compared to others in the *huta*. This is especially the case when considering the size of the family living in it.

The extended house had one bedroom, a living/dining room, a bathroom, and a small kitchen right in front of the side door. The back house, a landed home, connects to the elevated wooden front house via a staircase. The stairs from the front house go down to the living/dining room in the back house. From this multipurpose room, the house led to a bedroom, a kitchen right in front of the side door, and a bathroom that leads to the back door of the house (Figure 7.5). Even after the homestay started, with significant extensions on the back, the family had the whole house to themselves. Initially, the family occupied the entire house; however, this began to change when tourists came visiting.

Before Homestay

Figure 7.5 shows the house in habitation before guest started arriving. The most used space in the house was the front wooden house, followed by the kitchen and the back living room. Although there is a bedroom in the house, the family usually sleeps in the front house, *Jabu Bolon*, with the parents, especially the mother, and the kids. Therefore, the bedroom in the extended house was often unoccupied and was mostly used to store clothes in wardrobes and drawers. Meanwhile, activities such as gathering, relaxing, and hanging out usually took place either in the front house or in the living room of the extended house.

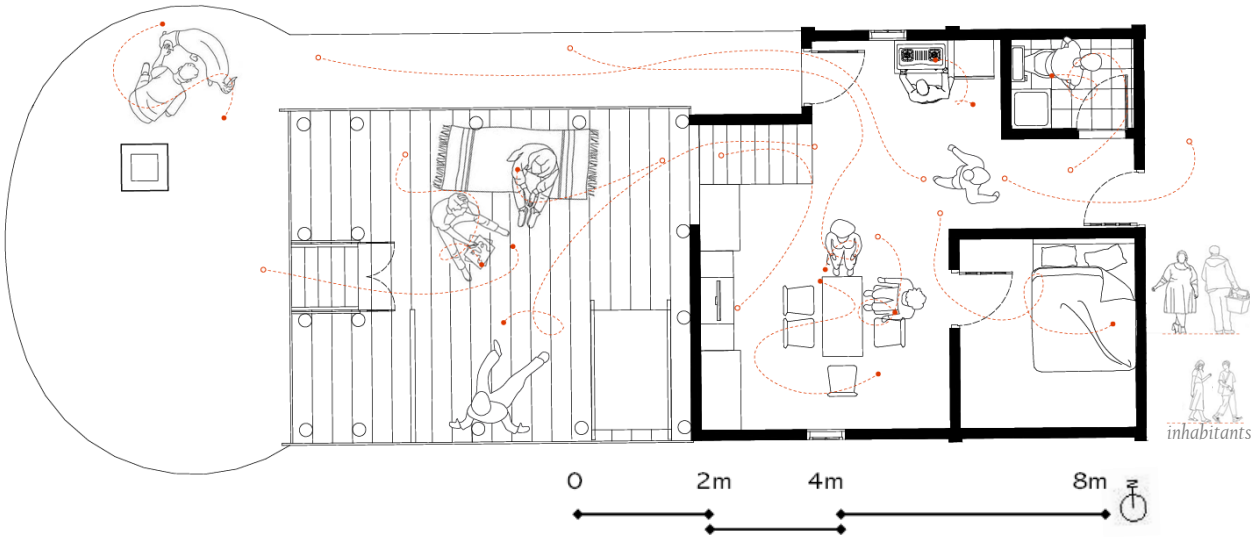


Figure 7. 5. Movements of inhabitants before homestay. Drawing created by the author.

During the day, the front house would be used as a family living room, for relaxing and gathering, and as a study room for the kids, where they did their homework under their mother's supervision. Often, the children played in this room as well. While the front house was mainly for family gatherings and collective activities, the back house was for supporting services, including cooking, a bathroom, and sometimes dining. Although there was a dining table in the back house, meals more often occurred in the front house, without a table. Family members sat in a circle on the floor—a very common practice in the Batak community's daily lives. The habit of sitting on the floor is a part of the culture and upbringing, which makes the 'sitting on a chair' style of dinner very rare in the family. These inclinations and well-rooted behavior of using the front house as the main home remained unchanged until the early stages of homestay operations. However, during tourist season, the house is situated differently.

After Homestay

Following the government's general instruction from the homestay program that the front house should provide tourist accommodation, the owners have dedicated the *Jabu Bolon* to tourists. The front house becomes a guest room, with beds laid out on the floor. While the room is still a large, open-plan space, some segmentation has begun to form, especially at the front corners of the house, right by the door (see Figure 7.6). An additional creates a small room with more privacy. Besides sleeping, guests also use the house to relax and often watch the children playing in the yard from the front stairs. Most guests' activities take place in this room, except for using the bathroom, which is located in the back house. To use the bathroom, guests will need to go to the back house and pass through the living room to reach it. In addition, for guests with families, the owners usually prepare both bathrooms for the tourists, which increases the tourists' spatial occupation in the house.

The owners' initial plan for the house was to rent it out occasionally as a homestay. However, during peak seasons, as demand for bedrooms increased, the owners also decided to rent the first half of the back house and rent it to tourists. One bedroom and the living room will be for rent, along with the living room, and there is a separate entrance to the house from the side door. It consequently reduces the space available to the family. Domestic spaces get pushed even further back. It leaves only one bedroom for the whole family, as shown in the packed bedroom with red circulation lines in Figure 7.6. Along with it, there are also the kitchen at the very end of the house, a dining table, and a shared bathroom with the guests. When a facility is shared with tourists, it is undeniable that the hosts prioritize their comfort.

Another activity being removed from the front *jabu* was family gathering. After the homestays, they gather in a different part of the house. They move to the space between the kitchen and dining table, which is meant to be a circulation area. Figure 7.6, the room in front of the back door, shows an impromptu sitting area on the floor. This is where the family gathering concentrates, which is a much smaller space than the previous one. While the gatherings are informal—everyday family members' activities—they happen very frequently.

The movement of family members' daily activities to the back rooms of the house, as indicated by the red lines in Figure 7.6 below, suggests that the inhabitants occupy only the far back of the house, with the back door serving as the main entrance. The family activities focus on only a small area of the entire house, less than a third of the total area (areas with red lines only, Figure 7.6).

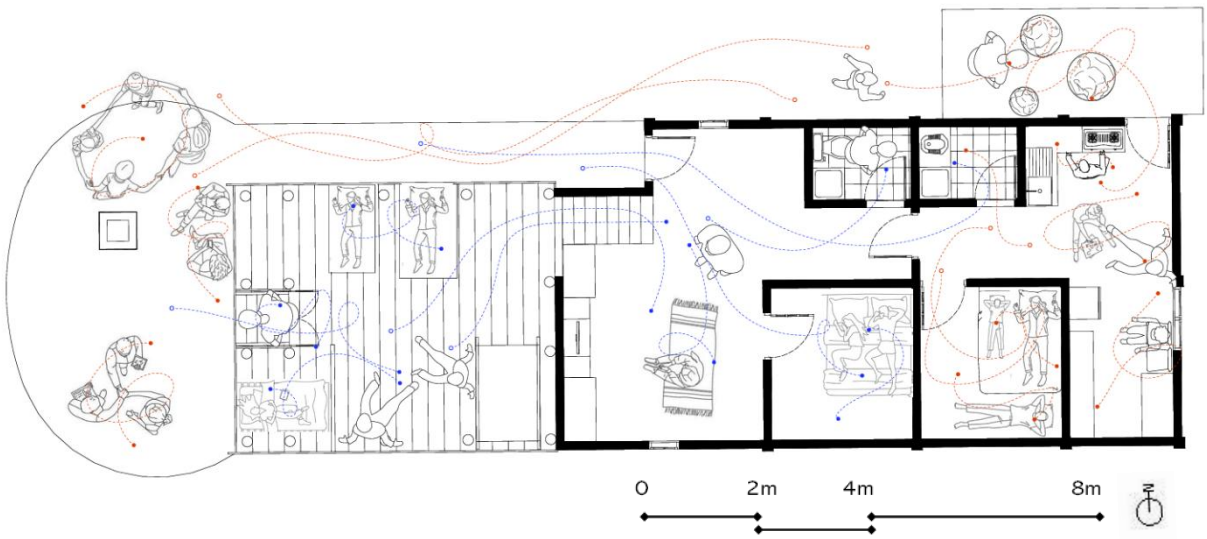


Figure 7. 6. Movements of inhabitants after homestay, during tourists' visits. Drawing created by the author.

Additionally, the figure also shows an increasing red line of traffic to and from the back door. Moreover, the laundry area, right by the door, is also a domestic activity that becomes more dominant in the house after the homestay. While laundry activities initially took place in the bathroom, they now requires more space as the inhabitants use blankets and linens more frequently.

Another change regarding the people-place relationship in the house is the children's play area. As there is no space for kids to play inside the house anymore, they move outside and use the front yard as a playground. During the day, the house shaded the yard with its high, pointed roofs, making it a comfortable place to hang. A bench is also put in this area for both kids and guests to enjoy the day. The figure shows that more activities occur in the front yard. While this is not new, the frequency increases during the holiday season, as less interior space is available to accommodate local children's needs.

Therefore, during peak seasons, the house is mostly occupied by tourists, taking over two-thirds, leaving only a small portion at the back for the four inhabitants. Although it is temporary, this short occupation has significant impacts on how inhabitants organize their everyday lives beyond the duration of tourists' stays.

At the beginning of the homestay period, even though there were changes in how inhabitants organized their spatial activities in relation to tourists' presence, the house in general remained primarily domestic. In other words, the inhabitants typically occupied both *Jabu Bolon* and the extended house when no tourists were around. For generations, inhabitants have lived in the J*abu Bolon* and used the back house only for the kitchen and bathroom. Even at the beginning of the homestay period, the owners still maintain this habit. The family gathering, children's learning, doing homework, having meals, and sleeping usually still took place in the front house. As previously stated, this is due to the room being more spacious, well-lit, and ventilated, in addition to the occupational habit that has been built for generations. Therefore, they moved to the back house only after receiving reservations from tourists, and after the guests left, they reclaimed and reoccupied the front house.

As time went by, the temporal space occupation started to weigh on the everyday life of the locals. The need to move stuff around, empty, clean, and reinhabit the space again creates a lot of work and pressure for the owners. In this case, they would empty the front house and bring all their belongings, including clothes, kids' toys, books, sleeping gear, and other personal items they use regularly. They would clean, prepare, and equip the room with amenities and small furniture for the coming guests. Then, the guests would take over the room upon arrival, as described previously.

Especially for short-notice reservations, the preparations required disrupt the daily routines of locals who spend most of their days on the farm working. In fact, often the owners found themselves rejecting the reservation and recommending other homestay units instead. it is because they did not have enough time to prepare the house for the short-notice guests. However, as a part of agreements with the government and amid the hosts' pressing financial situation, the owners decided to welcome tourists back into their homes.

Therefore, to address such recurring issues, the owners finally decided to free the rooms they had planned to put on the market and keep them ready all year long, thereby establishing a new

pattern of spatial occupation in the house. One of the homeowners mentioned during the interviews that, here I quote:

> *"At first, we would clean and prepare this [Bolon] house for tourists once we received a reservation; however, we gradually got tired of moving things around and putting them back. At some point, we refused to receive [guests], but then we decided to dedicate this [Bolon] house for the guests, and we moved permanently to the back".*

To keep the front house and the main bedroom in the back house ready whenever tourists arrive, the owners finally decided to leave them empty and free of domestic activity. They permanently moved all their belongings to one of the bedrooms in the extended house, where they now sleep (Figure 7.6). It prevents additional work of cleaning and rearranging the house when room reservations arrive. Keeping these rooms, *the Jabu* and the middle bedroom, empty means the inhabitants' domestic lives largely remain the same as during the period when tourists stay in the house. It means it is the same, even without tourists. It gradually becomes their default way of living. However, this comes at the cost of using the largest and arguably most comfortable part of their own home and changing their patterns of living. But at least they can make this decision based on the financial needs of the family.

Such a gradually established spatial division allows the house to continuously host guests without disrupting their everyday routines by requiring them to remake and rearrange the house. However, it poses a risk of detaching inhabitants, especially younger generations, from the Jabu Bolon, both in its cultural and everyday significance. Figure 7.7 further demonstrates these changes in inhabitants' spatial behaviors.

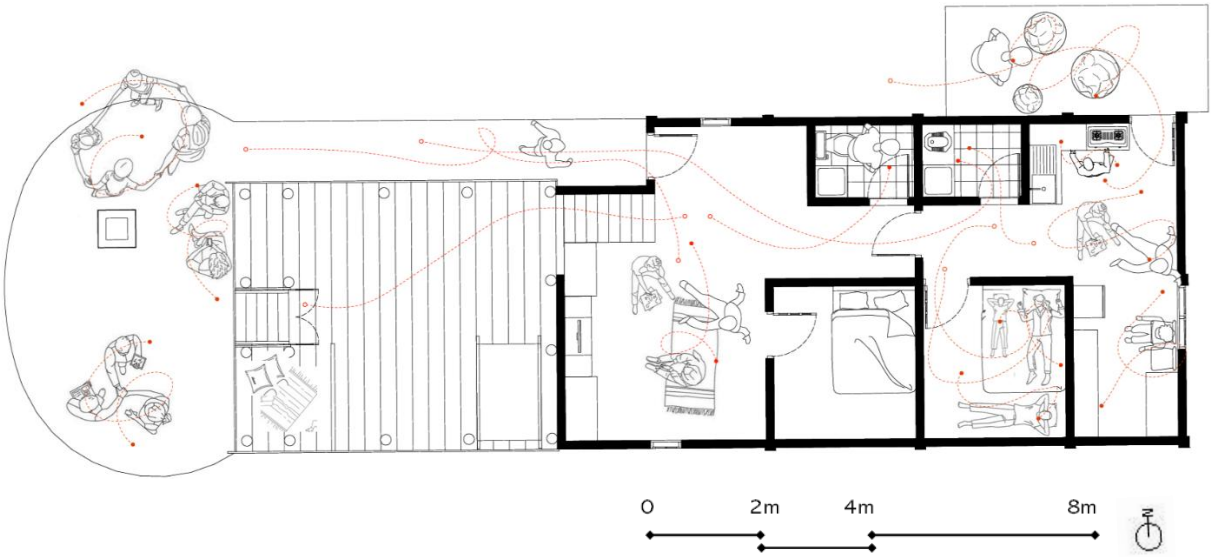


Figure 7. 7. Movements of inhabitants after homestay, during tourists' visits. Drawing created by the author.

The presence of tourists, although intermittent, significantly situates and conditions the behaviors of the inhabitants beyond the tourists' visits. Changing spatial use behaviors and implementing those changes takes time and some persistence. For families with children, making it a habit that the *Ruma Bolon* is no longer a living room, a playground, or a dining room needs a consistent reminder. And when it becomes a part of daily life, it tends to stay that way. Consequently, even though no guests are staying, the front house is often left empty. Kids started playing in the back house and occupying the back living room more often, rather than reclaiming the *jabu* after tourists left.

Furthermore, when tourists stay, the back house, which includes the kitchen and bathrooms, is mostly shared with family members, making the space for playing even smaller. It further pushes children to play outside, limiting their indoor playtime. The only part of the rented rooms that the kids occupy when there are no tourists is the living room in the extended house. In Figure 7.7, the room with the rugs is in the middle of the house. In fact, when there are no guests in the house, the room is used by the family to hang out, spend time together, relax, watch TV, and have dinner, as shown by the movement and occupation of the space (Figure 7.7).

Additionally, the homeowners also maintain the pattern of sleeping habits shaped by the presence of tourists. It also began to change the family's communal sleeping arrangement. Known for its communal way of life, *Ruma Bolon*, with its spacious, multipurpose room, has been accommodating Batak people for generations. While children initially slept in the front room and were occasionally accompanied by their mother, homestays have made some changes, as the inhabitants need to empty the room. Sleeping together played a culturally significant role in the lives of younger generations. It was time to exchange ideas and pass on norms and values. Interestingly, when homestays began operating and relocating the 'bedroom' into a small, closed room at the back, it became very private and divided. It changed communal sleeping into a very modern way of living, separated from other people, in an enclosed room, with no visual access or control from the parents.

In this case, although the extended houses have two bedrooms, the family's bedroom is the smallest. Meanwhile, the bigger room is dedicated to tourists and left empty to keep them clean and ready for guests. The inhabitants even get pushed to the back. It further shrinks the domestic space and prioritizes economic use of the house, shifting most of the house from the front to the middle and leaving only a small part in the back. Figure 7.7 above shows that, even without tourists, most domestic activities still mainly occupy the small part of the back house, as they did during tourist visits.

While it is claimed that the family made the decision based on economic needs and for its own benefit, its impact on the quality of life of the inhabitants remains a concern. As well, it raises concern that, in the long run, projecting the current trend in how the business goals are growing and evolving, the continuity of the community's cultural and communal senses remains open to further investigation.

Similar Cases: Situmorang House

This part elaborates on other cases that follow a similar pattern to Sibanang's, in which tourist purposes take over parts of domestic spaces beyond the given homestay structure. Like the pattern of the Sinabang house, Situmorang's house also shows that the tourist rooms are prioritized over those for domestic use. While Sinabang demonstrates the process of change from dominant domesticity to tourists' majority of space use in the house, this case aims to provide examples of more established divisions between the homestay and the domestic house. Given this, it shows that there are dedicated spaces for tourists, with clear divisions, where the daily activities of the inhabitants are kept separate.

The Situmorang family is a married couple. They live in the house alone. Their children are married and migrated elsewhere to start their own families, away from home. Therefore, the house is occupied by only two people: the middle-aged Sitomorang couple.

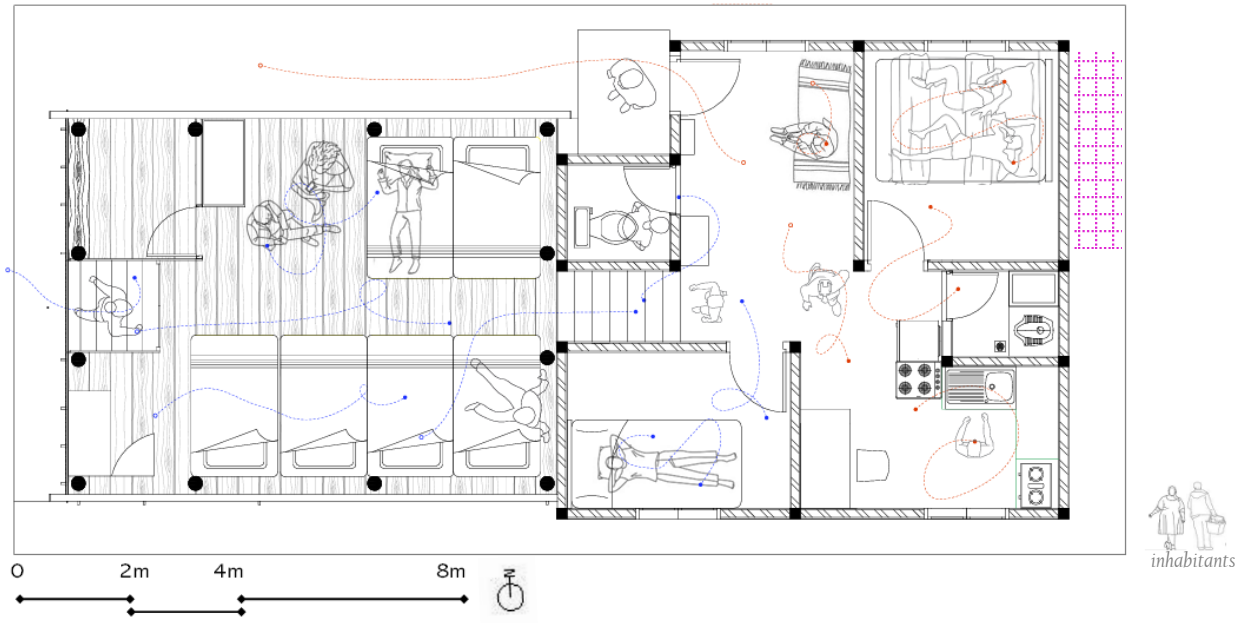


Figure 7. 8. Movements of inhabitants after homestay. Drawing created by the author.

Although at first the Situmorangs' front house was used intermittently by tourists, they eventually decided to keep the room permanently for guests. The permanence of such spatial division is even more well-established than that of Sinabang. The division is marked by installing permanent furniture in the room, including four solid-wood bed frames, a set of wooden tables and chairs by the window, and mattresses and pillows for each bed (Figure 7.8). These sets of furniture, due to their heavy materials, stay in the room regardless of the tourists' presence. This arrangement makes the room usage to be permanent, for tourists only.

Compared to the Sinabang, where the spatial division is marked by emptying the room at all times, the Situmorang house goes so far as to design the room for the guests and keep the interior as it

is. In addition, the room is painted a special color, making it stand out from the rest of the house. It is also decorated with local ornaments and crafts on the walls. The owners also added information boards on Batak house knowledge, providing brief explanations of the house's meaning, its elements, and the original Batak-language terms. The explanation is made simple to be easily understood by the visitors.

As the front house is now dedicated to homestays, the owners consequently live in the back house. The side door has become the main door for them; even their guests (non-tourists) are welcomed there, instead of in the front *jabu*. As this habit starts to solidify, the owners express their adaptation, as quoted here:

> *"For years and years, we were used to the idea that Ruma Bolon is the front house. Coming home from work all day, we entered the house from the front. But since the homestay, [and] that front house becomes a guest room, we cannot enter [from there] anymore. So, now we come from here [the side door]... Because it's tiring to climb stairs after working all day long. So, [we] just go straight to the back. We park our motorbike right in front of it and head directly inside [from the side door]... As it turns out, it is not too bad, you know. We are getting older; these knees are different now [laughers], and the fact that we do not need to go up and down the stairs to get to the house is quite comforting. Let the guests experience the authentic life of the Batak people in that traditional wooden house. We are quite happy to live in this [back house]."*

Moreover, like Sinabang's, this Situmorang house also dedicates part of the back house to tourists' homestays. As shown in Figure 7.8, the bedroom by the staircase connecting the front and back houses supports only tourists. Meanwhile, the inhabitants can only be seen moving around in the back house, especially in the back bedroom, the bathroom next to it, and the kitchen. Regarding kitchen use, it also has a temporary system in place. It sometimes functions as a domestic kitchen, and at other times as a guest kitchen. During the tourist presence, the kitchen is either empty or in use by the guests, as seen in Figure 7.8.

However, domestic kitchen activities move to the back of the house, just outside. The inside kitchen is for the tourists, while the temporary one in back is for the inhabitants' use (pink rectangle in Figure 7.8). A temporary cooking area is on the back to accommodate the needs of inhabitants. Occasionally, this temporary outdoor kitchen serves more than domestic needs. It is also used to cook meals for guests staying in this house, as well as for those staying in other houses who purchase a meal package during their stay. I used this service during my stay and found it very convenient and helpful, as there were no restaurants nearby. In this case, especially for large orders, the kitchen becomes a public one where all other homestay owners, coordinated by Mrs. Situmorang, cook meals for their guests during breakfast and/or dinner.

Mrs. Situmorang is very visionary and full of initiative and ideas to succeed in their homestay business. Besides initiating a communal kitchen as a side business to homestay services by giving options for the guests to include local dishes cooked by local women from the village, she also actively markets her homestay through her personal social media accounts, including Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, as well as her personal and professional networking, in addition to the official website organized by the *huta*'s homestays coordinator.

Not uncommonly, she brought a large group of guests to *huta* and distributed them among other homestays as well. This pattern happened more often than the official homestay coordinator did. Although this created a new power dynamic within the locals, her involvement significant roles in running homestay programs in the *huta* is significant and undeiniable. To my surprise, she also networks with local businesses that run tourist attractions/hot spots. An example of this is offering discounts to her guests who visit those places using her name as a referral. In this way, she helps promote local attractions/businesses while also gaining incentives and promotion from them in return.

PATTERN 3: DOMESTICS AS SUPPORTS

As I move to the third pattern of the merging spatial inhabitation of tourists and locals, this pattern marks the initial anticipation of domestic space as a service to homestays or tourism. The pattern highlights how locals view homes more as service and a support for tourists than as a dwelling space to raise families. This change in perspectives and attitudes towards the function of homes has been evident since the initiation of the homestay program, compared to the previous pattern, Ceasing Domestics, in which a house gradually transforms into a business after the homestay program begins. Consequently, spatial divisions within a house do not occur later as a gradual behavioral adaptation to accommodating tourists in homestays. Rather, on the contrary, it was a definitive motive from the get-go. This idea manifests in the house's condition.

Here, I introduce the case of Mrs. Nainggolan House in Huta Parsaoran I to elaborate on the changing attitudes of leading domestics toward a service-oriented approach to support homestay functions. This case demonstrates how a home becomes increasingly business-oriented rather than a dwelling and living space for a family unit.

Basic Pattern: Sitanggang House

Mrs. Sitanggang is married to one of a Nainggolan's men. Although the house inheritance follows the Nainggolan line, to differentiate it from other houses in this *huta* that are also Nainggolan's, I prefer to identify it after the participant I interacted with: Mrs. Sitanggang.

It turns out that Sitanggang's house is the oldest one in *Huta* Parsaoran I. It means that the male figure from this house is the *Tunggane Huta*. The current *Tunggane Huta*, however, does not live in the *huta*. He is in Jakarta with one of his adult children. Meanwhile, the house is taken care of and

lived in by his wife, their adult daughter, who just quit her job in the city and decided to come back home temporarily, and his middle-aged brother, for some reason.

All in all, three people live in this jabu daily. Mrs. Sitanggang works for a local cooperative and spends most of her days either working or helping her daughter's early-stage business, which processes water hyacinth to produce indoor sandals, such as those for hotels. Their main customers are new hotels in the region. For this reason, the mother and daughter are rarely in the house during the day. Such a business of theirs has grown considerably due to tourism, with hotels and lodgings rising on Samosir Island to meet the demands of visitors. Additionally, their business began around the same time as the homestay in this *huta*.

Before Homestay

Like any other family, the Sitanggang family used the front wooden house for sleeping, gathering, and relaxing. On the side of the front door, a small room is at the corner of the front wooden staircase, with a plywood wall to provide privacy for family members. Meanwhile, the extended parts of the house were initially for services such as cooking, dining, and cleansing. Figure 7.9 shows this pattern.

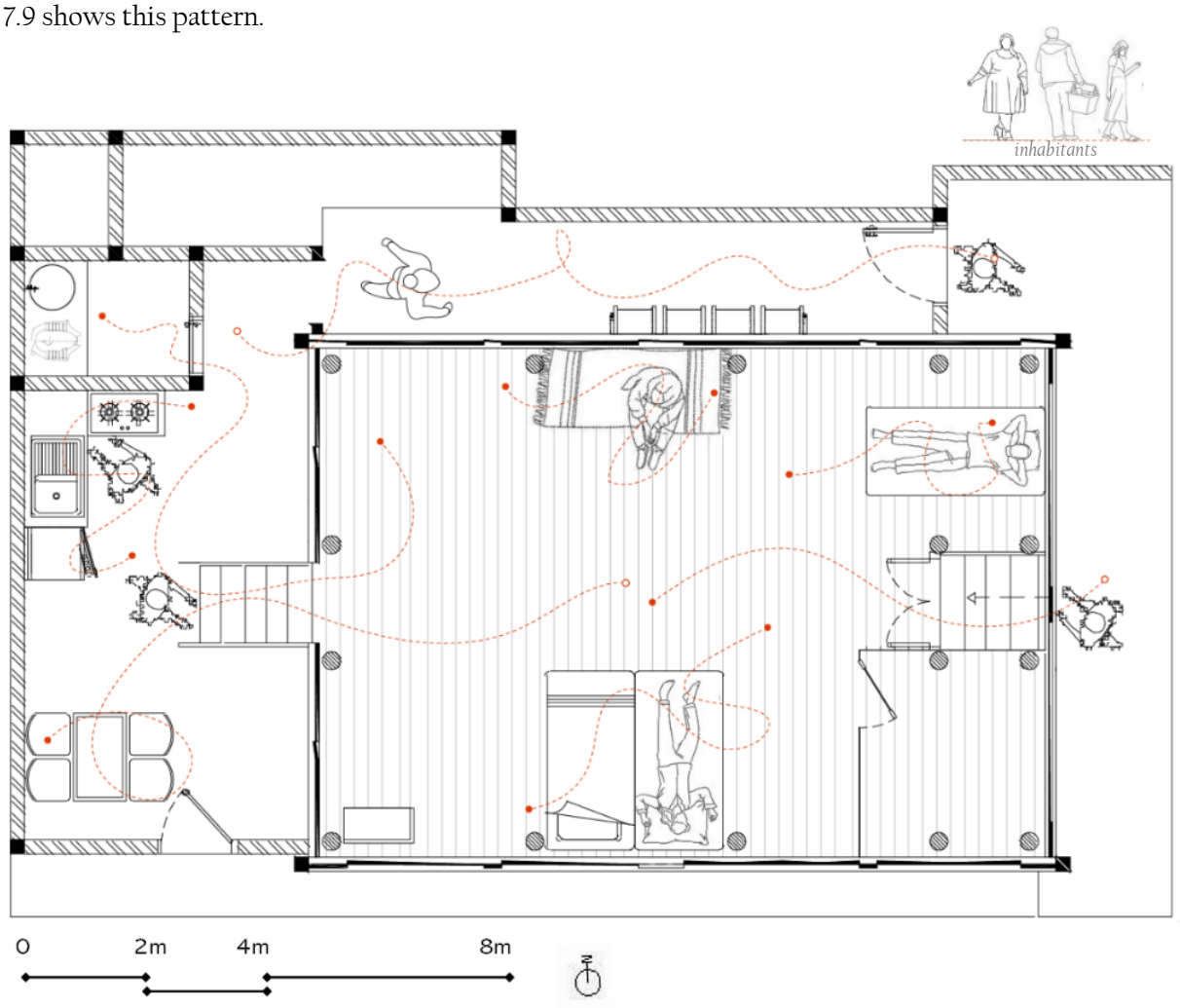


Figure 7. 9. Inhabitation before homestay. Drawing created by the author.

In addition to the back house, the extended house also has a side section that connects to the side door. This side zone serves as the entrance area, with seating to allow temporary relaxation before entering the house further. This side living room is also often used to host Sitanggang's personal guests, offering a more intimate welcome and a less formal space to interact, compared to the front wooden house. In the very back of the house, where the bathroom, kitchen, and dining table are located. From this back area, there is also a staircase leading up to the front wooden one. Figure 7.9 above shows that, before the homestay, all parts of the house supported owners on a daily basis.

However, the frequency of inhabitants staying in the house was dissimilar to other households with young kids or complete families. This household consists of members who mostly spend time outside the house, as both the mother and daughter were busy developing their business together. They even sometimes spent nights at their house production, located by the lake. Thi sis even the case after they implemented the homestay, except when guests are staying. In this case, they would decide who would stay at home to take care of the guests, while the other would stay in their production house, especially during periods of high demand for their products. Therefore, although domestic activities mainly occurred in the house, both the front and extended ones, their intensity was relatively lighter and less frequent than in other houses. The fact that the family members used the house mainly as a place to rest takes the initial idea of homestays beyond a mere 'addition' or 'injection' of an economy into the domestic sphere. Further, the Sitanggang family decided to make it the main focus of the house.

After Homestay

When the homestay arrived at this *huta*, the Sitanggang family understood the opportunities that such a government program could offer their family. Given Sitanggang's location in the city center, where the main development and major attractions are, and Sitanggang's familiarity with tourists seeking affordable lodgings, they decided to maximize the potential of their house as a homestay. It offers a different approach to integrating lodging into existing domestic spaces. Unlike other houses that mostly add a second floor or expand the back house, this house decided to add a floor below. Instead of going up, it goes down, adding a new floor below the elevated wooden house. Instead of relying on the back house for living and service, it uses the side hallway (Figure 7.10).

The blue lines on the first-floor drawing in Figure 7.10 (top) show tourists' movements through the house. In other words, they represent rooms and areas of the house that have been transformed and dedicated to tourists. The front wooden house has been changed from a family room into tourist lodging. Similarly, the back house, which was initially the dining room, is now a guest room. In addition, the previous kitchen includes a new bathroom unit, in addition to the existing one. This arrangement has taken over the family's former living and sleeping rooms. As a result, the family rooms shift to the ground floor below the elevated *jabu*.

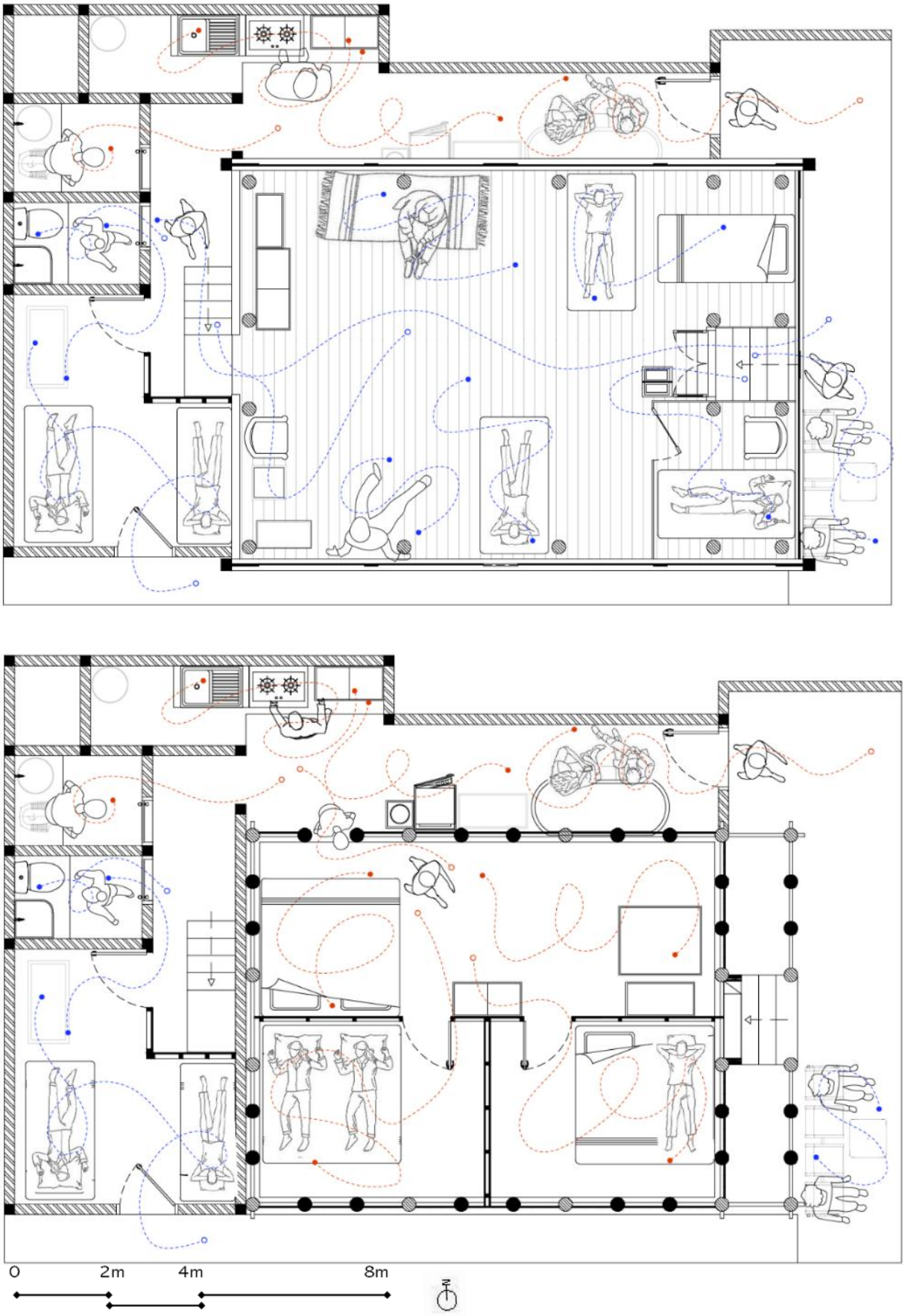


Figure 7. 10. Movements on the first floor (top) and ground floor (bottom), after homestay. Drawings created by the author.

As described in the first part of Chapter 5 Design, *Homes vs Homestays*, the builders dug out the ground to provide sufficient elevation for one floor height (House 2, page 132). Here are the family's bedrooms and living room. It has a small door connecting it to the side house (Figure 7.10, bottom). Meanwhile, the narrow side of the house now serves the kitchen, with a dining table, a couple of chairs, kitchen drawers above the table, and a hallway providing access to the side door, which is now the family's main entrance. In other words, the transformation of the house relocates all domestic activities to the previously called 'bara', the space below the *jabu*, which is now functioning as the main domestic area. Moreover, the back and front main houses, where the initial dwelling process took place, work as lodgings and are exclusively inhabited by tourists. Such changes in habitation patterns emerged from the beginning of the design process and proceeded to be permanent, regardless of the presence of tourists.

Similar Cases: Nainggolan & Sijabat Houses

Other houses indicating a similar pattern to the Sitanggang's are the Nainggolan in *Huta* Parsaoran 1 and the Sijabat house from Sosor Nangka.

The Nainggolan's

The Nainggolan's house also followed the main intention, to make it more of a lodging and less of a dwelling space for the family. Capitalizing on the house for economic benefits suits the family's current situation and the roles of the house for them during the initiation of the homestay project in the *huta*.

The Nainggolan House is the parents' house. It means that their two children have grown up and started their own families in other cities. Therefore, they no longer live in the house. Similarly, the mother lives with one of their children, which leaves the father to live in the house by himself. Although he initially lived with his wife and left the house empty, he decided to move back to the *huta* because the homestay team requires it: the owner must live in the house to receive homestay funds. Another interesting condition is that, since 2002, the family has not lived in the front wooden house anymore, as stated by Mr. Nainggolan during the interview, quoted below:

> *"That [Ruma Bolon] indeed, we no longer live in. It was the first time we got here that we lived in the [front] house, it was around 1998. Then, in 2002, once we had some money, we built the back [house], and we have lived there ever since. We occupy the back; this [front house] becomes empty. [...] I did not grow up in this [traditional] house. My father, being the youngest son in the family, inherited the second house built by my grandfather, which is outside of the 'huta' and is not a Ruma Bolon. So, I've never lived in one, and after inheriting it from my father, I must move in here with my wife and kids. And once we had a chance to build the back house, we no longer wanted to live in the front house. It has been left empty ever since. Well, you know, until this homestay."*

Therefore, from the first time the discussion of homestay was initiated in this household, the owners were fully committed to making the Ruma Bolon a tourist's lodging, with very limited changes to its domestic functions. Before the homestay, the house was occupied only by the father. The main space used was the back house, including the main bedroom, bathroom, and dining table, as shown by the red lines in Figure 7.11. Meanwhile, the rest of the house, including the front *jabu*, was not inhabited for domestic purposes. Access to this part of the house was only for maintenance.

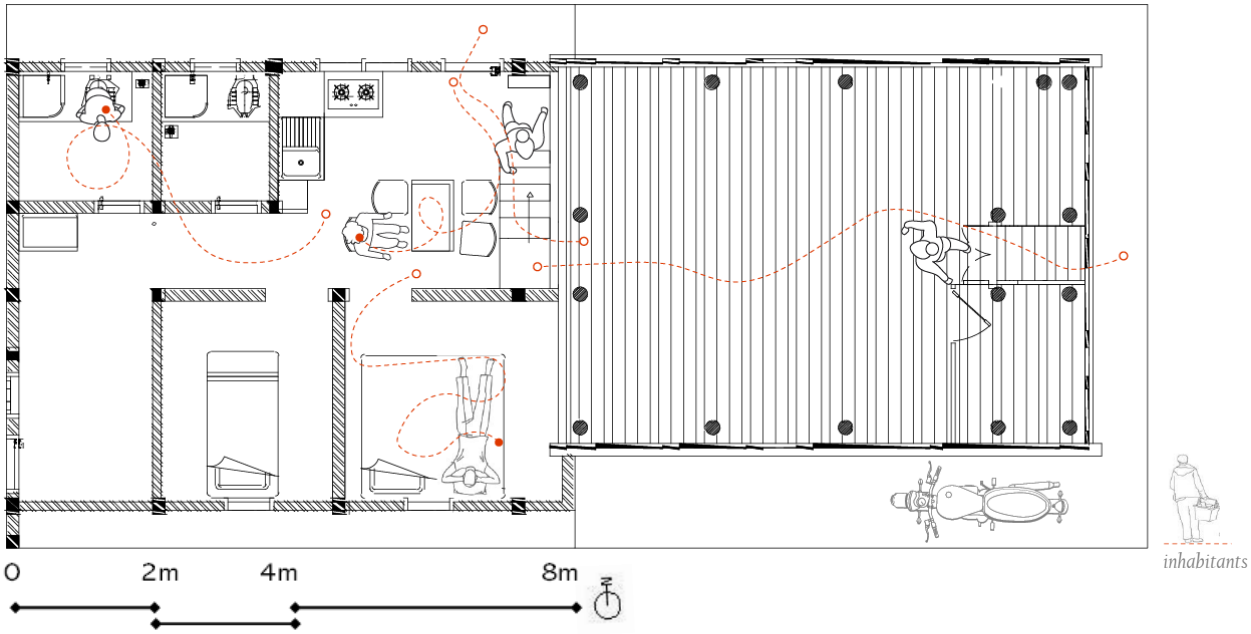


Figure 7. 11. Inhabitation before homestay. Drawings created by the author.

In other words, before the homestay, the Nainggolan house was a retirement house, where only the parents lived. Even, sometimes, the house was empty as they went to visit their children and grandchildren. However, as homestay programs began in the *huta* and the permit procurement process approached the residents, the father decided to live in the *huta* permanently to help initiate the project and oversee its procedures. The movement in 7.11 was the reconstruction of the father's before the homestay implementation. Living alone, he inhabited a very limited space in the house. He primarily used the bedroom and bathroom, and sometimes the dining table when he had people coming over. As he did not cook, he never used the kitchen and I found it mostly untouched. The main access to the house was the back door, while the front door on the wooden *jabu* was rarely used. Mostly only for maintenance. In fact, the front *jabu* was empty, without furniture, except for an old manual sewing machine.

After the homestay which resulted in significant physical changes, including a new second floor and some rearrangement in the back house (Figure 7.12), the lives in the house changed substantially. Figure 7.12 demonstrates the changes to the house. However, despite the physical changes, domestic activities do not show significant differences. Mr. Nainggolan continues to live

alone and continues his life as he did before the homestay. Only minor changes occur in the homestay portions of the house, guest-related activities, and daily maintenance. A maid hired by the owner handles the homestay's daily operations, such as cleaning the room, changing the bed sheets, and arranging the mattresses. As a part of tradition, male figures in the family are not involved in handling domestic chores such as these, unless it for is ceremonial-related events. Hence, the family decided to hire someone to take over the job from their father. Therefore, Mr. Nainggolan's daily activities in the house do not change much, as shown in Figure 7.12 in dashed red lines.

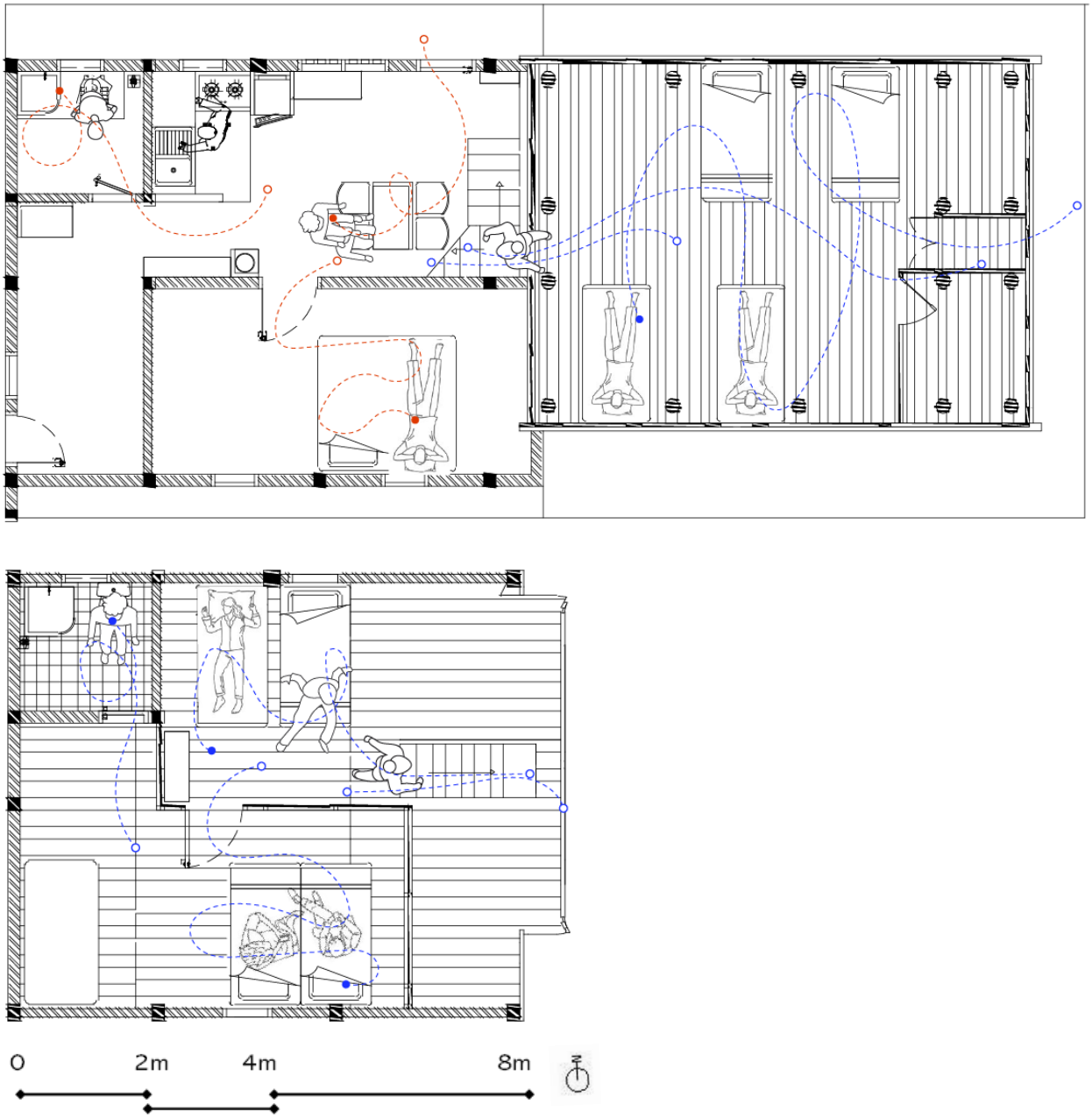


Figure 7. 12. Inhabitation after homestay, first floor (top) and second floor (bottom). Drawings created by the author.

On the other hand, the presence of tourist activities occurs in other parts of the house that were initially empty. Figure 7.12 shows these spatial dynamics. While the red lines representing domestic activities in the house generally remain the same, the blue lines spread more frequently throughout the house, showing the movements of the homestay's guests. They mainly take over the front house, the second floor, and the staircase connecting the two. Although no physical boundaries separate the homestays from the domestic spaces, with circulation open between the two zones, their spatial use is well defined, as seen in Figure 7.12.

The empty front house, the wooden *jabu*, is prepared to host multiple guests, commonly a group of backpackers, family, or friends travelling together. The second floor offers a slightly different atmosphere. The architect designed the upstairs as a more secluded and private area and away from the rest. The second floor has its living room, a bedroom, and a private bathroom. Guests seeking more privacy and less interaction with the host will prefer the second-floor homestay to the front wooden homestay. Those staying in the front house will need to go to the back house to use the bathroom. In addition, as the host never uses the kitchen, it is set up for guests to use if they need to cook or prepare something, at no extra charge. Although using the kitchen and bathroom may create some contact between the host and the guests, as Mr. Nainggolan is barely at home or mainly resting in his bedroom, very little interaction will occur between him and the guests.

The Sijabat's House

Another example of a similar pattern is the Sijabat House in Huta Sosor Nangka. Mr. Sijabat and his wife own the house. Their children have all grown up and started their own families elsewhere. Hence, only Mr. Sijabat and his wife live in the house. However, recently they had one of their granddaughters live with them, as they felt too lonely living alone and wanted their 2-year-old granddaughter to stay for some time.

Unlike previous homestay owners, who often dedicate or provide the Ruma Bolon for tourists' lodging, Mr. Sijabat takes a different approach. Instead of dedicating the front wooden house to the guest room, he lives in it and offers the second floor for the homestay. Mr. Sijabat stated that there is no doubt in his understanding that the front house is intended for the owners, not the guests. Here are the excerpts from the interviews conducted during the fieldwork:

> "*... absolutely not. The owners should live in the Bolon House. Our guests, if they do come, will be in that homestay room [referring to the extended house and the second floor]. We, of course, [remain] in the Batak house. That is why we never occupy the homestay buildings [referring to the back house] here; those are only for tourists. Safe to say, the only time we use that structure is if and when our extended families come to visit from 'rantau'. For us, we must be at the Batak house, that's it.*"

Moreover, when contrasted with the prevalent practice of homestays taking over the *Ruma Bolon* in other units of *huta*, Mr. Sijabat argued that that was not how the government instructed them.

Although people in the *huta* do not necessarily reject tourists' requests to stay in *Ruma Bolon*, the default is that the front house serves as their living space. "*The government's homestay is the one on the back, not this. This is Ruma Batak, this is ours. The two-storey buildings are the homestays. Not this,*" said Mr. Sijabat. In addition, the local leader I interviewed argues that *Batak House* to the local community, specifically in this *huta*, is more than just a house. It has cultural meanings and personal sentiments to the owners, which significantly influence how they navigate spatial division and zoning to provide guest rooms. Mr. Sijabat expressed his feelings on this subject as follows:

> *"I personally prefer to sleep in Rumah Bolon, in this Batak house. We were born there. I'm so used to living here. Well, that's it. We feel more comfortable if we are in the Batak house. After all, our custom, for the Batak people, if we sleep in... I don't know... if it's in a homestay, for example, [it feels] as if we are leaving our ancestors. That is how we feel. Our parents used to sleep where I sleep right now. In olden times, people slept there; my parents slept there. And I also slept there with them. So, yes, that's how it is.*"

Finally, given the owners' emotional and cultural attachments to the house's meanings, this household decided to dedicate the back house and its second floor to guests, while inhabiting the front house for domestic purposes. This decision divides the house into two zones (Figure 7.13). Each zone has its own entrance to the house. This house still maintains domestic communal living in the *jabu*, with the front house for daily living and the back house for services such as the kitchen and bathroom.

After the homestay extension, the house grows with a new second floor and a side extension. The domestic activities in the house, however, roughly remain the same. Figure 7.13 illustrates this, where domestics still use the front house as the main dwelling space and a part of the back house for services. Meanwhile, the rest of the back house has become a circulation area for guests entering the homestay rooms on the second floor. Here, the upstairs area is the tourist zone. The guests will enter from the back door, go through the kitchen area, and reach the staircase leading to the second floor (blue lines on Figure 7.13).

The second floor has a living room, a balcony with outdoor furniture including a table and benches, and a bedroom complete with a private bathroom. The design provides privacy for tourists while staying in the homestays, with very limited interaction with the hosts, if preferred. However, as the village has a frequent problem with water scarcity and accessibility to clean water, the second-floor bathroom consequently does not fully function as the water sometimes has difficulty arriving.

In addition, due to construction imperfections, water often leaks onto the floor and drips into the room below and into the circulation area around the staircase. The water marks visible on the walls and ceiling on the first floor indicate that this happens frequently. During my visit, unfortunately, the hosts needed to mop and clean this area regularly to keep it dry and safe. To

address this issue and prevent leakage, hosts often need to ask guests to use only the toilet and keep the floor dry. For showers and other bathroom activities that require a larger volume of water, they advise guests to use the downstairs bathroom. Although the fixture is less contemporary, such as using a squatting toilet instead of a sitting one and a water tub instead of a shower, this bathroom has sufficient fresh, clean running water. Figure 7.13 shows this pattern. Overall, the guests mainly occupy the back house, circulating between the second and first floors. While the second floor is fully private, the first floor is shared with the owners, including the bathroom and kitchen.

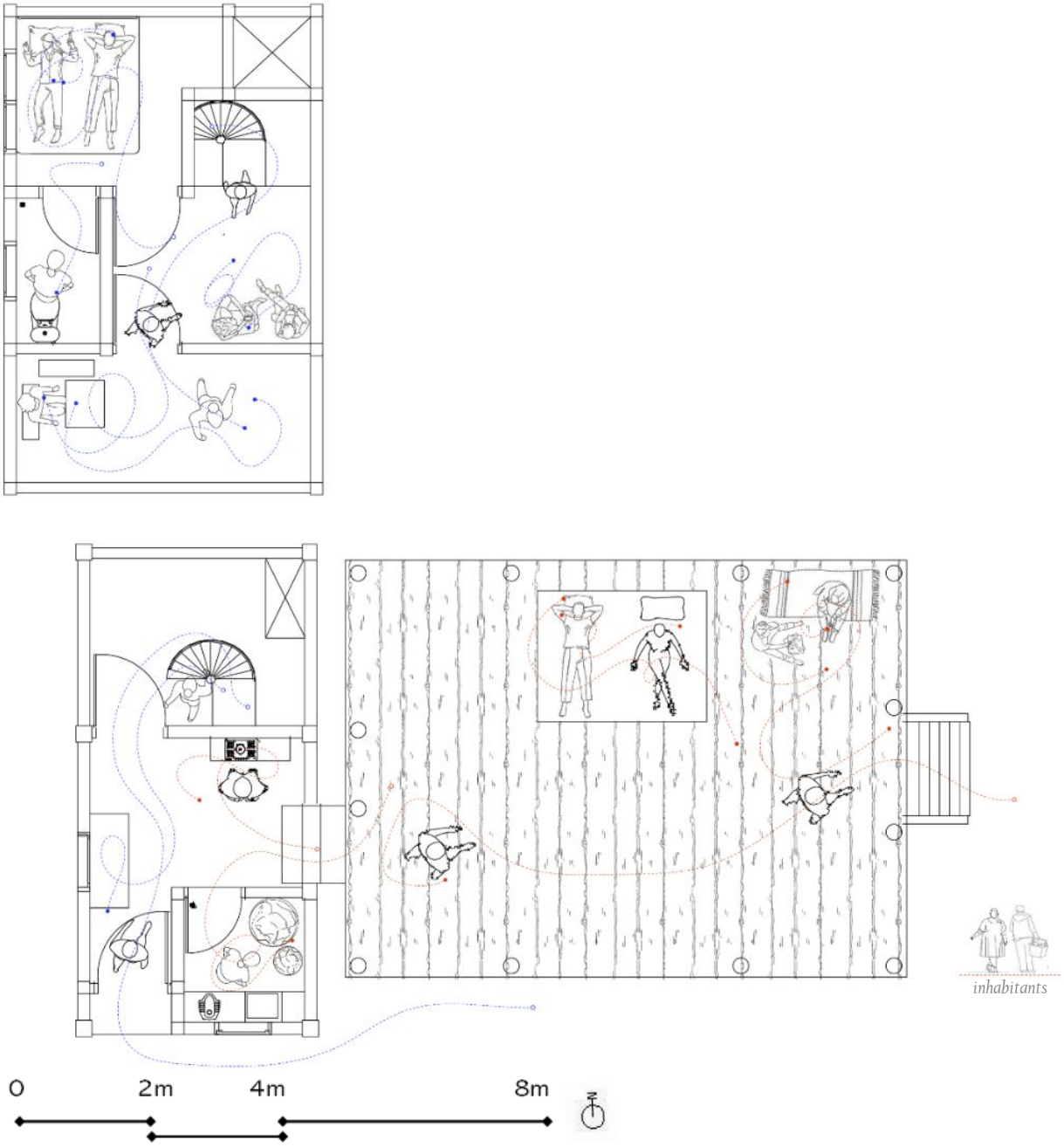


Figure 7. 13. Inhabitation after homestay. Drawings by the author.

PATTERN 4: FREEING DOMESTICS

Moving away from the merging and negotiation of domestic and touristic spaces within a single house structure, this pattern highlights a different response to homestay provision in *Batak hutas*. This part follows the spatial principles of "Domestics as Supports," which aim to separate tourists from the well-established owners' everyday life activities. Yet, this pattern goes beyond creating different zones for the two functions. This pattern goes further by physically separating them into two buildings. It provides a completely different structure for tourism purposes adjacent to the hosts' house. Therefore, no direct contact or interaction occurs, providing greater privacy for the guests. However, this also contradicts the homestay's idea of combining or negotiating domestic and economic functions under one roof. Consequently, a structure, separate from the existing domestic house, is a new building or a repurpose into homestays to accommodate tourism activities promoted by the government.

Houses included in this group have distinctive designs. Instead of injecting new rooms into the existing house or expanding the home for a homestay, the project team created a specific design for each family that could afford a new building. In other words, from the initial discussion and the initiation of homestay projects, homeowners with extra land next to their homes requested that the team build the homestay separately from their house. this pattern usually occurs among families with a history of becoming the *Tunggane Huta*, known as landlords, and among generations descended from the original person who 'opened' or built the village. With a spare plot of land next to their existing house, they can build a new homestay structure.

In this case, while homestay units are separated from the owners' house, they are usually close to the hosts' house for maintenance purposes. Although the arrangements and proximity between the domestic house and the homestay building vary from case to case, the common principle is to make the homestay operate independently and not rely on the hosts' domestic spaces. Therefore, no rooms are for common use between owners and guests, nor are any direct interactions intended between them. Cases supporting this pattern include the Rumahorbo House in Huta Tapian, the Ricardo House in Huta Siallagan Parhapuran, and the House 2 in Huta Tinggi.

Ruma Horbo's homestay in Huta Tapian sits on an empty lot between two existing houses facing each other (Figure 7.14). Instead of adding a guest room to each of the existing houses, the architect advised the families to combine the homestay units into a single new structure. Hence, they built a two-story homestay. The hosts' family members continue their domestic lives as usual. No sharing or replacement of existing domestic spaces, such as bathrooms, living rooms, or bedrooms to accommodate guests' needs. Figure 7.14 shows that domestic areas, represented by red lines, occur only at the two ends of the building. The blue lines, representing the guests' movements, occur at the center of the buildings with the open, shared living room. The family moves to the second floor, where the homestay's private rooms are, including a bedroom and bathroom. Each building unit,

whether homestays or domestic houses, has its own entrance and circulation areas, with no designated contact points anticipated between tourists and hosts.

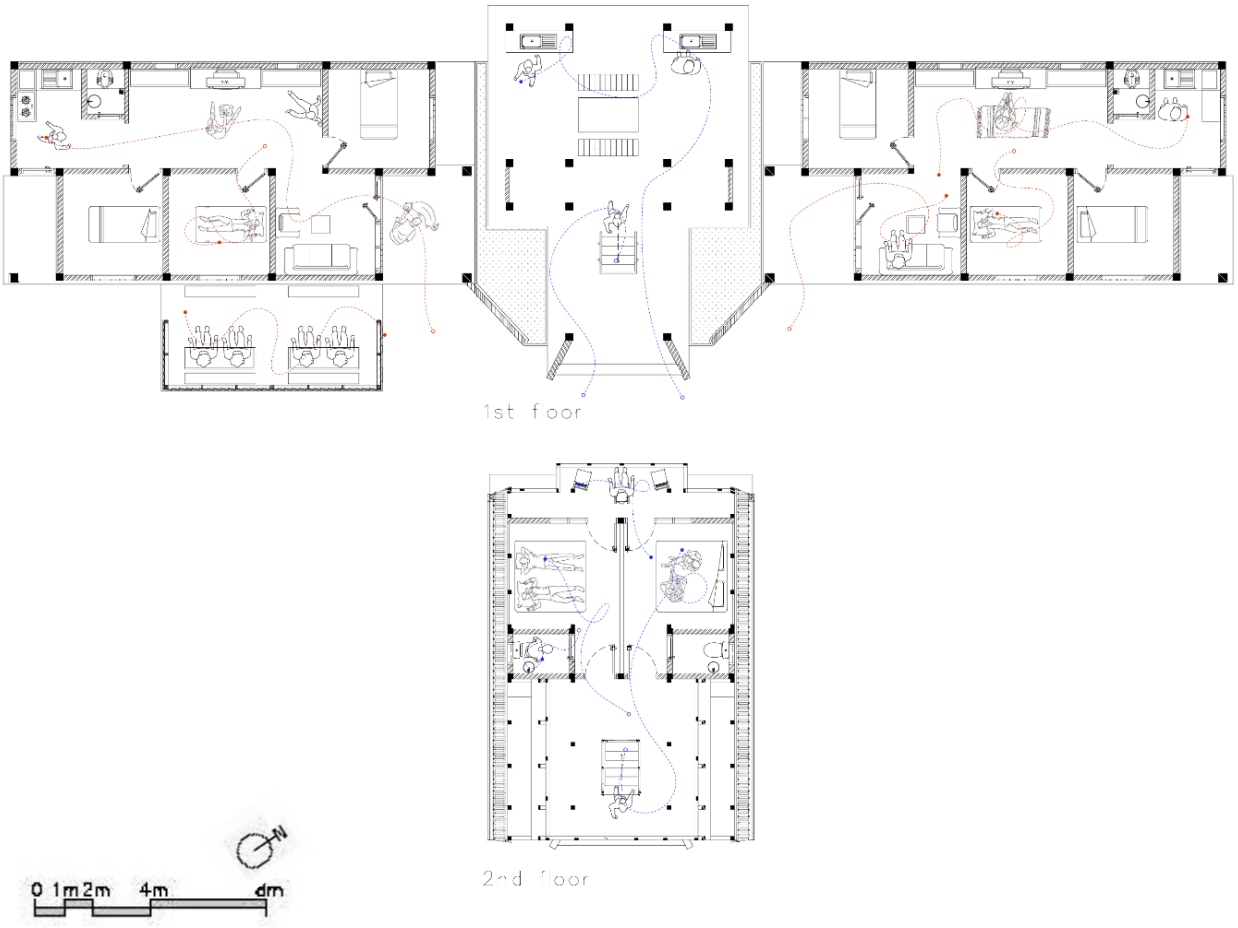


Figure 7. 14. Inhabitation after homestay. Drawings by the author.

Likewise, a separate structure for a homestay, apart from its host's house, also occur at Ricardo's house. Figure 7.15 shows this clear division. Two homestay units stand separately in front of their existing houses. The homestays are two individual buildings with their own entrances and front balconies. The guests have their own rooms, including their own bathrooms. However, the guest bathrooms are behind the homestays. Although the bathrooms are attached to the house, their entrances are on the outside. Figure 7.15 shows the flow of guests to the bathroom units at the back of the homestays.

Interestingly, one of the homestay units connects to the kitchen area of the house, since the homestay unit also commonly host the extended family. Therefore, direct access to the house is provided. While the tourists are welcome to use this, this is not intended. Instead, the common practice among tourists is to use the outdoor bathroom unit at the back of homestays. Additionally, Figure 7.15 shows clear separation between guests' and owners' spaces (shown in red lines) that occur throughout the rest of the house. The entrance to the house is on the side where their shops/restaurants are, with tables and seating.

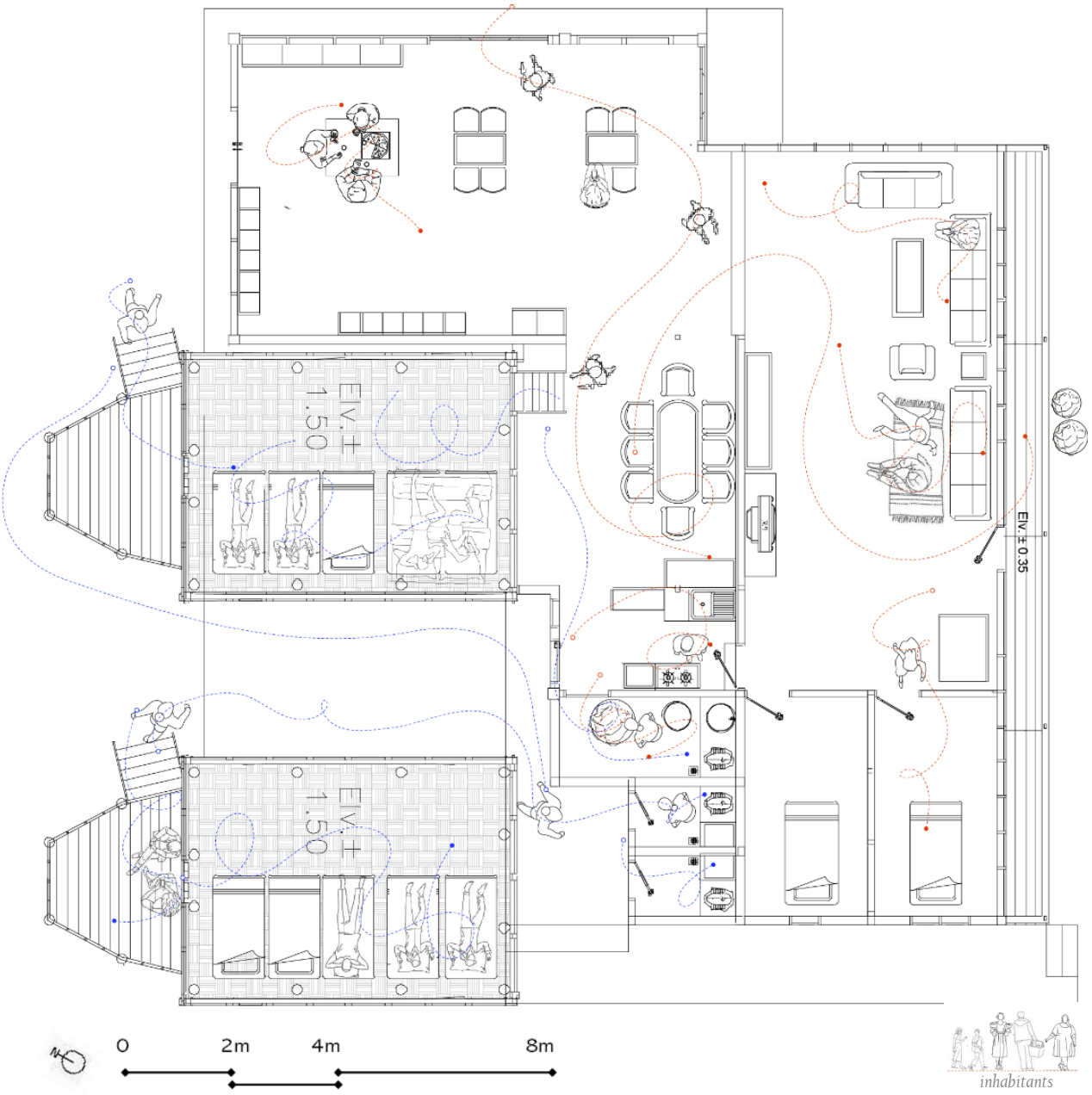


Figure 7. 15. Movements after homestays. Drawings by the author.

Another case for this pattern is House 2 of Huta Tinggi (Figure 7.16). Unlike Ricardo's homestay in front of their existing house and Rumahorbos' in between two of their existing houses, this homestay is built attached to the existing family's home. The homestay, in fact, shares a side wall with the house. Figure 7.16 demonstrates this scenario.

The homestay is built on an empty plot of land beside the existing house. With this, the homestay has its entrance and front porch on the same part of the house. The homestay has its own bathroom at the back, with no possible contact or interaction with the hosts. The only area where contacts with the owners may occur is on the front porch, where guests may meet with the hosts if they are sitting in the front seating area, as seen in Figure 7.16.

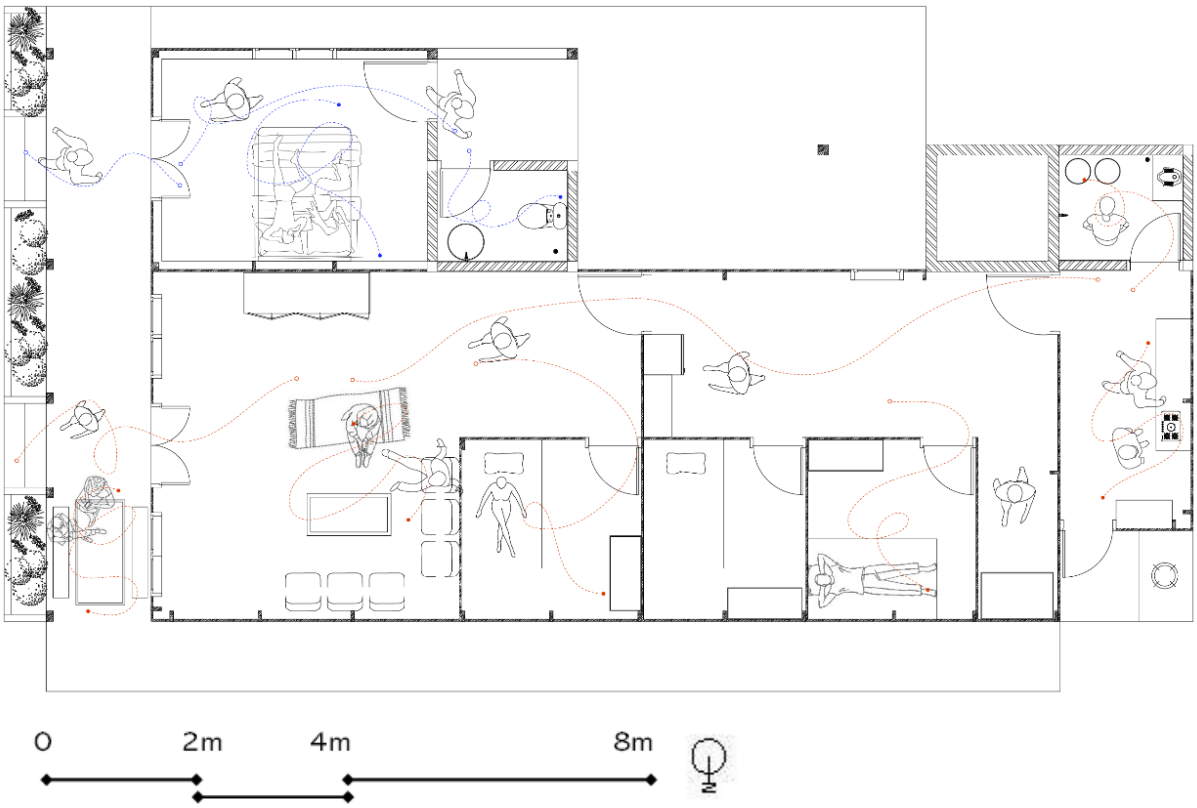


Figure 7. 16. Separating homestays from the domestics: movements after homestay. Drawings created by the author.

Finally, this type of homestay, including Ricardo's, Rumahorbos', and Huta Tinggis' house 2, can function individually without relying on the existing hosts' houses. In addition, it provides better privacy for tourists, with either very limited or no direct contact with hosts. However, these homestays have very limited potential to offer cultural appreciation, interactions with the inhabitants, and a deeper understanding between tourists and locals, which is contrary to the main purpose of governments' homestay projects.

PATTERN 5: DOMESTICIZING HOMESTAYS

This part elaborates on exceptional cases of homestay projects implemented in some Batak *hutas*. Cases in this section are meant to highlight the expansion of domestic use of the supposed homestay spaces. Houses in this category refuse to give up any part of their domestic space for homestay use. Not only that, but they also reject the idea of integrating tourism activities into their everyday lives. This means that the goals of homestays, which are to insert economic purposes into local traditional houses, do not go as anticipated. It means that since construction ended, the homeowners have never accepted or hosted tourists in their so-called homestays.

Initially, as part of the deal at the start of the homestay, the homeowners agreed to host. Only then did the government and homestay team process the funding to renovate and prepare their

houses to become a tourist's lodging. However, after receiving the funds and having their houses renovated, some have never wanted to host tourists in their homes. They refused to accept tourists' reservations. Instead, they occupy the homestay building for their domestic lives. It turned out that some homestay recipients did not find having strangers in their homes something they could incorporate into their livelihoods. This is still the case even though they had already agreed to be a homestay, as part of the agreements with the governments and homestay teams. In other words, they did not fulfill their promises.

Rather, such practices represent perhaps one-sided interpretations of how governments help locals renovate and improve their houses. Renovating houses, as one of the key points the government team used to promote the homestay project to residents, has unfortunately been a reason, perhaps the main reason why they accepted it. It was not for the sake of the homestays' goals.

> *"Before, they [people here] didn't even know what a homestay is, they even were afraid that 'the government will kick us out of the house,' that's how our society used to look at it. So, I, who have been given trust by people here as a figure, help explain it to them, and, of course, with the government's guidance. [...] In the beginning, to help people accept this homestay, we emphasized some of its benefits, especially 'assistance to repair our house'. Without such assistance, there is no way we could do it ourselves. Yes, that's it."*

This case is not uncommon. In every *huta* marketed as a tourist homestay, there is always one or two units that do not follow up on renting the rooms to tourists. Based on my observation during data collection, those houses that accept the homestay program, yet function fully as domestic houses only, include Siallagan house, Sijabat (1) and (2) houses.

Siallagan house was a pilot project for homestay designs in the Samosir region. The designs were the first in the region, before other homestays occured in the rest of the *hutas*. However, it turns out these pilot homestays never operated as tourist lodges. The *adat* leader further explained this situation and explained, as follows:

> *"The families from 'rantau' [who live outside the region] are rather reluctant to accept the idea [of hosting] tourists in this Bolon house, they said, 'It's not for the public, it's our grandparents' house, let's not make a business out of it. The important thing was,' they said, 'every month we will send a sack of rice to you [to help with monthly expenses], if it is about money, we will help." So, we obey [laughing], otherwise it will be embarrassing. Since then, we haven't accepted [any guests]."*

Figure 7.17 shows the domestic activities that occur in the house of Siallagan, which rejected hosting tourists. The house is lived in by the Siallagans, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Siallagan, who are in retirement, and two of their grandchildren, whose parents live nearby, right behind the *huta*. Both

kids are in elementary school, and while mostly they spend time with their parents in the shop, they usually sleep in this house with their grandmother.

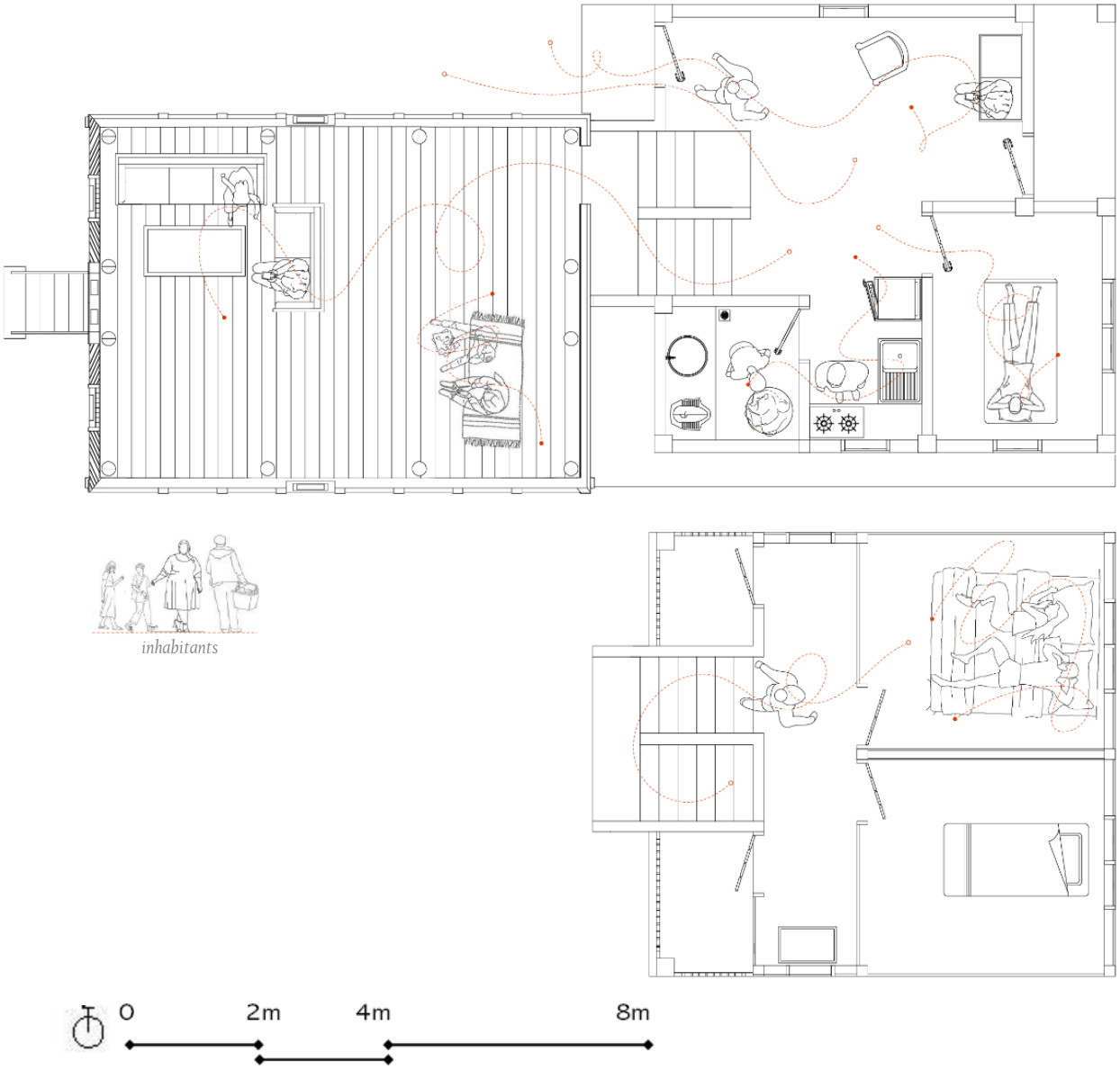


Figure 7. 17. Domesticizing the homestay; movements of the members. Drawings created by the author.

The figure shows that movements in the front house are very rare. In fact, no activity was observed around the front door, indicating they no longer use the front entrance to enter and exit the house. Rather, their main circulation to the house is through the side door. On the contrary, the back house is full of everyday activities. On the first floor, the inhabitants usually cook, have afternoon coffee, and sleep. The second floor also contains two bedrooms; however, the owners only use one. Meanwhile, the other one is mostly empty, except during occasional visits from the family members.

Another example of this behavioral pattern is the house of Sijabat 5, from the same *huta* as the previous Sijabat house (Figure 7.18). For a while, the house only serves one person: the father. Initially, he lived in another city with his wife and their teenage daughter. During the initial homestay initiation, to meet the homestay recipient eligibility requirements, he decided to return to the *huta* alone and present in the entire homestay procedures.

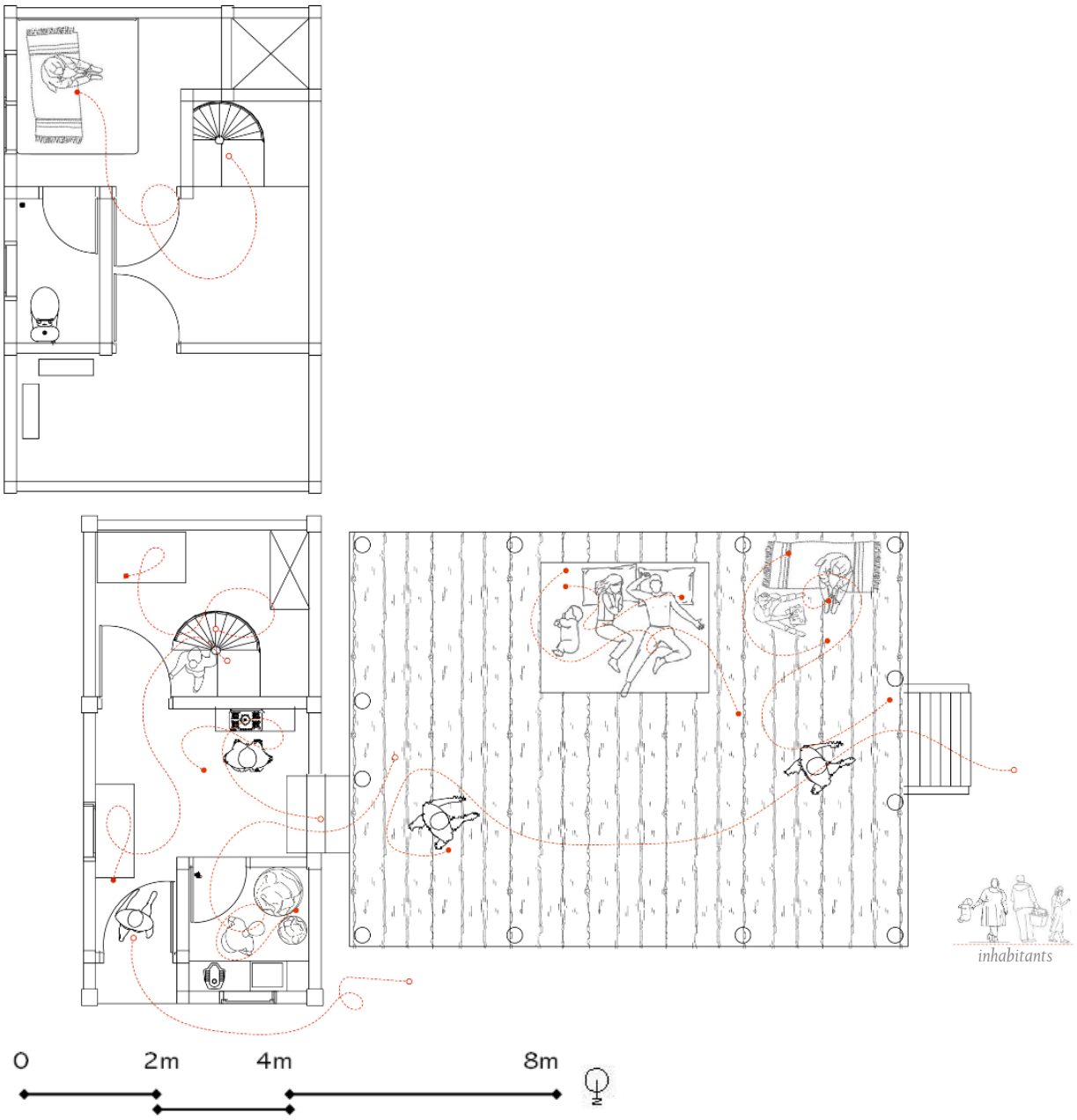


Figure 7. 18. Domesticizing the homestay; House of Sijabat. Drawings created by the author.

Based on Figure 7.19, since he lives alone, he occupies only a few parts of the house. The only part he uses is the back house, especially the bedroom and bathroom. He does not cook and always eats out; therefore, the kitchen is almost untouched. The same thing happens in the front house. It was left unoccupied for quite some time, and from my fieldwork visit, it needs serious cleaning before

it can be habitable. The entrance frequently used is the back door leading to the extension house. Meanwhile, the *Jabu Bolon* door is never used or opened by inhabitants.

In addition, Figure 7.19 also shows that no guests have ever stayed in the house. The owner admitted that he has no intention of receiving guests at his house yet. As the only male in the house, he is not familiar with hosting and serving people. However, he is not opposed to this idea when his family returns and takes care of the work. Although he welcomes the idea, he does not feel strongly about it. His priority is not preparing the house for tourists; he focuses more on bringing his family back to the *huta* and living together in a better house with a bathroom and clean water, instead of relying on the public toilet or the lake across their *huta* for daily use. In other words, the intention of accepting homestay funding is not always a mix of personal and governmental goals but is sometimes dominated by personal gain. Houses explained in this category demonstrate the conflicting expectations between the personal and the government.

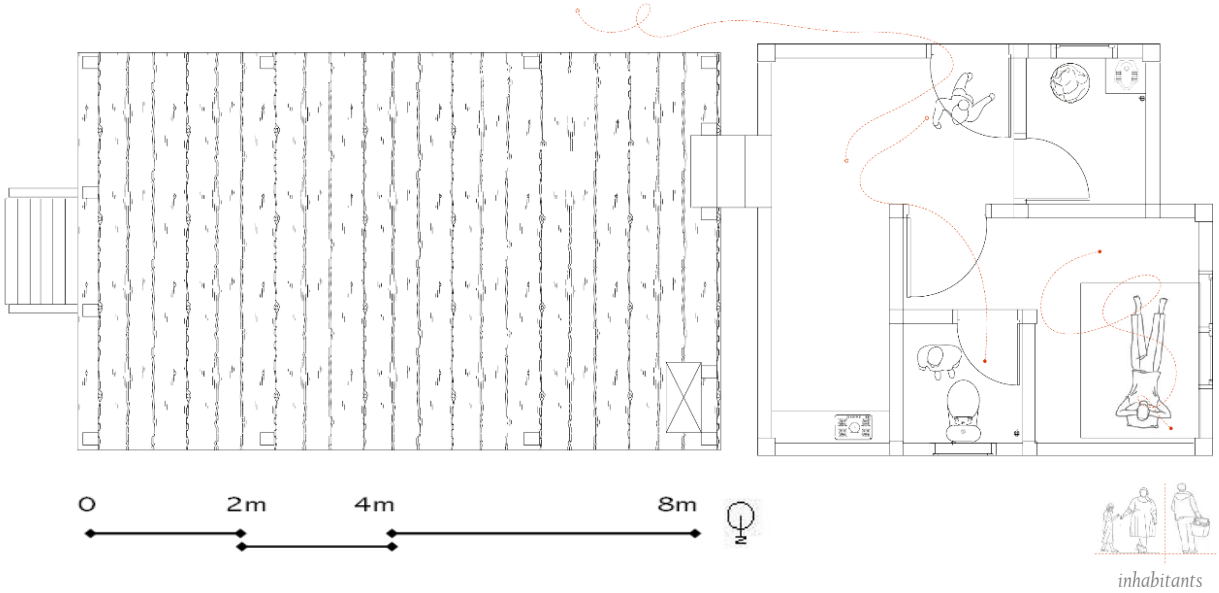


Figure 7. 19. Domestic movements of the owner. Drawing created by the author.

Regarding the rejection of hosting tourists in the homestays, this attracts different responses. While the homestay accommodates the individual owners' needs, many see this as negligence on the part of governments that have invested substantial money and effort to make this happen. Other private lodge owners expressed their sceptical views on this particular practice, "*Government homestays now all become personal houses, everywhere is like that. That's why we started this business, local taste, but not mixed with personal space.*"

A similar view comes from one of the *adat* leaders criticizing the flexibility, or almost ignorance, of the government towards their own projects. This is due to a lack of guidance, post-occupation performance evaluation, or casual visits from homestay teams/governments to assess how homestay programs work after the construction phase is complete. Here I quoted the stated argument:

I am also not sure whether this homestay aligns with the government's expectations. After the construction, no follow-ups at all. It almost seems that this homestay was built just to be left out by the government—I don't understand. The government has never visited, never checked, even though it is they [the government] that built this. How can we make this homestay work better so it doesn't waste government resources [money], right? We don't know. What a shame."

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that at least four patterns of habitation occurred in the homestay units under study. These patterns correlate with the degree to which the spatial and temporal portions of the houses are for tourists, ranging from one extreme to the other: on one end, tourists taking over most of the house and shrinking domestic spaces; on the other, domestic activities invading homestays and limiting, if not erasing, guest rooms. In more detail, the occupation patterns of houses after the implementation of homestays vary both within units and across villages.

Some key aspects defining such spatial inhabitation patterns includes aspects: 1) size of the family residing in the house, where the bigger the family, the more temporal-based use the spaces are, 2) the degree cultural attachments of the owners and their understanding of ownership: which are 'ours' which are 'homestay's' or 'governments', and 3) while not universally applicable, inhabitants' previous living experiences also influence the preference of spatial occupation in the homestay units.

Regarding the last point, it is quite common for inhabitants who previously lived in a different house to find themselves residing mostly in the extended house when moving to the *jabu*. This is due to the habit of living in landed houses, and they find the back house more convenient, as living in the *jabu* would require a lot of vertical circulation.

Furthermore, while such evidence focuses on the spatial dialogue between tourists and inhabitants, and how the presence of tourists impacts the daily life of the local community, this study further indicates how these dynamics reflect cultural discontinuity that tourism activities potentially bring to the vernacular communities and their architecture in the long run, if no regulations exist to improve how homestays operate right now.

While the idea of promoting culture and vernacular architecture by bringing tourists into local houses is promising in educational and financial terms, sharing rooms and keeping them 'representable' for tourists' eyes influences the spatial priorities of the inhabitants, especially in their domestic lives. Basing this argument on the previous occupational pattern, it is only necessary to point out that 'giving up' large portions of the house, keeping them empty, clean, sterile, and free from mundane objects and traces of everyday activities, especially in the vernacular house or *jabu*, in the long run, can harm the sense of attachment and the living qualities in the house. This is especially the case if no regulations are put in place to improve how homestays currently operate.

This is due to restrictions on the use of vernacular houses for tourist accommodation and financial gain, which creates a distance between living heritage and younger generations. Preventing occupants from living in the vernacular house on a daily basis, as this front house is now for homestay while the family lives in the back house, could hinder the gradual yet rooted establishment of communality, shared space, and control, as well as the experience of the house's cultural spatial qualities. Consequently, tradition, cultural understanding, and the establishment of attachment occurred only through occasional cultural events rather than in everyday life.

In addition, discussing the pattern of reducing domestic spaces to a small part of the back house and dedicating most of the house to tourists raises questions about the quality of life. Space for playing, gathering, and hanging out with family members, or even just observing children as they do their homework, becomes very limited, potentially affecting tourists' privacy and comfort. The house becomes very quiet. Likewise, having these concerns identified raises questions on the very basic purpose of homestay programs, which is to conserve and preserve the endangered Batak Samosir's architecture. From the perspective of tangible heritage and the development of knowledge traditions, the vernacular architecture-based accommodation does not constitute a significant or meaningful attempt to conserve endangered architecture and knowledge. Lastly, I find the dwelling patterns adopted or encouraged to accommodate Batak homestays concerning. Moving the inhabitants from the traditional house to the new building at the back is highly questionable, especially given the purpose of incorporating vernacular communities into tourism programs: to sustain and conserve the interdependent architecture and culture of the community.

Finally, the inhabitation patterns reflect the perhaps very limited design exploration done for these Indigenous houses. Based on the analysis of spatial inhabitation, it shows that injecting 'tourist rooms' into existing lived homes is not sufficient to either promote culture or conserve its architecture, especially when the remaining space/structure stays the same. Dividing houses into zones, which unfortunately often minimizes owners' domestic lives, simply does not serve its purpose. The spatial organization needs better integration, both spatially and behaviorally, to better meet locals' needs. This is where architecture can contribute by studying design possibilities for how the everyday lives of new temporary global citizens coexist. For example, design studies on combinations of private and shared spaces deserve more attention. Design exploration should focus on integrating both aspects of life.

For better design, homestays need a thorough study of the spatial organization and programming that best accommodate two distinct user groups: tourists and inhabitants. This is not only to ensure tourists' comfort, but also to improve the quality of everyday spaces and the built environment in local communities. Lastly, I argue that this is why collaboration, contributive roles, and genuine—*rather than formal*—involvement from local communities during the design process are most important. Understanding Indigenous perspectives on their environments, spaces, homes, and lives will significantly enhance the impact and contributions of designs.

CHAPTER 8
SOCIAL DYNAMICS

This chapter examines homestay projects as a contact zone of different actors, needs, and aspirations. This part delves into the role of homestays as contact zones in redefining and recontextualizing the socio-political relations within local communities. This chapter further examines the agency—*and ways to reclaim the agency*—of host communities during the construction, renovation, redesign, and remake of their own houses, especially under the surveillance of the government, its appointed architects and contractors, and *adat* leaders, in support of the state's homestay project. Here, I highlight aspects around ownership and authorship of the homestays implanted in local houses to assert the sense of control and agency that indigenous communities have over their land and homes, both as a group and as individual homeowners, and to ensure that this sense is sustained and respected in any nation's programs and agenda.

I divided this chapter into 2 parts. The first part deals with the politics of money, how government funds operated, and how they shaped the lives of the Batak in Samosir. Second, the social dynamics concern how the implementation of homestays shapes community dynamics and enhances cohesiveness, from both the perspective of *adat* leadership and everyday communal life. And lastly, I provide a brief synthesis of the chapter.

ECONOMIC INTERPLAYS

In accordance with the President's 16 August 2019 speech aimed at advancing tourism areas to attract both domestic and international tourists, in 2020, the central government prioritized development in five National Strategic Tourism Areas (KSPN) designated as Super Priority, including Lake Toba. Homestay developments in the five super-priority regions were among the National Strategic Projects listed in Presidential Regulation No. 109 of 2020. The Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (abbreviated as PUPR) funded and organized the homestay projects under the direct order of the president of the Republic of Indonesia, Jokowi Dodo. Therefore, the financial implementation of the projects is under the direct observation and management of the ministry, including the homestay provisions in the Batak Toba regions.

Given this approach, during construction of the homestay units, funds allocated to each house were centrally controlled and distributed by government teams, without any intermediaries, not least the homeowners. This system excluded homeowners from receiving homestay funds to rebuild or renovate their homes. This part traces the flow of funds for homestays and how it influences decision-making and the involvement of certain actors in the process. In this chapter I examine economic interactions among actors and the social dynamics they created both during and after the homestay implementation phase.

State Funds Management in Homestay Project

Once the homestay team had final data on the headcounts of houses that would receive homestay funds, and the architects' team began calculating the estimated costs to build the 2-bedroom-2-bathroom into the existing houses in the village, they started assigning funds to each house. Across the 6 villages I studied, the funds allocated to each house range from 115 to 180 million IDR, roughly 7-9 K USD. In one of the *hutas*, Sosor Nangka, for instance, the ministry set a budget of 115 million IDR for every unit. Meanwhile, another *huta*'s recipients reported receiving 180 million. However, according to one of the homeowners in Sitohang Village, during one of their initial discussions with ministry officials or the homestay team, the fund was around 182 million IDR. The number, unfortunately, gradually decreased every time they had a meeting,

> "*... In every meeting, they calculated something, then they reduced the amount. It was confusing. We never actually saw the money; we only heard the numbers. They're the ones who knew everything and kept all the money. Final number we got was around 114 million IDR, almost 115 [per house], I think.*"

This statement shows some opacity on the owners' part regarding the decisions made. Although the state kept the informed with all decisions, the actual calculation and allocation of the funds were not clear. Furthermore, the homeowners understood that there was a stage prior to their participation, involving *Tunggane Hutas* and the homestay team, to set aside funds for public facilities in the *huta*. An example of this was the construction of a drainage system in Sitohang *Huta*, from houses to the city's system or other waterways. The *Tunggane Huta* described this particular issue as follows:

> "*... the waterways are new, built along with homestays. I asked the consultant directly, 'Try to draw [the waterways] first, take some funds from each house, just deduct it, maybe one million each.' They agreed, but the funds were not sufficient for all houses and around the village, so [it was] only on one side of the huta. The other side, no, it goes directly to the back, the bushes, and all the way to the lake.*"

For this *huta* specifically, the *Tunggane Huta* actively promotes the development of common infrastructures for the *huta*. On another occasion, he also asked the homestay team whether it was

financially feasible to pave the *alaman* (the front yard) with blocks to address acute soil dust. Unfortunately, the funds were not sufficient for that without risking the homestays.



Figure 8. 1. New waterways in the huta. Photos taken by the author.

The involvement of the *Tunggane Huta* in the budgeting process for homestay units was not something prevalent across the village recipients. In most cases, in five out of six villages I studied, the homestay team assigned the final amount of the funds to the individual homestay units, without any involvement of their *Tunggane Hutas*. Once the number was settled and the owners were notified, a purchase could be made for construction.

Although the funds were for every house, the owners did not manage the spending. Instead, the homestay team was the one who controlled the funds. This system happened to all villages in the regions that received homestay programs. During the interviews, thistopic often surfaced across recipients, across villages. Excerpts from one of the participants demonstrating this case were as follows:

> *"...They told us to open a new bank account, and they deposited the money there. So, the money was in the account, we held the account book, but the ATM card was with them, the officials. [This way] we did not have access to the money; we could not withdraw it. We were only the owners of the account. We did not know when, how, on which, or how much they spent the money or any other details related to its spending."*

As the homestay is a nationally funded project, there were direct controls from and involvement of the central authorities. However, with this procedure, the state controlled every aspect of the projects, even down to the individual bank accounts of the communities in Samosir. As the owners had no access to or control over their homestay funds, they lacked the bargaining power to participate in deciding how to allocate portions of it, as better suited to their needs and situation. In other words, although the funds were theirs and dedicated to improving their house, they lacked

the means to manage their spending. This approach limited their involvement in the project, leaving them out of key decision-making processes regarding the construction of their houses. This is due to the important roles the funds played in the whole process. In fact, the fund was the main generator of the project, informing it from the design phase onward.

Regarding the homestay implementation, this section will delve further into the next major expenditure from the assigned project funding, including material purchases and builders' salaries. In this sense, once the money was in the account, the homestay teams would inform the homeowners to move forward with the project. For example, the DED (Detailed Engineering Design) documents from the architects included information on materials, their specifications, quantities, and their price ranges. Based on this information, the homestay team would ask the homeowners, individually or in groups, to order the stated materials from local building supply stores of their selection. As architects decided and set everything, the homestay recipients did not need to research material selections or the quantity of them, as stated by one of the owners: "*We had [everything] ready and [it] was designed like that. [Like] the cost was this much at the most, and the sand and the cement were this much. So, we just need to order them to the 'panglong'.*"

Panglong is a local term for building materials stores. While there was a case of an individual homeowner who placed an order for building materials with the local panglong, most hutas purchased materials collectively. One participant mentioned that "*We could do it [ordering materials], or they [homestay team] could do it too. So, [in my case], I ordered them; the materials arrived; and then they [the government] paid directly to the 'panglong'. I have no clue how and when they did it.*" The same payment procedure applied to cases where the material was purchased collectively.

While the owners, individually or collectively, could choose whichever *panglong* they preferred to source their materials from, the government still retained inherent control over this selection. The designs provided by the architects include the DED and the Bill of Quantity, in which the prices of each material are set so that the prices offered by *panglong* fall within the government's budget and calculation range, while, of course, meeting all the set specifications. On the one hand, such controls were strategically useful for maintaining spending on building materials, as prices were skyrocketing due to high demand for thousands of homestays in the area, a trend that occurred around the same time.

On the other hand, having every aspect of material provision handled by the government team left nothing for the owners to consider or decide. In fact, they were couriers, taking the pages of the Bill of Quantity and showing them to the stores when ordering individually. It further precluded them from the implementation procedure. Once the order was made, the store transported all the materials to the construction site, the *hutas*. Due to this procedure, very often the homeowners preferred to have their building materials ordered and managed directly by the homestay team, "*... they drew [design] it; they calculated everything, they are the ones who pay, we know nothing, so why not order it also. Saving*

us a trip to the store." Therefore, in most *hutas*, the materials were purchased in groups and handled by the homestay team, without the help of the local communities.

However, only one *huta* offered owners the option to purchase materials individually or in groups, while the other five did not. In most villages, the team ordered materials without consulting the owners. One owner from the other five villages mentioned that, quoted here, "*We weren't involved with this [material purchase] that day. Knew nothing about it.*" The homestay team purchased the material directly, leaving the homeowners as spectators. It consequently led to the owners' involvement being even further limited and prevented. Unfortunately, this further prevented homeowners from claiming any degree of ownership or control over decisions, such as in Parsaoran 1, Sosor Nangka, and others.

Navigating State's Funds: Politics of 'Marga'

In terms of materials procurement, *marga* plays an important role in deciding which *panglong* to use. It defines the financial distribution and flow of the homestay funds. It is of particular concern due to the collective, massive purchase of building materials, which inevitably altered the economic rhythms of remote regions such as Samosir Island. When purchases were in large quantities in such previously relatively less active *panglongs* in the region, their potential financial impacts attracted attention from local people, including those in positions to voice their choices and preferences. They are *Tunggane Hutas* and village heads. One of the *Tunggane Hutas* claimed that his *huta* decided to order all the building materials for the entire homestay units collectively and therefore proposed a store to buy them. When *Tunngane Huta* was proposing a *panglong*, another recommendation was made to the homestay team. It was by the Head of the Village government, *Kepala Desa*.

The difference between the two leadership roles, *Tunggane Huta* and *Kepala Desa*, is that the former is traditional and cultural, concerned with communal ways of living, while the latter is an administrative position, part of the state government. The scale of their authorities is also different. *Tunggane Huta* exercises authority over the neighborhood and the people living on his land, which generally consists of up to 20 *jabus*. On the other hand, the administrative area of the Desa Head may cover multiple hutas, sometimes up to 5.

The dynamics between the two leaders, *Tunggane Huta* and the *Kepala Desa*, on an everyday basis, are mainly based on the logic that *Tunggane Huta* focuses on the domestic and cultural aspects of the *huta's* life. The *Kepala Desa*, on the other hand, deals with the state's related programs and administration. As a part of the state's system, the title of Kepala Desa is widely known among the people. Unlike *Tunggane Huta*, it is a cultural title specific to the Batak Toba communities, so it is unknown to most people from other ethnic groups. Given this understanding, the majority of the state's assistance and interventions commonly come through contacts with *Kepala Desa*.

The same thing happened with the homestay project. Before the meeting between the homestay team and *Tunggane Huta*, the team first established a relationship with the *Kepala Desa*. Only

then would the *Kepala Desa* connect the team with the *Tunggane Huta*, to move forward with the next stages of the project, as stated by a *Tunggane Huta*: "*Yes, this huta is within Kepala Desa's administrative territory. So, early into the homestay assistance, they had to ask the Kepala Desa's permission. Then, Kepala Desa called me.*" Here, the homestay team had an opportunity to work with both leaders. Consequently, the meeting of these two figures created dynamics during the project. While the initial stage *of Kepala* Desa was dominant, it began to decline as the project progressed, with a focus on the *huta* residents and their houses. In other words, the *Tunggane Huta* began to take greater control and to communicate directly with the team in charge.

Specific to the project's financial aspects, one situation involving the two figures and direct interactions occurred during the period of deciding on the *panglong*. As both figures proposed their own *panglongs*, some meetings with recipients were held to select one. The procedure for *panglong* selection was important to both the project and the people. Regarding the project's purposes, the ministry's team members specifically required that the proposed *panglong* meet all requirements set by the team. Some of their expectations mentioned during the interviews were: 1) the *panglong* preferred to be local and located in the region to prevent the extra cost of transporting materials to the site, while also giving opportunity for the local businesses, 2) to have complete and valid business permit documents, and 3) to offer prices within the budgets of the homestay unit. As long as these three items were met, the homestay team let the locals choose their *panglong*, as quoted here:

> *"It was PUPR [the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing] itself that offered us freedom to choose panglong. They said, 'Brother, you can determine whichever store you want.' But the important thing is that the distance is affordable, the permits are complete, and especially [the shop is owned by] the [local] people here. Let them earn some money here, too."*

This set of requirements is very reasonable and beneficial to local communities, including homestay recipients and the public. To assist with selection, the team requested that *Tunggane Huta* propose at least 3 *panglongs*, along with their pricelists, for consideration. The *Tunggane Huta* recalled how the homestay team asked him to provide three *panglongs*, "*It would be nice if you could find three panglongs, so that we could compare the prices and make an informed decision.*" As the design team prepared the names and specifications of all materials, *Tunggane Huta* easily gave the lists to the *panglong*, who then wrote down the prices next to each material. Afterward, the homestay team checked the price lists from the three *panglongs*. As all turned out to meet all requirements, *Tunggane Huta* then decided to use one, the 'CV Lamtorang.' *Lamtorang* is a *marga*, a clan's name, that is in fact still a part of the Sitohang group, the marga of *Tunggane Huta's* family.

Meanwhile, the Village Head proposed the Si*gurning panglong*. Responding to this, some sentiment rose from *Tunggane Huta*, defending his proposed *panglong*, by questioning the motives of the

'sudden' involvement of the village head after he had distanced himself from the initial meetings and discussions. It was believed that the *panglong* proposed by the village head was one of his acquaintances among his marga's families, just like how it was with *Tunggane Huta's* reasoning in picking the *Lamtotang.*

Unfortunately, this conflict caused tension, further complicating the homestay team's work. *Tunggane Huta* admitted it by saying, "*I had a debate with Kepala Desa and the consultant, I said something along the line, 'you never attended the meetings before, but now you wanted to have a word when it comes to panglong.*" The debate continued with a mix of jealousy and suspicion, intertwined with issues of power in decision-making, financial gains, and the political significance of one's *marga*.

To prevent prolonging such an inconducive condition, the homestay team decided to use the two *panglongs, Lamtorang and Sigurning,* and presented them to the homeowners. The homeowners chose one of the two. *Tunggane Huta* described the final meeting as, "*... the government [mentioned the person's name] was so confused and, in frustration, begged me just to find a middle ground. So, we decided to ask the people directly, 'Who chooses this panglong, hands up, and sign here right away*'." Interestingly, it occurred that almost all homeowners chose Lamtorang, and only one chose Sigurning. When asked why they chose their respective *panglong*, the most common answer was, as quoted here, "*It's still family.*"

Such phenomena, I argue, have confirmed the political influence of one's *marga* in the strategic decision-making process. The relations and interpersonal connections between *margas*, let alone among the same *marga*, go a long way. There are undeniable strong bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood among the clan members. An instant connection would form between two strangers if they found out they are *marga*-related. Such a connection is shown in how they address each other within the *marga* structures.

In the case of *panglong* selection, one of the voters explained that "*...we were like this: hopefully whenever we can afford to do some construction, this panglong would be where we go, because we are still related.*" *Marga* plays a significant role in defining the flows of money within the Batak society, including during the homestay implementation. *Margas* have greatly influenced the distribution of funds from a centrally designed development program to various relatively remote places in the Batak lands. Here, the power of the central government over the Indigenous Batak communities embraced and absorbed the communities and further distributed through the networks of marga, which, in turn, were also centralized towards particular groups of *marga*.

I find it intriguing to see how traditional and customary lineage/network systems influence, if not dictate, the production and practice of architecture in Indigenous communities. Here, the power operates in a manner different from the interplay between the so-called center and periphery. The initially perceived it as 'periphery' has somehow transformed and morphed into a new center within the power dynamics—receiving central support and operating in a distinct, local yet centralized

manner. This power relation creates a new dynamic within the initial peripheral zone, altering the power hierarchy. In addition, this dynamic reiterates the importance of looking beyond the architecture's products and engaging with the productions, the conditions surrounding and conditioning the production.

While it is interesting to find how a *marga*—cultural, or rather familial bonds created through the clan system—influences the distribution and direction of economic growth in the community, it was not always the case during the production of homestays in Samosir. Some *hutas*, in fact, did not have the same opportunity to take part in choosing the *panglong*, the supplier, for their building materials. The homestay team handled the process without coordinating with the villagers, including homeowners and *Tunggane Huta*, the homestay coordinator, a new position created to help bridge the government team with the local people. Villages such as Sosor Nangka and Parsaoran I are examples of this exclusion, leaving out local involvement in the provision of building materials, as explained in the following section.

Payment Procedures during Homestay Construction

The completion of government projects, or any projects in that matter, depends heavily on the availability of funds. Given the special circumstances of the homestay projects, the program faced added pressure under a one-year fiscal period. This time limit made quick decision making even more important to ensure the flow of funds to meet the anticipated timeline. When the scale of homestay projects reached levels the local *panglong* had never dealt with before, getting such massive orders for material supplies often posed obstacles. This issue was due to no local *panglong* having material supplied or stocked in such an amount. Regarding this, one *Kepala Desa* mentioned that one of his important roles during the homestay implementation, which many people did not realize, was to make sure the materials were ready on time. He further described his critical involvement, where not all *Kepala Desas* in Samosir had the confidence to do so:

> *"...the village played a role, for example, the panglong did not send the materials smoothly, due to some payment issues, I had to intervene and mediate, to speed up the process. I gave personal guaranty to these panglongs, I said, 'I guarantee you all, this will be paid. Just send all the goods.' Others were not necessarily courageous enough to do this. Because you know, if they [panglongs] did not get paid [by the government], well, then I must pay."*

This issue occurred because the payment system used in these projects was a reimbursement system, rather than a prepaid one. With the reimbursement, payment only happened after the work done. Hence, the *panglong* got paid after they delivered the ordered materials to the construction sites. Even worse, sometimes this payment did not arrive as quickly as they expected, which consequently delayed their restocking process or other material purchases from their suppliers. Here, a personal

guaranty from the *Kepala Desa* accelerated the process and therefore prevented delays in transporting the materials to the *hutas*. Such initiatives by *Kepala Desa* proved effective, as his village was the first to complete the homestay projects on time. In fact, the government recognized the *Kepala Desa* for his determination and initiatives in promoting and supporting the homestay program, as explained in the following excerpts. Furthermore, understanding the local economic situation was essential to every decision regarding construction, including the selection of *panglong*.

> "*...because Desa did not have access to the homestay funds and the PUPR [Indonesian abbreviation for the Ministry of Public Works and Housings] was the one who paid panglong directly, when there were some 'money' delays, someone had to do something. Even though it was an acceleration program, one year of completion, but, well, you know how the government is, the administrative process is way too complicated, so of course, they were very slow in funds disbursement. I believed the money would arrive eventually, just needed time, that's why I gave my word.* "

Another aspect I want to relate to the project's scale. As mentioned before, the homestay projects took place across the country, across Samosir Island and its *Batak hutas*, all at the same time. The construction happened simultaneously nationwide, meaning that material orders and deliveries to and from suppliers across the island also occurred simultaneously. This was not surprising that there would be material delays and even deficiencies. Therefore, it was essential to purchase materials from more than one supplier. It also helped with process supervision: "*distribute the high demands [for building materials], as well as to make it a bit more centralized for control*" from the homestay team and the village, as explained by *Kepala Desa*. In other words, the purposes is, first, to break down the scale of the transactions to make it manageable to the local business, as explained during the interview:

> "*If it were just one [panglong], it would not be enough. Here, the company [panglong] wasn't very big. In fact, let's say, if there were 17 units [of homestay in one village], 17 units times 127 million [IDR], it would amount to nearly 2 billion [IDR worth of building materials]. A Panglong with 2 billion? Doesn't exist here. That was why we used 2 suppliers so that the construction would run smoothly.*"

Here, the intervention from the *Kepala Desa*, although he claimed it was personal, was strongly related to his appointment as the Head of the Village. He had the power to do so because he understood the dynamics within the homestay team and the situations on the ground. He held an authority to represent trust to the local *panglong* from the government's side. Likewise, his position represented a grasp of the local dynamics and how things operate on the ground. Therefore, the involvement of *Desa* was found to be essential in mediating between the governmental and local systems and was a critical measure to ensure the completion of the projects. In other words, his position was crucial in the project, especially in mediating and bridging the systems between the state and the local communities, particularly the economic systems.

To contrast this case with others with less direct involvement from *Kepala Desa* and *Tunggane Huta* in mediating and influencing the project's financial flows, *hutas* such as Sosor Nangka and Parsaoran I came into focus. This is to show the impact of their roles on the project completion. In Sosor Nangka, especially, although the *Desa* officials and the homeowners, 18 of them, were committed to and enthusiastic about the project, very limited control or involvement occurred regarding the fund's circulation. Specifically on materials provision, including giving recommendations on the *panglong* selection, the process completely left out local communities. In one of the interviews, the homestay coordinator of the *huta* admitted that he had no idea regarding the material supplies, as follows:

> *"They [PUPR] handled everything, including buying the materials to panglong. I did not really know, but if I am not mistaken, I guess, ehm, what you call it. … It's like being auctioned [to the panglongs], to find the most affordable one. We weren't involved at all at that time. One day, they came, and all the materials arrived as well. … They drop everything here in the middle of the 'alaman,' materials for every house mounting here."*

The homestay coordinator further mentioned that they did not even figure out which *panglongs* were the suppliers. In managing materials arrivals, with the spirit of greater care and transparency, the coordinator and the *hutas*' people decided to assign a person to take notes and document all materials that arrived in their village, including their quantities. This attempt was their way of being helpful and more participating in the process, as they did not have control over the other ends of the actors' network, which they refer to as 'the government', 'homestay team', or 'PUPR.' Their disinvolvement caused how limited their understanding of that matter was, *"PUPR people carried out the auction, perhaps, they all handled it, or their team. Maybe. They went there [panglongs] themselves, [handled] by the government directly; it was not through us, not to the community here. I didn't know how they did it."*

Regardless of their lack of involvement, they continued to celebrate the project. Once all the materials were ready on the site, the workers began construction the very next day. They started with the *Tunggane Huta's* house, out of respect for the landlord. The local communities celebrated the beginning of construction by a ritual to bless the start of a *jabu's* construction, by sacrificing the blood of animals, such as pigs, chickens, goats, etc., for the ancestors to beg for their permission. After the first house began construction, the others then followed and this without any rituals. The rituals for the *Tunggane Hutas's* were also for everyone. In other words, the homestay construction was a collective entity rather than as individual buildings.

The ritual represents the locals' acceptance and excitement about supporting the development and improvement program for their houses and neighborhood. The local communities welcomed the homestay project with the intention of doing it in the right way and following their building traditions. While it was an exciting and hopeful period, it was also a busy time for the

village, witnessing all the construction taking over their private and public spaces. One participant pictured the scene as follows: "*...back in that day, there were no gatherings or ceremonies in this huta—no such things. Here [the front yard], it was all filled with materials, starting from stones, sacks of cement, roof zinc plates, mountains of sand, and iron bars. Everything. Everywhere there was construction, workers, super hectic.*"

Unfortunately, as the construction period drew to a close, the villagers' initial hopeful attitude began to change. During this period, reality began to shift as homeowners saw various issues emerging that risked leaving their homes unfinished. They faced situations ranging from insufficient building materials to differences between the materials delivered and those approved in the drawings, to delayed payments from the government to the contractor handling on-the-ground construction. The intended fast-paced construction on the sites brought its own dynamics, which were already complex to deal with. Adding the government's centralized control only compounded the situation. It prevented the owners or the local government, the *Desa*, from having any control or say in managing financial flows in real time when construction issues arose. In Sosor Nangka specifically, the interview mentioned that, due to payment issues experienced by the contractor, they could not continue the work. This condition forced them to leave the construction site and disappear, as follows:

> *Actually, these [homestays] were not finished. Here I'll tell you the story: the fund was from the government, and they distributed it. We didn't hold the money at all. So, the contractor was paid directly by the government, and the funds were distributed to their ATM. There must have been some issues with the payment. That day, he couldn't do it anymore, gave up, and then just left. That's why these houses aren't finished.*

The homestay coordinator explained that there was nothing they could do to keep the construction going. They did not have the authority to pay—hence, no power and control over the contractor, the construction work, or the builders working in their houses. When the contractor realized that the money had run out and was no longer enough to complete all the work, they left the *huta* unannounced, leaving all the workers unpaid and the work incomplete. Although the homeowners did not fully understand the real problems, they felt responsible for the builders working on their property. The homestay coordinator decided to take action to help pay the builders, as he explained:

> "*[They were] running out of money, they said. I don't know how it happened. Anyway, we detained the [contractor's] motorbike. I was the one who dragged the motorbike here, [but] no element of coercion. The builders still needed to be paid. They kept their [builders'] salary. There was no money remaining. So, we were forced to pay for them. That's why we detained the motorbike. We sold it and used the money to pay the builders. After that, we can no longer let them [the workers] continue working. No more. We told them to go home.*"

The builders, who were not locals, had to leave the *huta*, which unfortunately left the homestay construction unfinished. In this process, the non-transparent flows of funds, coupled with the centralized control of the homestay finance, have come at the cost of someone else, such as the contractor's personal property and the homeowners who had to put in some money to complete the work to make their homestay habitable, at the very least.

The state of the homestay units when the work stopped was about 75% done. It means that there was some major finishing the owners needed to do. One of the owners stated that they had to spend their own money to continue construction, so that it would be safe enough to host tourists: "*...we can offer the homestay to the tourists, [that's because] we spend our own money [to complete it].*" In other words, without their personal funds, the homestay would be impossible to live in. To picture an image of the incomplete state of homestay units in this *huta*, the coordinator gave some examples, such as "*some walls weren't plastered, ... some of the bathrooms weren't done, ... the windows had no frame or sash, ... the balcony had no railings, ... and so many other things.*" In addition, the unfinished image also came the fact that the homestay buildings they had were not the same as the initial drawings shown to them. In relation to this, the coordinator argued that,

> "*...it's already been shown the drawings. We already knew what it looked like from the beginning. This [built homestay] does not at all accord with the specs or the drawing shown. What was shown, our house did not look like this. But it was adjusted, I think, according to the funds, unfortunately. It was forced to be like this. ...The drawing was much better. How come it ended like this*?"

Despite their disappointment at the realization of their dream house, the owners ultimately decided to accept it and committed to finishing their house as much as they could afford. The pressure, especially, came from the provincial governments, which planned to visit the village and hold a symbolic handover of the homestays to the owners in the *huta*. Despite the disappointing implementation of the homestay program in their huta, the homeowners felt they had some responsibility to continue the work as much as possible so they could present their homes better in the eyes of the government, as stated by the coordinator: "*They held the handover here, so we, as the owners, it was impossible to just leave it like that [the way the team did]. So, what could we say? Every time we had extra money, we put it into here and continued to finish it little by little.*" Although the house was never considered finished, the homeowners argued that, with the additional work invested in their homestays, they at least felt somewhat comfortable presenting their *huta* as one of the tourist villages to provincial officials during the handover ceremony.

Finally, based on the discussion in this section, which revolves around the payment system and the controls that come with it, several lessons emerge. First, access to and control over government-financed aid influence the degree of agency and power one might have in implementing the projects. I argue that distributing this access among different actors, rather than to one, would

have benefited the projects better. Second, distributing some portion of control over power, the defining element of the development, especially to the people on site, helps ensure the quality and completion of the project. From the locals' perspective, this would have given them the position to manage and ensure the completion of the work on site. Conflicts such as those that occurred in Sosor Nangka would have been avoided. Third, when the local community, those who actually dealt with daily work and the realities of day-to-day projects, were involved, they would have direct control to manage and resolve construction site issues. It would be more beneficial for the owners than centralized control, which offers no room for participation. In other words, it is reasonable to argue that a lack of local community engagement in managing the financial aspects of the onsite works, which directly affect their daily lives, contributed to the overall project's failure.

The Economy of Homestays: Income & Tax

While the previous part elaborates on the financial flows surrounding external actors in the homestay project, this part highlights the economic cycle that directly involves the homeowners. They are the homestays' gross income, daily maintenance costs, and tax.

The financial impact of the homestay on the owners across Batak *hutas* varied among the villagers. For some owners with regular guests staying in their homes, the financial benefits of it will be greater than for those who very seldom host tourists. For relatively active homestays, the owners were very grateful for the homestay revenues they earned. Some of the owners expressed gratitude for the additional income they received from homestays, as one of the owners in *Huta Sitohang*, said:

> "*If we compare [our income] to before the homestay, it clearly increased, which is exactly the purpose of building this homestay, right? It is to increase the community's per capita income here in this huta. Personally, it increases my income by 2-3 times per month, on average. So yes, I am very grateful. But it was not a given thing, you know, I worked hard to promote and market my homestay, improve the room's conditions, and had a lot of personal funds put in it.*"

Another successful story from a homestay owner in *Huta Parsaoran I, Mr. Nainggolan, says* the homestay has become an important source of income for his family. He said that in a month, while previously earning only from their farm, he can now rely on the homestay to support the family. Roughly, the owner said their homestay could generate 1-3 million IDR per month, meaning they could earn up to 3 million IDR during high season. In the region, this amount is around the minimum wage.

This income, however, was not deducted from the day-to-day expenses incurred in running homestays. For a family who claimed to have earned almost 3 million IDR gross a month during the high season, the income is then divided into a 60:40% split. 60% is for the owner, while 40% is for the family-hired person responsible for the daily maintenance of the homestays. The owner argued that

after working all day, it was challenging to manage the homestay operation as well. One owner mentioned that due to her advanced age, she needed help to run the homestays, as follows:

> *Now, I can't do it [taking care of the homestay] anymore. That's why we have a helper. If I were to do it alone, I would not be able to do it—going up and down, upstairs, back and forth, to sweep, bending down a lot—I could not do it anymore. So, we handed it over to a helper. That's why we divide the profit 40:60, with 40% for the helper and 60% for us. We get 60% because we still have to cover the expenses, right? Electricity, water, oh, water is expensive. Not only because water is scarce, but also because we pay a lot more when we have guests. Also, water to wash all the thick blankets and linens.*

Besides labor and daily expenses for running homestays, most homestays needed to set aside a portion of their income for the *huta* fund to help improve the neighborhood's condition. Sometimes, the community fund covered cost for making a sign and a gate on the street side leading to *huta's* alley. In another case, such as Sosor Nangka, the community fund is for neighborhood watch during guest visits, while in other cases are for water restock, as some *hutas* store their water together; hence, those who have guests in their houses chip in extra money. Additionally, homeowners set aside a portion of the homestay income as a gesture of gratitude to *Tunggane Huta*. This *Tunggane Huta's* reward is particularly the cases the landlords who also serve as homestay coordinators, which were initially the majority of *hutas.* This gradually changes because other homestay owners prefer to find their own guests through social media marketing rather than relying solely on the coordinator or *Tunggane Huta*. This way, the homeowners earn more by both skipping the *hutas*' retribution and having guests more frequently, without waiting for their next turn in the guest rotation from *Tunggane Huta*. However, it also creates new dynamics in the *huta*, which will be a part of the social impacts arising from the homestays.

Regarding the income, the high season for tourists visiting Batak homestays usually falls on national holidays, such as Eid Al Fitr—the holy days for Muslims—Christmas, and New Year's, when the state usually gives one week off, if not more. Other than those holidays, the homestay owners usually expect the guests to come if there is a long weekend, such as when Fridays or Mondays are off. However, this is not always the case. The following is an excerpt from an interview with one of the owners:

> *"[Even though] the long weekends usually bring crowds to this region, we see a lot of visitors on this island, but it does not mean that they stay in our homestays. It is not necessarily for us [the visitors], as the hotels are still empty, and now they are everywhere. ...When the hotels are full, then we will get some [guests]."*

Due to the growing number of accommodations in the region and the emergence of new types of lodges, competition for tourists has intensified. Homestay owners, in particular, experience

difficulties with such phenomena, claiming they are less competitive because of the quality of the amenities they offer.

The homestay units, designed to help low-income families, offer a very basic set of amenities and facilities. Each homestay unit usually comes with a cupboard, 2-3 mattresses, and two sets of beddings. The guest bathrooms are an extension of the back house and feature very basic designs. For the bathroom, although the designers adopted a seated toilet instead of squatting ones, it was very minimal compared to a hotel. In addition to the toilet, most toilets lack other fixtures; only a large water container is provided by the owners. As a room for rent for guests, this unit does not have a heating and cooling system, hot water for showers, or a TV in the bedroom. These differences make hotels more comfortable and perhaps more appealing to tourists, as one interviewee stated, "*... hotels are more comfortable than here and have better facilities.*"

While it is up to the owners to upgrade their government-sponsored homestays, finances remain the main obstacle to their competing with private businesses. Another quote from a research participant further emphasized this issue by saying that:

> *"There are too many competitors right now. Now that we have more visitors on this island, houses that were initially rented [yearly] have become homestays. The big houses one lives in were then partially converted into a homestay. ... Empty plots of land were rented to people who wanted to build houses for homestays. It is very prevalent right now. Everyone is doing it, including public civic servants with regular incomes. The competition is unbelievable. My prediction is that in a few months, we will no longer be selling. No one will want us [our homestay] anymore. Unless they come here really for the 'adat' house and the ordinary everyday life of Batak huta."*

While the homestay owners face increasingly competitive conditions, they still receive guests during the holidays, as one owner said, "*for now, it is still crowded here.*" Despite competition from better-financed accommodations, the government homestays remain in the market. Based on interviews with homeowners and reviews of visitors' feedback, the competitive advantages of these so-called basic homestays are their affordability for low-budget travelers and their Batak cultural experiences.

The competitive price is mainly for groups. As the homestay generally takes place in the *Jabu Bolon*, a large, open-plan room, it offers suitable sleeping arrangements for multiple people. In fact, this is the project's selling point, while also embracing and romanticizing the past, when Batak people lived and slept communally in the main room of the house. As it serves well for group visitors, it's way more affordable than hotel rooms. Among the six villages I studied, the price for a unit per night varies, on average, from 350,000 IDR (20 USD). This price applies to groups of 1-4 people; larger groups will be charged around 5 USD per person. Some *hutas*' rates are higher than the average; for example, Huta Tinggi's and Parsaoran I, at 550,000 IDR (33 USD) and 400K (25 USD), respectively; while others are at a lower rate, such as Sosor Nangka, at 15 USD. Mainly, the price difference is

determined by the quality of homestays and the range of amenities each offers. An owner during the interview mentioned that,

> *"Yes, we sell Batak experiences here, but also our units are way more affordable; it's cheaper here. … [also], we offer discounts and give customers some room to negotiate the price. We set a benchmark here: let's say, for one big room [Jabus], it costs 400K rupiah per night, but they can negotiate, and we are willing to give a discount. [Because we think] besides the original Batak house, price is at our advantage, we give a low price for a group, we gave a low price, for example, 4000K a night for a family, thinking 'where else one will get that price for one night, with more than 5 people'."*

This price range and the discounts attracts families and friends traveling in groups to choose homestays over hotels. In fact, during my second fieldwork, conducted in mid-June 2024, Mr. Nainggolan proudly mentioned that his homestay had been booked by a family from Jakarta for the 20th of July the same year. The guests reserved both the *Jabu Bolon* and the second-floor homestays for one night and asked for a price of 800K IDR (~50 USD), as quoted here, "*…because they were afraid it would be fully booked by the time they need it, so they reserved in advance and made a down payment through bank transfer for the total price of 800.000 rupiah. Of course, we accepted.*"

However, it cannot be justified as the average income for the remaining homestays in the same village. With the same logic, such a monthly income cannot be the standard practice across villages. Homestays earn at different rates across units and villages. However, after a few years of operation, the government began imposing taxes on homestays. The homestay owners received visits from government personnel, who informed them of these updates. It created some dynamics among the owners and highlighted a new aspect of the business. An interview with one of the owners regarding this is as follows:

> *"It's just that we have a problem with the current tax initiative, they said, the 'homestay tax'. Now that there is a circular letter from the regional government stating that we have to pay taxes. Well, they ask for 5-10% of the monthly income from homestays. I mean, that's a lot. Think about maintenance, water—it is expensive here —and electricity, labor to clean the room, and laundry for the bedsheets and blankets. These are all costs. So I argued: since there aren't necessarily any [guests] every month, that it is not our fixed income, what if we make it like a vehicle tax? In one year, the vehicle tax can be 100K-150K. It is more reasonable to me. … [because homestay revenue] It all depends on our luck, really; if we receive a lot of guests, then there is no problem, right? Even if there are fewer guests, we will still pay if the amount is reasonable. Nobody likes taxes, but this way, it won't be much of a burden for us. … So far, it is still a plan [circulated], not yet enforced. They said next year [will be imposed]."*

Owners met the idea of imposing a tax on the government's homestays with mixed responses from the owners. Some, such as the previous one, see it as a form of pressure stemming from uncertainty about tourist visits and the costs of running a homestay. Others, on the other hand, perceive it as goodwill from the government, provided that these taxes help further improve the homestay units. They expected further involvement from the central government in the homestay projects, extending beyond the construction phase and including oversight of homestay operations and improvements in quality and maintenance.

Another response regarding tax was concerning the competitors, the privately funded homestays growing in the area, along with their tourism development. As many family homes transformed into homestays due to the increasing visitors to the island, the number of non-government homestays has also increased. The idea of imposing taxes on government-funded homestays prompted expectations of the reorganization of non-state homestays. One of the homeowners argued that,

> *"These [self-made homestays were] not included in the government program; they make it themselves.... So, about tax, if they want us to pay, they should manage those too. They are not taxed, but they do the same thing as we do. How come we are taxed, while they aren't? On average, when it is a holiday, all houses that are not state-homestays also become tourist accommodation.*

Therefore, while owners earn extra money from having a homestay, as a source of income, it is irregular and unreliable. It especially highlights the growing number of accommodations in the region. One of the homestay owners argues that this competition puts their business at risk if no further regulations and improvements are not taken:

> *"We can't predict [it]. ...Most guests we have had so far usually come on Saturdays and Sundays, or during long national holidays, ... but one thing is that, in Samosir, there have been so many [homestays]. So many. If you are looking for 600 homestays around here, it's easy to find, along this [interdistrict] street alone, they are all homestays, either like this one [their own, state's homestays] or self-funded ones."*

Regardless of the mentioned competition among government homestays, as well as with other types of tourist accommodations, such as private or self-funded homestays and hotels, it is worth looking at the dedication of government-funded homestays' recipients in promoting and running their lodging to tourists, while at the same time organizing their livelihoods in the same structure.

Generally, homestay owners who actively market their units through online platforms or their connections and acquaintances are more successful in making the homestay their source of income than those who do not. These homestays usually have some signs, including their involvement in social media accounts and promotions; the physical conditions of the homestays, such as the

permanence of the homestay rooms, decorations, additional amenities provided beyond the basic things given by the homestay fundings; and personal initiatives and management roles in homestay networking and promoting.

While some owners can improve their homestays with their own funds, little by little, not many remain with the basic units the government provided. It is because, even after the homestay, they barely make ends meet, which puts homestay upgrades low on their list of priorities. Instead, as previously stated, the owners hope to receive assistance from the government to grow and nurture their homestay business, which they expect to receive from the anticipated tax imposition. However, this idea was clearly not a part of the tax system as discussed with them during visits by tax personnel to their *hutas*.

Seeing the recurring cases of homestay owners struggling to develop their units or being demotivated to host guests, the village government once invited homestay owners to be a part of the so-called 'BUMDes,' Badan Usaha Milik Desa, or translated as Village-Owned Enterprise. It is an enterprise managed and organized by the Village administration to help homestay owners improve and upgrade their homestays, in return for membership fees paid to the Village. While some owners showed their interest in this system, as one said, "*It actually will be helpful. For example, if we need new mattresses or more blankets, we can ask the Desa. Or to improve how we host guests.*" Another owner mentioned that, as they somehow ended up not receiving any mattresses or bedding from the homestay team, having a unit organization to oversee and help standardize homestay quality across units, at least in one huta, would be a great help to them. Similar insight came from another homestay owner, who hoped that the regional tourism ministry would return to the *hutas*, standardize prices across homestays, and provide pathways to improve and sustain their operations.

Regarding the *Desa*'s initiative to include hutas' homestays in their BUMDes organization, the *Tunggane Hutas* were reluctant to accept and participate. Although some homestay owners found the idea interesting, the *Tunggane Hutas* still get to decide on the matter. This is because the homestays are within the huta's territory, which gives Tunggane Huta the authority to decide how they evolve, especially when it involves Desa administration. The tension and competition between the *Huta* and *Desa* systems have been rooted in the community, perhaps, since the implementation of the Desa Government in 1979, which diminished the significance of the *Adat* systems (Gultom et al., 2023). And recently, the homestay projects provoked this dynamic and influenced decision-making throughout the homestay process, including this BUMDes incorporation and the previously mentioned *panglong* selections. Specific to BUMDes, an interview with a *Tunggane Huta* reveals that there was a trust issue between the two leaderships, as stated in the following excerpts:

> *"Kepala Desa [village chief] said, 'You guys should join BUMDes.' I said, 'No.' You know why? Because the village administration managed it, that's it. So, our money [from homestays] goes there. I strongly disagree. You can ask the Village Chief; you met him right. ... There was more, I also said*

something like, 'I know there's BUMDes funds every year [from central government], but guess what, my huta never received it. It always went to your huta first. We also need it.' ... [Working with Desa] It is different from working with PUPR [Ministry of Public Works and Housing, the government agency dealing with homestay projects]. I am more trusting of the ministry. If we go to the ministry, they say tax; we [I] are ready to pay, if we have guests. Because these hometsays are from them. But for BUMDes, I have to ask first, 'What has Desa done for my huta?' Because we know there are numbers [budgets]. [That's why] I don't work with BUMDes. More importantly, I feel this way also because there are boundaries for the Kepala Desa."

Being in the middle of this power dynamic, the homestay owners cannot do anything other than manage their own homestays individually. Meanwhile, for those who cannot, they remain with the very basic facilities and qualities provided by the homestay team during its construction. This situation increases the quality gap among homestay units. Consequently, this creates two ends of the spectrum of owners' involvement in tourism: one fully dedicated to homestays, to the point of taking over their domestic spaces, while the other comprises those who gradually (or sometimes instantly) withdraw from hosting guests—these correlate with the inhabitation pattern of some homestay units as described in Chapter 7.

Going back to the economic aspects of running a homestay, across the full cycle of homestays—including the benefits and responsibilities of homestay owners—homestays generate additional income for local families. However, as competition from other tourist accommodations increases in the region, homestay owners lowered their rates and offered more discounts. This is because their homestays offer very basic facilities for tourists, which gives them a competitive disadvantage compared to other privately funded homestays or lodging. Additionally, coupled with daily expenses for running the homestay, labor put into it, and other cuts for the *huta*, landlords, or the coordinator, and, more recently, tax imposition, reduced their homestay earnings even further. As a result, homestay owners feel pressure from various directions, leaving them with very limited options, especially when they receive no further assistance in improving their homestays or keeping them running. In fact, some owners who express interest in paying taxes hope that, with tax payments, the government will return to their *hutas* and continue to assist them in managing the homestays, as they have had no direct contact with the government since the homestays were built. Here, it is understandable that some owners chose to use their homestays solely for domestic purposes, instead of combining it with hosting, as previously explained in Chapter 7, Inhabiting, especially pattern 5, "Domesticizing Homestays."

In other words, many homestay unit occupancy patterns follows the financial impact of homestays and the socio-political, economic dynamics conditioning homestay production. Also, the economic 'success' of one's homestay relies on the socio-political climate among local actors, especially elites such as Desa and *Huta.*

SOCIAL COHESION IN THE COMMERCIALIZED HOMES

In this section, I highlight the social impacts of homestay implementation in local communities. While the previous part deals with the entanglements of the economic values of homestays within the lives of hutas' residents, it particularly delves into the social dynamics arising from interactions among the different actors involved in the projects, both during and after implementation. It covers three parts of discussion: 1) the dynamic between the state and local leaders, 2) relations between landlords and their multi-generation residents, and 3) among the residents while maintaining the productivity of the homestays.

Additionally, these aspects of social dynamics led to contacts occurring both during the implementation phase and in the aftermath, after the states' team left the premises and the locals navigated the rest of the program: running the homestays. This chapter aims to contrast the presence and absence of the state's direct involvement in local communities and to examine how locals navigate their relations after the state's presence and intervention. In other words, it reflects on the effects of their initial contacts with the state during the initiation and construction of homestays in their neighborhood—and the aftermath, when they face the initial (yet disturbed or provoked) social system in the *hutas*.

State-Desa-Huta Relations

Through homestays, traditional leadership and systems are being reactivated. Contact between the state (in this context, the homestay team) and the residents is especially important. State programs usually reached the villages through the Desa administration, meaning the state used the Desa body as an extension of its own hands to reach village residents. In return, *Desa* gains greater autonomy to operate the state's program within its territory (Evans & Millot, 2020). In homestay programs, however, the state directly interacted with the residents, using *Desa* as a mediating on-site agent. The interaction inevitably leads to the local *adat* elite, such as *Tunggane Huta.* While the division between the two, state's *desa* and *adat's* desa, is clear, according to the Desa Act No. 2014 (Republic of Indonesia, 2014). It states that the state's Desa deals with administrative functions, while *Desa Adat* focuses on religious and cultural functions. In other words, the homestay provided an overlap in interaction between two separate systems.

In homestay scales, the state's direct involvement in the huta creates power dynamics between *huta* and *desa* leaders. While initially *Desa* had more power to make decisions about any state's programs, the homestay programs shifted this direction, giving more prominence to the *huta* leader. It is clear in every *huta* receiving homestay projects under study that *desa* is less involved in the projects and works in the background. On the contrary, when the head of the Desa is more vocal and involved in homestay implementation, it creates some struggles for influence with the *Tunggane Huta.* As the homestay took place within *Tunggane Huta* territory, although it is the state's project, the

Tunggane had an opportunity to draw boundaries over *Desa*'s intervention. It is why the *Desa* acts in ways that are more supportive of the homestay team and less involved in *huta*-related decisions. Interestingly, in some cases, where power struggles between *Desa* and *Huta* intensified, the state then became the mediator. An example of this is the *selection of panglong* (building material supplier), where both *Desa* and *Tunggane* recommended different suppliers, and the homestay team resolved the issue by acknowledging both suggestions and asking the homeowners to choose and vote.

Another dynamic between *desa* and *huta* occurred after the homestay began operating. As merging lodging into the house is new to locals and there are very limited government-provided amenities, many owners face difficulties keeping their homestays running. The Desa offers assistance to owners in managing their homestays by inviting them to be a part of the Desa's BUMDes enterprise. The BUMDes are essentially miniature versions of state-owned enterprises (Badan Usaha Milik Negara - BUMN) at the national level. These have become a more popular form of collective local enterprise, in some ways displacing the village-level cooperatives (KUD – Koperasi Unit Desa) that have been losing popularity in recent years (Evans & Millot, 2020).

However, due to years of feeling neglected by the Desa administration, many *Tungganes* are reluctant to work with the Desa to manage their homestays. In fact, none of the *hutas* under study are a part of BUMDes, at least up until the study conducted. Many owners hope to receive assistance from the state as a follow-up to its initial homestay provision. Locals begin to associate taxes with reconnecting with the state and prefer them to their Desa's initiatives. Unfortunately, as the homestay project is a one-time program within one fiscal year, regulated by former President Jokowi through Presidential Regulation No. 109 of 2020, the direct state intervention, such as the homestay project, falls short of expectations. It is also because the current president, Prabowo Subianto, has different key priorities and main initiatives. Consequently, it leaves the owners to deal with homestay issues and challenges on their own. Owners with greater capital power can improve their homestay businesses, while those without become more passive and less engaged in homestay activities, which is concerning if the situation persists.

Changing Dynamics: 'Tungganes' and Residents

The introduction of homestays to relatively isolated agrarian families in Samosir's hutas impacts the communities' lives. Due to the state programs and personnel's intense presence in their neighborhood throughout the implementation year, it changes their social dynamics. The homestay projects, as they took place in the *huta*'s territory, have put the *Tunggane Huta* at the center. This section looks into the dynamics experienced and created by *Tunggane Hutas* in response to the homestay projects. It highlights how the homestay program has become an opportunity for *Tunggane Hutas* to reaffirm, and perhaps also reclaim, their status and influence among their residents. It examines how they navigate the project and position themselves within the state's presence and in

relation to other actors' participation. This part particularly builds on the agency mapping established in Chapter 4, "Homestay Implementation," especially in Figure 4.18 on page 127.

Drawing on agency maps from the homestay implementation phases, *Tunggane Huta* saw significant involvement during the Permit, Design, and Hosting stages. Throughout these stages, Tunggane Hutas tried to reassure and reaffirm their ownership of the hutas through controls and authoritative decision-making. During the Permit stage, for example, approval from the *Tunggane Huta* was an unnegotiable requirement for the state program to enter the *huta's* territory. In fact, in many cases, this leads to granting landlords more privileges to smooth the process.

Similarly, in some *hutas*, *Tunggane Hutas* took charge of the design process to control building density, sizes, and designs across houses on his land. Such *Tunggane Huta* roles that overlap with residents' private property create some tensions among them. Although many owners tried to negotiate the design restrictions imposed by the *Tunggane Huta*, there was rarely room for compromise. The *Tunggane Huta* also made his conditions clear to the architects and other homestay teams, resulting in all requests for house designs being brought to him for approval. The *Tunggane* predominantly rejected owners' requests for design changes, leaving homeowners feeling unheard and disempowered.

Through these forms of control, the *Tunggane* asserts his authority over the lands on which the residents' houses stand. Throughout the homestay implementation, frequent negotiations led to repeated rejections by the *Tungganes*, resulting in confrontations between the *Tungganes* and the homeowners. Tensions particularly arise from *Tunggane's* statement, which reiterates his obligation to enforce his rules as the landowner.

Initially, the concept of *huta* revolves around the community value called "*holong,*" which means "to love". Batak people believe in the saying, "*Siholdo Magodang*," meaning that only by being together can one grow and be strong. *Huta* was built on this concept, that when there was a family member (even though not from a direct line of the father's bloodline) who was less fortunate or affluent, another family member would have a strong will to love them, by sharing a land or house and letting them build a house on their family's land for free. However, after centuries, when the grandfathers of fathers have died, younger generations feel differently about this situation. Especially after the arrival of tourism and investors, the value of land increased significantly, and many conflicts arose over ownership and over who would develop and benefit from tourism advances in the regions. The city of Pangururan noted a significant increase in land issues, ownership disputes, and management challenges in Samosir since the massive development of tourism.

The arrival of homestays, along with tourism developments in the region, particularly provokes this dynamic. As the economic value of the property, including the *hutas*' lands, increased, *Tunggane* enforced his rules more strictly. During negotiations and perhaps disagreements over homestay designs, the *Tunggane* reminded the residents that they could leave the *huta* if they were not

happy with his ways. Many homeowners expressed their disappointment over these changing dynamics; they deem it a disgrace to their ancestors. In one of the interviews, an owner stated that:

> *"Since there is tourism here, it's so easy for them to say: '[If] you don't like it here, leave. Lift your house and move out.' That's what they said. If opung-opung [our ancestors] were still here, they would say, 'How dare you' to them. Because it was their ancestors who invited ours here. True, they gave ours [ancestors] a place to live, but ours [ancestors] helped theirs open and make this inhabitable land a lovely home for them too. ... [It was they] who begged ours to live here, so that this place would be livable—ours helped them transform a wild jungle into a neighborhood. But now, after everything, we become merely 'manoppang' [temporarily residing]."*

Such statements are particularly sensitive to the residents. It harms the long-standing understanding of mutual benefits between landlords and residents in the history of Batak society. While it was true that the landlords—especially *Tunggane* from the first generation—were generous to allow people to live on and build families on their land, the residents returned the favor by helping the landlords open the land, making it livable, safe, and, more importantly, creating a new close-knit community to practice their cultural and communal ways of living. In other words, the residents relied on the *Tunggane* just as much as the *Tunggane* did on them. Therefore, both sides greatly respect and are grateful for each other's roles. An excerpt from interviews with one resident captures the mutualism of *Tunggane* and residents:

> *"The Tunggane, more than a hundred years ago, invited people to live with them: "Rohanima, rohanima! [please come, please come!] Let's build this huta and make it better for whoever is willing to work together. We can build a house here." Something like that. They wanted and needed people, other clans, to come, live, and liven up the huta together, because it is impossible to live alone in a new place in the middle of nowhere, in a heavily wooded area. So, in the past, residents helped the landlord; they needed other people to open a new huta. That's how this huta was first established. In the past, you got wood and cut it with a manual saw, not a chainsaw. That was why Tunngane truly needed and respected everyone who was 'manoppong' in his huta."*

This mutual respect, however, gradually fades out as generations grow, evolve, and become more disconnected (distant) from the sources. The homestay project, unfortunately, intensifies this declining sense of community and mutual understanding between the *Tungganes* and the residents. The statements, as quoted above, remind residents of their temporality in the *huta*, regardless of the fact that they have lived there for generations, and they are very obedient to rules and regulations set by the *Tunggane* families since their ancestors. In fact, this was a disrespect to the residents and a misinterpretation of the concept of residing in a landlord's village, or '*manoppang*', in Batak culture.

The practice of temporary dwelling in Batak *hutas* has been part of the communities since the *hutas* opened. The Batak *Jabus, with their traditional wooden joint systems,* manifest this temporality. It allows the houses to be taken apart, moved, and put back together. It served the temporary living that the communities have practiced. Mainly, there are two reasons why a *huta* resident leaves the premises. First, because they had found a new place to live: a plot of land on their own, owned by another family member, or a place with more farmland to work on. Second, one is forced to leave due to one of their family members breaking the core value of the community, the 'unthinkable', such as murder, infidelity, or marriage within the same *marga*. In these cases, the whole family is expelled from the *huta* and must bring everything with them, including the *jabu*, which is dismantled, transported, and reassembled. Therefore, when the idea of leaving the *huta* entered the conversation over mere disagreements about the homestay design, it hurt the community.

Some express their disappointment with silence, while others begin to pull away from the *Tunggane*. For the latter, they reorganize their lives and homestays independently of the ones organized by *Tunggane*. Instead of relying on the *Tunggane* as a homestay coordinator to gather and distribute tourists, they form a new group and organize their homestay activities within this smaller circle. Interestingly, this subgroup is more active and creative than the one handled by the *Tunngane*. They market the homestays more intensely, across their social media and networking. The sub-group also initiated offering local cuisine for their guests. In a group, they cooked together and somehow started a catering business for tourists, incorporating it into their homestay packages. Moreover, some families who owned multiple motorbikes began renting them to tourists staying in their huts. They also begin collaborating with local businesses, such as new tourist attractions, car rental companies offering pickup from ports and airports, and travel agencies.

Homestays open doors to more economic opportunities for locals and facilitate economic-based relations among residents. In fact, the network began to establish itself with broader society, beyond the *huta* members. However, along with these growths, the social dynamics and cohesion among them also transformed. Some groups might become stronger and more economically independent; however, this also creates a degree of exclusion from others. Specific to the relationship between these subgroups and *Tungganes*, it gradually becomes more individualized, increasingly withdrawing from communal values and practices. Consequently, the tension between the landlord and residents intensifies and potentially transforms the basis of their relationship, tilting it more towards economic transactions.

The 'Tungganes': Reclaiming Status

The property ownership in Batak society is inherited through a patriarchal system. The inheritance is going to the family's sons. For *Tunggane Huta's* lines, the inheritance not only includes the *jabu* but also the *huta*. Some groups of Batak *margas* inherit *huta* properties to the oldest son, while

others to the youngest son. Regardless of these differences, the question of ownership arises during the legal documentation of homestay permits. The issue occurred across cases. Male members of the *Tunggane Huta's* families compete to reclaim their status as the *Tunggane* of the *huta.* It further problematizes the question of ownership: who owns the *huta*? This chapter examines this dynamic through the *Tungganes'* line of inheritance.

As established in Chapter 4, Implementing Homestay, the defining stage beginning the homestay programs was obtaining permits from both the *huta* owners and the homeowners. Regarding the *huta*, the approval came from *Tunggane*, the village landowner. To solidify this permit, the *Tunggane* had to sign legal documents as proof of his and his family's approval.

Conceptually, *Tunggane Huta* is the eldest son, or in some cases, the youngest one. However, in reality, the appointed *Tunggane* very often builds a life elsewhere and decides to leave the *huta.* It means that someone needs to be in charge of the *huta* and living in their family's *jabu.* Mostly, it was the brother of the appointed *Tungane.* As time goes on, the acting *Tunggane*, the one staying in the *huta*, gradually becomes the one seen as the real *Tunggane.* He is the one who deals with the issues and realities in the *huta.* Before the homestay, this system worked well. It serves as a win-win solution for the *Tunggane* brothers or cousins—the male heirs.

When the homestay arrived and required some legal documentation of ownership, the live-in *Tunggane* took matters into his own hands, like he always does. The live-in *Tunggane* made decisions throughout the homestay implementation process, solidifying his position as the landlord. In response, the migrated *Tunggane* returned and tried to reclaim his status, especially during the initial stage of implementation. There was a competition over the *Tunggane* position among the members of *the Tunggane* lineage. While the local community initially welcomed the status of *Tunggane*, the fact that every on-site decision runs through the far-away *Tunggane* and that the permit documents should include the *Tungganes* signature, this raises questions about the land's ownership status.

During this period, the faraway *Tunngane* had made himself come back to the *huta* to regain his legal status as the land's owner. It problematizes the position of the *Tunggane* who have lived in and taken care of the *huta* for generations. Interestingly, the operating *Tunggane* imposed a lot of restriction during homestay implementation, which makes the residents feel more connected to the original *Tunggane*, the one who left and came back temporarily to maintain his status. During interviews with residents, many retold the story of the 'real' *Tunggane* and how this story resurfaced frequently during the initiation of homestay programs. Some interview excerpts are as follows:

> *"Actually, the Tunggane Huta is [Name], but he is not here. This one [the acting Tunggane] became the Tunggane because they have lived here since he was little, and now he has a family of his own. The actual Tunggane does not live, so initially, if there was a need for him, he would ask the one here to*

represent him. However, over time, this one claimed to be the Tunggane, even though they were not actually the direct descendants of the original Tunggane Huta. But yes, they were still related—their grandparents were brothers. They go around saying, 'We are Tunggane Huta.' Well, we don't dare say anything, but we know he is not. So, the real Tunggane came here at the beginning [of the homestay]; they said they wanted to make it clear that they are the real Tunggane.

Another example of how homestay projects stir up the quiet communal ownership of *huta* occurred in a different context. One aspect that remains the same as the previous pattern is that *Tunggane* lives far away and has migrated to another region. It is no surprise that many Batak people *merantau*, or migrate to other cities, such as Medan, Siantar, Parapat, and Jakarta, in search of a better life. As a result, many have left their *hutas* without a *Tunggane*. As this absence continues for years, the *huta* becomes more individual. *Tunggane's* roles in organizing his residents' everyday life issues gradually decline. Over time, the status of *Tunggane* has become only a symbol for the community. This means they acknowledge his status as the head of the *huta*, but no longer as the 'owner.' Ownership is now defined in modern terms: private, personal, and legal.

During the homestay implementation, when the *Tunggane Huta*—who had never been around and did not live in the *huta*—returned claiming the *huta* as his land, it created turmoil within the community. The dynamic reached a point where the residents rejected the status of *Tunggane Huta* altogether. The following excerpts are quotes from some interviews with the residents regarding the dynamic of reclaiming *Tunggane Huta* status:

[1] "We are a modern society; there is no need for a Tunggane Huta anymore."
[2] "Oh, there is no such thing anymore. It [Tunggane Huta] no longer exists here; it's already modern. All these [houses, including lands on which they stand] are all personal property."
[3] "The Tunggane Huta family has long since moved to different cities. We respect the title of Tunggane Huta, you know, as part of their ancestors' identity. But (!) we cannot accommodate the old-style roles and controls that come with it.
[4] "As long as he [Tunggane Huta] doesn't claim that it's his village, there is no problem. But after the last experience [when homestay programs arrived], he claimed this was his village. That's why we say, 'We are your brothers and sisters [...] if this all is your property, where should we go?' When he claimed that it is his hometown, that's the real issue for us. We admit that he is the eldest child; we admit it. But don't claim that it's his own. If he feels this is his village only, then one day we can be evicted? No way."

In these cases, the Tunggane is perceived as more of a cultural figure who connects the community's present to the clans' history. Ownership is no longer considered an entitlement to the title of *Tunggane*. Consequently, when the *Tunggane* was about to sign the homestay documents and

claimed the land was his, most residents felt unsafe and rejected his claim to be the sole owner. Because the *Tunggane* had been away from the *huta* for a long time, he unfortunately lacked the influence to control the narratives and maintain authority over the residents. This led the residents to reject his status, title, and role as *Tunggane Huta* altogether. In fact, one of the excerpts above shows that the *huta* no longer has a *Tunggane*. Every property is owned privately. In response to this dynamic, the residents hold tightly to their land and house certificates to prove their legal rights over the properties they claim to own. A resident said, "*All the certificates are under my name; I paid all the taxes.*"

The Residents: Competition, Jealousy, or Resistance?

The introduction of homestays to the *hutas* stimulates the local economy. Although every homestay recipient received largely similar support and incentives from the government, including design and facilities given to all units, in practice, the homestays' qualities and activities vary across houses and *hutas*. This difference creates dynamics among the residents. Competition began to rise among owners. As homestay businesses operate, they cannot escape competition, and sometimes jealousy, among the owners.

The pattern consistent across *hutas* under study is that in each location, one or two homestay owners are more active compared to the rest. Initially, signs of competition began to form toward the homestay coordinator—the figure in charge of receiving reservations and distributing guests, and therefore more engaged in hosting activities. Some argue that the coordinator prioritizes his own homestays and does not distribute fairly to others. Therefore, some residents created their own management system and, in turn, became a competing management system to the coordinator's. However, the *Tunggane* argued that, as a communal system, all tourists are distributed equally among homestays until the cycle is full. Therefore, each owner hosts relatively fewer tourists than they would if they individually marketed their homestay. Regardless, this social disintegration creates a dynamic where competition, sometimes jealousy, and often trust issues form.

At the same time, competition among residents—the homestay owners—also created jealousy and discomfort. Issues that arise from hosting guests often lead to disagreements and conflicts between residents. The presence of tourists in the *huta* brings different types of crowds and needs to the village. However, sometimes the physical and social infrastructure is not ready. During tourists' stays, for instance, electricity usage often exceeded the line's capacity, causing short circuits and cutting power to the houses on the same line. Other examples include water use, as some *hutas* organize their water collectively. Occasionally, small issues like these are amplified into something bigger, like a confrontation. One homestay owner shared her story in this regard, describing how her neighbor confronted her in front of her guests:

> *"I felt hurt by the. ... So, there were [university] students [who stayed] here at the time. It was true that these students were in the wrong; they didn't ask permission to use an electric stove. So, the lights*

went out... Instead of coming straight to me, they [neighbors] reported it to Tunggane. Then, his [Tunggane's] wife came to me and complained loudly; the guests heard it. I felt deeply disrespected. ...I am much older than she is."

Other forms of social dynamics initiated by a lack of collaboration within homestay operations were between houses with high tourist visits and those that rarely host. The ones with active hosting usually have better homestay facilities. They invest in their homestay by improving its interior and lodging facilities, such as bedding and bedroom furniture, and by maintaining the house's hygiene and cleanliness. The owners of active homestays face jealousy from other members. The following excerpts express this perspective:

"Sometimes they were jealous of us.[...] They saw that there were often guests [in our home], they would say, 'Well, good for you, great that you have a lot of guests. You must have made a lot of money by now.' ... I couldn't care less. This jealousy is baseless. I said to them, 'We did offer them [guests] to you, but you said no.' In fact, we only hosted because they had rejected them. Now they are jealous."

Furthermore, the gap in understanding and connection among villagers becomes more pronounced in their responses to the homestay programs. For homestay owners who seem passive and less engaged in hosting activities, the other groups that actively host seem too financially oriented. On the contrary, the active homestays view the other groups as too narrow-minded to pass up such a great opportunity to improve their lives. Two quotes from the interviews reflect these contradicting views as follows, respectively:

[1] Now, here, everything becomes a homestay. Look around [pointing at houses]. Every corner of the house has been transformed into a homestay room. Even the 'bara,' the underneath jabu, has become a home so that the rest of the house can become homestay rooms. ... The room ['bara'] that was meant for animals has now become a home for humans. People actually live there. Everything now is for the sake of money. We personally could not go that far. We only offer what sounds reasonable to us, to our understanding as proud members of our culture."

[2] The people here in this huta are still very narrow-minded. It is impossible to make them understand the opportunities this homestay has given us, which they blindly pass up. They are still so behind, you know, the 'village' people. But it's okay, it's still a long way to go for them. Slowly, they will realize."

In other words, different interactions between owners and their homestay businesses have created social gaps among members of the *huta*. They become more critical of others' approaches to running the homestay. While both agree on the economic benefits the homestay brings, the

boundaries of its integration into their everyday lives, before it is exploited, remain unresolved. In my opinion, this is where the 'gap' lies.

On other occasions, the gap also resulted from financial limitations that prevented some from improving their homestay units as others do. This makes them feel less competitive compared to others. Consequently, it creates a social division among homestay owners: those with higher-quality homestays and more frequent guest visits, and those with lower-quality homestays and fewer guests. In some *hutas*, such as Sitohang, these two groups work together. They collaborate, with the active owner inviting the others to be part of her guest's cycle. This usually happens when the active owner has her homestay fully booked. Therefore, when she receives more reservations, she distributes them to the less active ones. In return, the latter gives her a financial reward as a sign of gratitude. This system, however, is similar to that of the *Tunggane Huta*. Consequently, it was no wonder that the tension between this group and the *Tunggane's* increased.

Another significant aspect of social cohesion among the *huta's* residents begins to shift during a cultural event. A wedding, for example, is a major cultural celebration for the community. During this one-week event, almost all family members, including those who have migrated to other regions, return to the *huta* to participate. Initially, these family members would come to their family's *jabu* and stay there together, reenacting how their ancestors lived in the communal house: sleep together in the open space of the *jabu* while helping with the party preparations.

This habit has changed since the advent of homestays. Many family members, instead of sharing their *jabu* with other family members, chose to stay in the neighbor's homestays. This means they paid for their stay. Interestingly, for this type of occasion, the owner did not apply the normal rate and asked only enough to cover expenses such as water and electricity. In this case, integrating homestay-based accommodation into a complex, communal cultural event helps better accommodate members of the big family. The owner argued that staying in a homestay helps family members spread out and better organize themselves when resting, yet remain in the same location. Of course, this is only an option for families who are willing and able to pay. The family's *jabu*, however, will always welcome all its members during these occasions.

The Family Members

The infusion of homestays into only active traditional Batak houses has brought some family members back home: back to the *huta*. Before homestays, it was relatively common to find empty *jabus*. None of the family members wanted to stay in the *huta*, and therefore their *jabus* remained empty. Under a specific government regulation during the initial stage of the homestay program, families could only participate if at least one family member lived in the house, not if it was empty. Because the state made this rule clear from the beginning of the house selection process, many families reorganized themselves and decided that one of their members would return to revitalize their house. This discussion took place among the family members.

A third of the 17 houses I investigated during the fieldwork were initially empty. Family members returned to the *huta* only after receiving information about the homestay project. The project, seen as a rare opportunity, prompted them to rethink their hometown and the possibility of rebuilding their family's house. The reasons that brought these families back to the hutas vary, ranging from feeling too old or too tired to continue living in the city and dealing with all the hassles, to taking advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to renovate their house, to caring for their *jabu*, which also aligned with the opportunity coming from the government. Basically, the dynamics among family members include discussions about who should and is a better fit to go back to the *huta*. Most decisions followed the needs and the feasibility of achieving a better life for those who chose to return. Therefore, the homestay projects have brought people from *rantau* back to the *huta* and are committed to caring for the family's *jabu*, including managing the homestay.

Additionally, the homestay implementation also created a new dynamic among family members. This is particularly the case given *jabu*'s status as a family house. When it is in usefor business and as a regular source of income for the family living in it, other family members feel entitled to at least some portion of it, especially because it is also their house. In fact, it has been known as the source of family feuds in the communities. This is also the reason why, during the Permit stage of homestay implementation, obtaining unanimous agreement from the whole family to use the *jabu* as a homestay is mandatory. If one member rejected the idea, the house would be excluded from the projects. It is to prevent any potential legal issues from arising later, due to misunderstandings or jealousy.

During one of the interviews, a homestay owner shared their experience dealing with misunderstandings with other family members. Although the family members initially expressed support for accepting the homestay, after witnessing how it operates and the financial benefits focused on the current inhabitants, they changed their minds. Some families had an agreement that, as one had agreed to move back and reorganize their lives accordingly, it was only fair that the benefits of the homestay go to them. On the other hand, other families have different dynamics. It follows the logic that if the *jabu* needs some improvement, all members chip in, and the rules are expected to apply when the *jabu* generates income. An example of this dynamic is from a family in Sitohang village. The disagreement that surfaced stemmed from the assumption that the homestay generates money incessantly, as quoted as follows:

> *"Yes, they agreed at the beginning... It [family conflict] was because there is a homestay now in this jabu, people think, "Wow, every day, every night there are guests.' So, there are also people who want to sue, bring it to the court, and stuff. ... I have to explain to them, because sometimes people assume wrong, not in accordance with this [reality]. And secondly, I have to explain that they know the money that comes in, but they don't know what goes out."*

The expenses for the homestay cover not only daily operations but also the substantial investment made during construction. In reality, the owners argued that they had perhaps spent about 19 million IDR to complete the construction, including installing a water system and plumbing, and paying extra labor costs due to miscommunication with the builders. These unplanned expenses, the owners argued, are often not visible to outsiders, which is why providing a clear explanation of how the homestay operates financially is an important step in addressing any misunderstandings among families.

Finally, while the homestay projects have initiated family discussions in the early phases regarding the dynamics surrounding the new intervention designed for the relatively static physical changes of the Batak vernacular structures, achieving this requires more than a unanimous agreement on paper. However, it is fair to say that the unanimous approval did not come without resistance and/or skepticism from one or more family members. Therefore, the agreement on paper is often reached after negotiation and dialogue to influence and convince the rest of the families, sometimes involving the *Tunggane*, the head of the *Desa*, and neighbors.

Therefore, it always requires reassurance and transparent communication among the family members, beyond the permit phase. This leads to my next point for the homestay project: incorporating the community's years of practice in the shared, communal ownership system into the development and management of tourist homestay programs in the hutas. With this framework, the burden and responsibilities of running a lodge are shared among families and will, hopefully, empower the community and reduce dependence on government assistance.

CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of two parts: one on economic aspects and the other on social cohesion among local actors. What I learnt from the first part is that the state manages and controls the homestay funds directly, through the homestay team.

Although each house has a set budget, the owners never saw a penny and never knew the details of its expenditure. However, the implications of this directly affect homeowners, including issues with site construction or even failure to complete work. Consequently, this type of financial flow leads to poor quality control, transparency issues, and a lack of attachment among the owners, which affects their satisfaction with the overall outcome of the homestay, as shown in Figure 8.2.

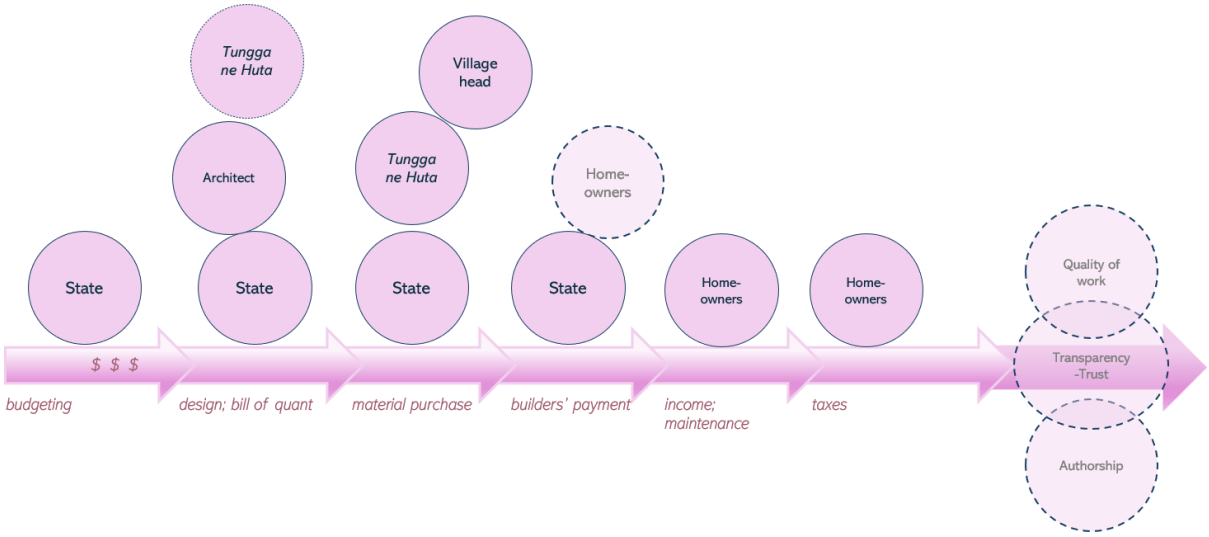


Figure 8. 2. The cycle of financial flows of homestays in Samosir. Graphic made by the author.

Additionally, homeowners often had to contribute financially to complete the work, adding a burden to these communities. This feels even more worrying to them when the state announces imposing taxes on homestays, raising concerns among homestay owners, including fears that it will reduce their already limited revenue (as they have to set aside some of their income for *Tunggane* or landlord, and sometimes also for communal funds) and that they will be treated unfairly, since the mushrooming self-funded homestays were not subject to the same tax.

The second part delves into the social dynamics arising from interactions among the different actors involved in the projects, during and after implementation. It covers three areas of discussion: 1) the dynamic between the state and local leaders, 2) relations between landlords and their residents, and 3) relations among residents.

In terms of number 3, homestays complicate the relationship between the Tungganes and their residents to the point that an argument over "living for free on this land" arises. Here, it is important to understand that the landlord or *Tunggane* owns only the land, while the people own the buildings/houses. The current dynamics, after the homestay implementation, somehow overlook the long history of their mutual relations and understanding, as established before: at the beginning of *huta*'s formation, the initial mutualistic relationship between *Tunggane*, the landowner, and the people building houses and living on his land. However, it is quickly transformed by the homestay.

During homestay production, interactions mostly occurred among local elites, such as *Tunggane*, the Village administration, and the state, as represented by the homestay team. It thereby strengthens the *Tunggane*'s position within the *huta* or village community.

Meanwhile, hosting activities in homestays constitute an interesting contact zone for homestay owners, opening new opportunities for collaboration among tourism actors. Although *Tungganes* initially played an important role in managing homestays, many homeowners have now taken the initiative to develop their own systems and management, creating a new managerial group.

This, however, created tension and jealousy between them and the rest of the residents, including 1) the *Tungganes*, as it affects the amount of rewards and the control they usually have over homeowners, 2) other homestay owners within *Tunggane's* management, and 3) other homeowners who are relatively inactive in the program due to some resistance or inability to commit more.

Finally, this study reveals the state's approach to working through vernacular architecture by navigating and penetrating local power without disrupting it, while, unfortunately, eroding the social cohesion of lower-class communities and further marginalizing the already marginalized non-elite *huta* people.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

This dissertation comprises three analytical parts: the implementation process of homestays in the Batak *hutas* in Samosir; design aspects and the dynamics of human agency; and changes in home and society in the formation of homestays. Within these focuses, the purpose is to answer two main research questions, focusing on 1) Indigenous agency ~~*(dis)*~~engagement in the production of homestays, and 2) its impact on their: architecture, spatial experience of home, and social cohesion. Overall, I offer several concluding points to reiterate the contributions of this study.

First is the spatial organization of the Batak vernacular architecture. This study contributes to the design strategies for integrating vernacular architecture into tourism accommodation. It shows how a home is reorganized to prepare vernacular architecture to accommodate a tourist lodge within its fabric. It offers what works and what needs improvement in the process of manufacturing vernacular architecture.

Similarly, this study highlights an interesting design exercise in incorporating vernacular architecture and its communities into contemporary tourism developments. It is to find a balance between the so-perceived 'authentic' traditional atmosphere and its ability to manifest some degree of transformation. The homestay projects in Samosir seek to find this harmony by extending parts of the house without disturbing the traditional structure. Although no significant visual changes are evident in this transformation, some minor alterations were made that do not enhance its structural authenticity, as explained in the last part of Chapter 6, "Reflection on Design".

Additionally, given the infusion of lodging into historical architecture as a design practice, increasingly prevalent across the globe, this study examines the specifics of this practice, particularly in Indigenous living architecture. In this context, it contributes by asserting the need to decentralize designers' roles and to open space for collaboration with owners or inhabitants, regardless of power dynamics within their communities, as is usually culturally rooted in the vernacular community.

Specific to Samosir, I believe that better time allocation and a dedicated collaboration stage are appropriate approaches. Co-designing with homeowners would have made the design more accommodating to the family's needs. It is to acknowledge two key elements of this project: the specific and intimate spatial needs of a home, and the intricate combination of home and tourist' lodge. And no one would understand their everyday spaces better than the inhabitants. Therefore,

properly and intentionally embracing the owners' spatial knowledge and established experience in the design study process would benefit both homeowners and the state that creates the program. In the end, the project is no longer only about maintaining the traditional appearance, but also about allowing domestic and everyday life to develop alongside tourism.

Second is the dynamics of local actors and spatial changes of homes. The implementation of homestays—the presence of the central government in the *hutas*—brings out the dynamics within the local communities. Figure 9.1 shows the relationships among local actors formed during the homestay implementation and the effects of these dynamics on the conception of home.

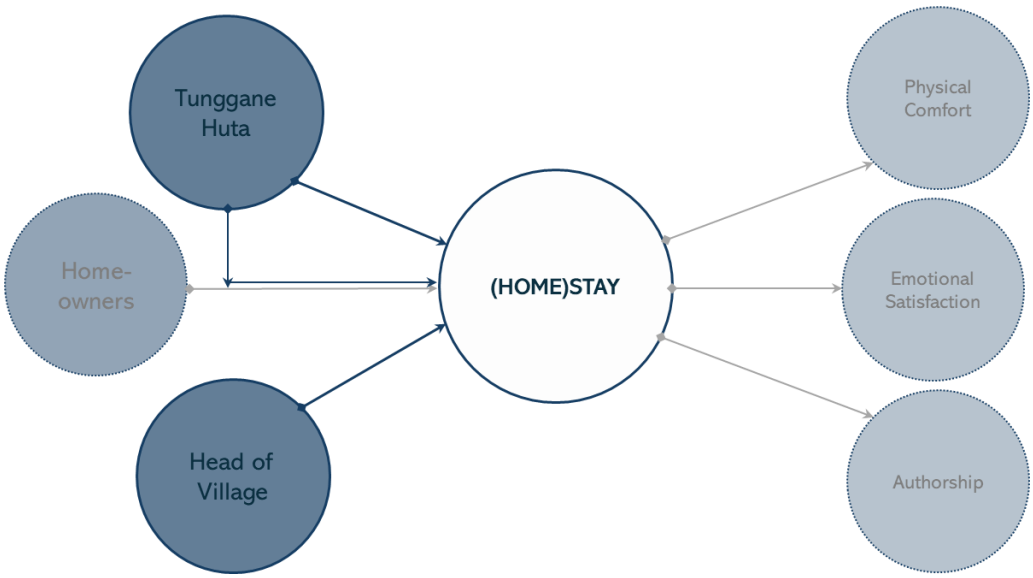


Figure 9. 1. Local agency in the production of homestays. Graphic created by the author.

The social dynamics among local communities involve three main actors intertwined in the process: *Tunggane Huta*, the village head, and the homeowners, as shown in Figure 9.1. The *Tungganes* played a significant role in defining the project's direction and, therefore, the decision-making process. The *Tungganes* and village heads have direct interaction and communication with the government team's of homestay implementation.

Although homeowners are a key element in the overall formulation of homestay production, as it is in their homes, and they are the ones who would run the business in the later stage, their involvement was very low. In the homestay process, their interactions with homestay projects, such as in the design phase, construction, and post-construction operations, are limited and minor. Even if there were some, they were often incidental and intercepted by the local elites, especially *Tunggane*, and sometimes by the *Kepala Desa* (head of the village). Additionally, throughout the design process, as analyzed in Chapter 6, part "Tracing Houses: Whose Design?", the involvement of homeowners in design decisions about their homes(stays) was often undermined, and their aspirations were often unheard.

Such disengaged processes led to changes in their experiences of homes. Figure 9.1 offers at least three different feelings of home. First, the physical comfort of home. Many owners expressed disappointment with the physical condition of the homestays after construction. Reasons vary, ranging from spatial efficiency, safety, and accommodating their family's needs to incomplete construction and differences from what was promised at the initial stage.

Meanwhile, the second is emotional satisfaction. The physical state of homestays often leads owners to make post-construction adjustments and improvements to fit their families' needs and, sometimes, long-term plans. Although these can be seen as signs of them reclaiming the authorship of their homes, which is the third element in Figure 9.1. The interviews with owners show that the emotions that often follow these post-production adjustments are mostly disappointment and dissatisfaction. Here, I argue that this is because of their exclusion from the design phase. Therefore, the disengaging process they went through, coupled with disappointment over the results, makes their attempts to improve their home an unfortunate additional burden that could have been prevented if the process had been more inclusive.

Third is homestays as a contact zone. In this research, I examine homestays as two sets of processes. They are the production process and the housing/hosting process for tourists. In both processes, homestays connect and mediate interactions among actors who were initially disconnected or operating in their own bubbles. During homestay production, interactions mostly occurred between local elites, such as *Tunggane* and the *Desa* administration, and the governments represented by homestay teams, including architects, contractors, and ministry personnel.

It is also worth noting that homestay production provided an opportunity for local elites, such as *Tunggane* and the *Desa*, to communicate, albeit unintentionally. Previously, the two had no direct overlapping authority or influence—the Adat and the state's village—which is why homestay production became an interesting meeting point for the two figures. This, however, strengthened *Tunggane's* influence over their residents, pushing the homeowners away from the contact zone. Therefore, homestay production as a contact zone is not necessarily a productive zone for homeowners, the regular, non-elite residents of the hutas.

During post-production, tourists' hosting activities in homestays constitute an interesting contact zone from homeowners' perspectives. Although *Tunggganes* play a relatively influential role in managing homestays in their huta, vis-à-vis the homestay coordinator, not a few homeowners have taken the initiative to develop their own systems and management practices. They are also more active in forming networks with communities beyond their everyday practice. These activities include starting a new catering business, promoting local cuisine to tourists staying in their homestays, collaborating with local businesses, and connecting with other homestay owners across Samosir through an online platform. Figure 9.1 illustrates these collaborations, with this aspect represented by solid black lines.

The newly established collaboration, however, excluded other actors who were not part of the newly rising individual homestay owner or group of homestay management. This created tension between them and the rest of the residents, such as jealousy, social and emotional distance, and competition. Examples include competition and tension between this active group and 1) the *Tunggane*, 2) the other homestay owners in *Tunggane*'s management, and 3) other independent homestay owners who were relatively inactive due to an inability to improve their homestay units or some form of resistance to the fast-growing transformation of the *jabus*. This type of relationship, shown in Figure 9.2, is indicated by dashed lines.

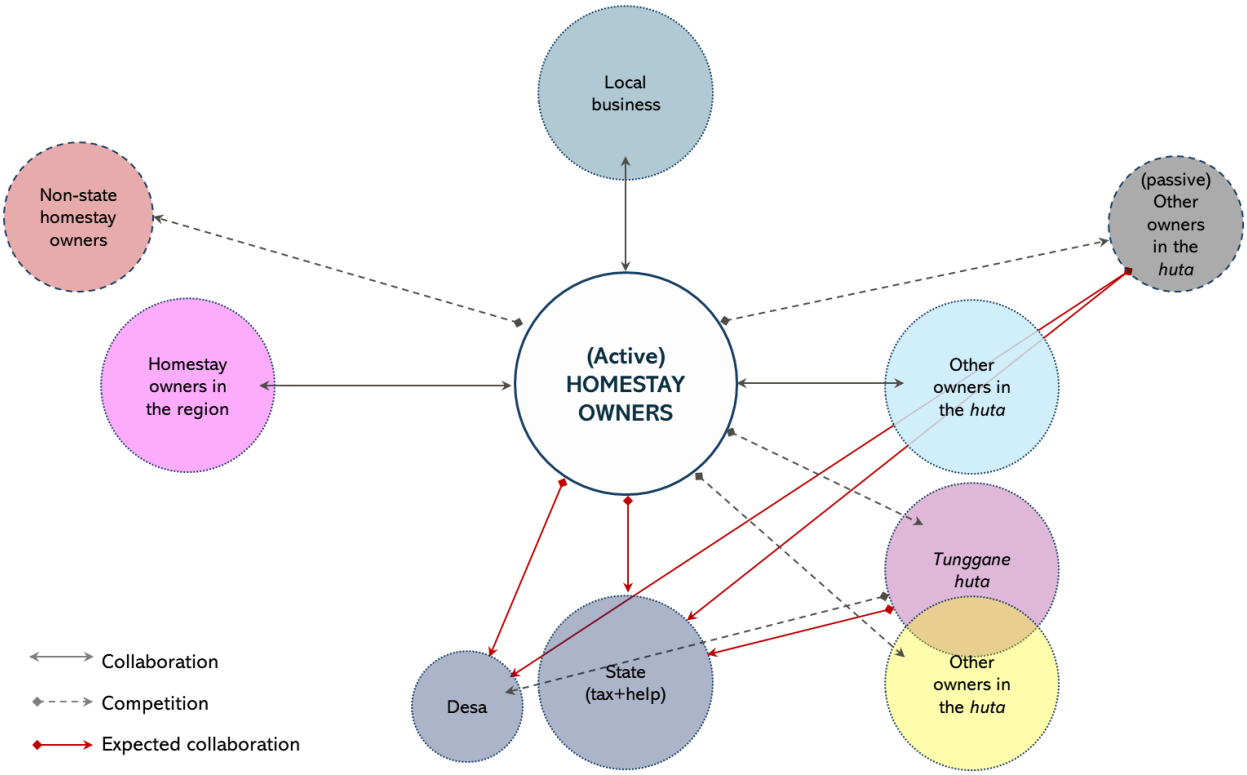


Figure 9. 2. Relations among social actors in the process of hosting tourists. Graphic created by the author.

Likewise, Figure 9.2 also shows the social dynamics created by the presence of homestays in the *huta* communities, particularly regarding the involvement of external actors to help homestays survive and/or further develop their lodging business. The homestay owners, both active and passive, are mainly open to assistance from both the state and the Desa. However, *Tunggane* only opens possibilities to the state and rejects the Desa.

Overall, as a contact zone, homestays, both in production and operation, connect actors and create connections that were initially nonexistent. They have become a space, albeit non-physical, for collaboration, mutual understanding, and dialogue, as well as a space for critique, negotiation, struggle, and the potential for resistance and transformation.

The concept of the 'contact zone' as introduced by Mary Louise Pratt is described as "social spaces where cultures interact, often in contexts of asymmetrical power such as colonialism" (1991). She argues, however, that a 'contact perspective' also emphasizes how ideas, objects, and identities are constituted in and by their relations to one another, highlighting the importance of co-presence, interaction, and interlocking understandings and practices. In the context of tourism, this idea is framed within the space where cultural encounters between tourists and local cultures take place. In other words, it is a tourism site that fosters cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, as well as a space for critique and resistance to established dominant narratives.

In contrast to Pratt's definition of a contact zone, my understanding of the term applies at almost managerial levels within the realities of the homestays. This study shows that the contact zone, as a social space, does not only focus on tourists' presence or the cultural exchanges between them and their hosts. Therefore, to put my research into perspective, I extend the definition of 'space' beyond its physical entity and broaden the interpretation of actors beyond host-tourist relations. These perspectives reveal asymmetrical power surrounding the livelihood of non-elite *huta* residents. It roots in the mundane, everyday life of the Batak community, severely limiting their sense of authorship, autonomy, and personal identity, which, through the appearance of homestay projects, is being challenged and confronted.

Furthermore, understanding these different views on the contact zone opens up another perspective. To see the homestay as a contact zone within the framework offered by Pratt is to examine the interaction between tourists and hosts through practices of the invention of tradition, such as locally organized and scheduled events, rituals, festivals, performances, souvenir centers, etc. However, in the case of homestay *hutas*, at least until this research was conducted, such anticipated social-spatial practices that reach tourists did not form. The homestay, however, remains only in the accommodation sector. There are no initiatives or identified interests in organizing the commodification of tradition for tourist purposes.

In other words, there is resistance to maximizing commodification of cultures alongside the top-down homestays. For now, the residents focus only on welcoming tourists into their homes, with the benefit of improving their homes. But there is no further intention or initiative to use their *jabus* and *hutas* as an arena for cultural commodification for mass tourism. Wedding ceremony, for example, is a fascinating cultural event well-known across the country; however, the *hutas* did not see it as a tourist attraction. A homestay owner mentioned that "*We allow tourists to see the [wedding] ceremony, if any happens to be here during the event.*" However, I found no further indication of awareness or interest among the communities in commodifying and promoting such cultural events for tourists.

Here, I conclude that there are three reasons for this condition. Firstly, the residents view these events as culturally rooted and personal, not as an economic drive to be marketed publicly or integrated into their homestay programs, as indicated in the stated interview. Secondly, there is

insufficient social capital to mobilize people to offer such cultural commodification. This is either due to competition between groups or to divisions/disintegration of the *hutas* members. Thirdly, as previously explained, a homestay alone cannot fulfill the family's economic needs, as it is often precarious and unreliable. Hence, most owners cannot give up their primary occupations, which are mostly farming, and instead see homestays as a side hustle. Consequently, homestay owners are already occupied, leaving little time and energy to create traditions for tourists' eyes.

Finally, I find this resistance, disinterest, and/or lack of awareness in engaging more deeply in tourism activities and cultural commodification—beyond homestays—worth exploring further. A research project dedicated to these aspects will help explain why residents or homestay owners react as they do, limit their participation as they do, and respond to the appearance of homestays as they do. I view this as essential to understanding the results or outcomes of the top-down homestays implemented in vernacular communities. This would be my research trajectory.

Fourth is understanding the state's behavior. This study reveals the processes by which the homestays come together. It shows the formation stages of homestays in Samosir Island, concentrated on the Batak *hutas*. By investigating the process, this study follows the state's way of working; that the state has such programs, creates systems to organize and divide labor, and assigns people in charge. In addition to demonstrating these implementation processes, this dissertation also conveys the power relations among the social actors involved. In other words, it shows the power relations embedded in that process as the state enters the *hutas*.

Based on Figures 9.1 and 9.2 at the beginning of this conclusion chapter, the homestay process strengthens a particular position: the *Tunggane Huta*. In this regard, this study contributes to understanding how a state—through vernacular architecture—penetrates a community and its ability—or perhaps its success—to establish a relationship with local power without disrupting it. It shows how the state works with local power using vernacular architecture and how the community survives through this mechanism.

However, its implication on the subaltern, the regular powerless residents living in *Tunggane*'s village, is significant. They become the end of the chain, bearing responsibility from all directions, but having little influence to act as an active agent in the process. Examples of this include financial rewards offered to *Tunggane* for hosting tourists, taxes imposed by the central government, and additional labor required for homestay daily operations, including cleaning, laundry, room organization, maintenance, and marketing. All these labors are in addition to their everyday hassles, such as caring for their children, working on the farm, and cooking and feeding their families.

With this in mind, I argue that the state's behavior in implementing homestays is to impose a new program on these *huta* communities, leaving them altogether once the project is constructed, without any additional support. In the end, however, it creates a huge burden and a sense of precariousness for the community's existing livelihoods. Considering the addition of homestay-

related labor to the family, the question of everyday labor within individual homestay-owning families requires a closer look at the family's gender dynamics. As this study stops at identifying this aspect, the gender dynamics at play in the homestay's daily management would be another possible direction for further exploration.

In other words, after introducing this new type of home-lodge, the state expects the communities to figure out how to develop and navigate it further. And in reality, in the process of figuring out, local communities experience various social dynamics, which will be my next point of conclusion.

Fifth is the social implications of homestays. In the process of navigating the ways of running and managing homestays, individuals began to detach from the traditional management system centered on the *Tunggane*. As illustrated in Figure 9.2 and Chapter 8, part Social Cohesion, some tensions, jealousy, and competition began to form among the residents. These active owners and rising individuals withdraw from the communal setting organized by the *Tunggane* to self-organize and gain greater economic rewards. These active homestay owners, who have detached from the communal system, unfortunately also lose their social network in the *huta*. Therefore, here, social change, class mobility, and class differences are underway.

In this case, the reward for individuality becomes the driving force behind social change within local communities. Having the houses upgraded motivates the owners to do better and be more active in hosting tourists. This way, they also receive better incentives. However, the tax imposition changes the dynamics: these groups will have to pay more tax than others, and it will be unclear who will benefit. The top-down homestay also comes with the top-down tax. Overall, the homestay project is based on a reward-based system. Even from the beginning of house selection. Being selected for the homestays is seen as a reward, provided that the homestays are tourist accommodations.

This, however, also creates division among the locals from the beginning. And even the selection process divides the community. As reflected in the various social dynamics in Chapter 8, "Social Cohesion", the homestay projects transform the community. In fact, while the homestay program aims to maintain the appearance of vernacular, the community's social structure actually changes within. Specifically, the changes occur among the lower class and the non-elite actors, while the *Tunggane* and *Desa* remain unaltered, without disrupting the local power structure. Therefore, through the homestay project, the state keeps the traditional appearance and perhaps romanticizes the vernacular built environment, while, ironically, inside, their livelihoods have already shifted—thereby disrupting the community's cohesion and communality.

Sixth, the final idea I want to highlight here is the one that goes back to the title of this dissertation: "The Home." It specifically addresses the meaning of home for Samosir Batak communities both before and after homestays. By referring to the homestays' design process, which excludes the homeowners, coupled with how the homestays are functioning now—that they have to

accommodate strangers, even though it would generate revenue—it must have changed the whole meaning of home. This is a good opportunity to pay more attention to the meaning of home perceived by the communities.

The Batak Samosir people view home as more than a mere physical house; it has broader connections to the socio-ecosystem, including farms, Lake Toba, water, land, forests, and animals. This aspect of local everyday life, particularly through homestays, has declined and been subject to intense restrictions, including no longer raising livestock in and around the villages, no longer storing and drying crops in the *jabu* (the front house), and limited interaction with Lake Toba. In other words, when the way home is changed into a homestay, it sanitizes the environment and displaces traditional local practices, which, rather than fostering integration, promote division.

To Samosir communities, a home is a more complex and comprehensive concept than how the state or the homestay team understands it. And the fact that the homestay is laser-focused only on a building unit is a sign of destructive assumptions about the local concept of home. Here, this study shows that one cannot view a home as an isolated entity; instead, for the locals, a home does not exist independently of its surroundings. Consequently, the homestays do not receive full acceptance from the locals, as they cannot fully immerse themselves in this economy, and make the homestays their main source of income.

Therefore, I argue that this passive resistance may simply reflect how the community conceptualizes the idea of home: it is not just the house, not about changing the physical house, but about how the house needs to be understood within a larger context. It challenges the analysis to go beyond just examining a single unit and how it changes, but how there's something larger missing. This will help explain the extent to which locals welcome this state economic enterprise, which seems to benefit only the elite, rather than the common people.

Finally, as the last takeaway from this study, I believe it helps one understand the concept of vernacular architecture, which is not only about buildings or houses. Rather, in a local concept, it involves a larger ecosystem that informs the physical, functional, and everyday aspects of what one calls a 'home' in Samosir. And homestays reduce a home to something very functional and eliminate the very important elements of everyday life in the communities, which go beyond houses. In other words, the vernacular architecture in Samosir is not only an architectural concept but, more importantly, an ecological and planning concept, as home is part of a larger village context that the state failed to integrate into the design and implementation of the entire homestay project.

For future practices involving vernacular architecture, I believe this perspective needs to be taken into account: understanding what a home means within local concepts, so that a project can grow hand in hand with the lives of local communities. I aspire to further this understanding, both in research and practice.

EPILOGUE

This dissertation aims to capture the nuances of the production and operation of the homestay in Samosir. While homestay realities comprise three parts that rely on each other for support, which are the state, the vernacular communities, and tourists, this study focuses on the first two legs. It has not yet fully engaged with the third leg: tourists. Therefore, this epilogue is for that: a plan for further exploration of the consumption side of homestays, with a focus on the consumers: tourists.

As the third leg of the state-local community-tourist composition, tourists are an important element in the chain of homestay production and consumption. They are a key factor to consider in homestay operations and improvements. To this end, I pose an overarching question to address the tourists' role in this dynamic:

"What are the roles of tourists in the Samosir's vernacular homestays?"

That is the primary research question, which leads to five sub-questions for further research. They are: 1) What roles do tourists play in the design and production process?; 2) Who are the tourists visiting and staying in the homestays?; 3) How do tourists' experiences of and reviews influence the development of homestays in Samosir vernacular settlements?; 4) What are the responses made incorporating tourists' reviews, if any, and if not, why?; and 5) How do the homestays respond to the market and their competitors in the region?

To address these questions, a thorough literature review and archival studies would be important components of the research to establish the current state of scholarly work on the topic, clarify the significance of this study, and refine and focus the research questions before data collection. Additionally, further research for these 5 posed questions could use a mixed-methods strategy that includes qualitative and quantitative methods appropriate to each sub-question, as follows.

The first sub-question is as follows: What roles do tourists play in the design and production process? To answer this question, future research would examine tourists' aspirations, expectations, and engagement in the design formulation and production of homestays. This part examines tourists' roles, both direct and indirect, in the design production process. This study aims to understand the role of tourists' imagination and expectation in the design formulation and production of homestays.

The goal is to determine whether any studies, precedents, or dialogues were conducted by the state or individual architects to understand the existing tourist behaviors and demands, especially regarding vernacular architecture. In other words, this exploration focuses on the extent to which tourists are considered in the design and production of homestays in vernacular settlements in Samosir.

This study will benefit from two methodologies. Interviews with the homestay teams will help collect data, especially to see whether, at the state level, there were considerations based on tourists' demands and consumption trends regarding vernacular architecture as a destination. The interview may involve Yori Antar—the key figure in homestay projects representing the Indonesian Architects Association—as well as the team from the Ministry of Tourism. Additionally, interviewing the architects about their understanding of tourists' preferences for vernacular-based accommodation will be helpful. While conducting this dissertation, I found that there were no organized design exercises or studies based on tourists' behaviors and demands; this remains an avenue for deeper investigation. In this sense, studies of architects' creative archives, such as sketches, precedents, and design iterations, might serve as a source of information. The purpose is to examine how consumers' understanding informs the implementation and realization of homestays.

The second sub-question is: Who are the tourists visiting and staying in the homestays? The purpose is to understand the tourists' profiles as a group of consumers. Understanding tourists' profiles helps explain the consumption side of homestays. This study aims to understand who the tourists staying in homestays are. The exploration may involve 1) the type of tourists, including domestic or international, and their origins; groups, families, or individual travellers; 2) the behaviors of tourists, such as the length of their stay, what they do, what attracts them, and the frequency of their visit, and 3) the reasons they choose homestays, and whether their expectation met or not. The methodology for answering this question can include interviews with tourists and a combination of on-site observations. In addition, I could identify and analyze market surveys, government agencies' reports, and empirical research conducted on the topic and region under study.

Sources such as the latest report from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy on "Homestays as Strategy for Local Economic Development and Sustainability" (Niscaya, 2023), as well as numerous studies and recent research projects on tourists and their roles in homestays. Some examples for this are: a comparative study on homestays among Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand by Ditta-Apichai et al. (2025); a review on a successful homestay program, especially by empowering local communities, by Sianipar et al. (2025); research on the key factors for successful homestays in Samosir from tourists perspective by Luekveerawattana (2024); a study focusing on tourists' decisions and consideration to stay at homestays by Zaim et al. (2025); the inquiry on what homestay services could help increase tourists satisfaction in rural areas by Anil (2023); and an interesting study by Ahsani and Keban (2025) on the institutional void resulting in the stagnation of community-based tourism, among many others could be a starting point for this stage of research.

The third sub-question is as follows: How do tourists' experiences of and reviews influence the development of homestays in Samosir vernacular settlements? The purpose is to review tourists' experiences and interactions with homestays during their stay. It will help build an understanding of their preferences—what's working and what's not—regarding vernacular homestays in Samosir villages. There are three ways to investigate it. The first is by studying social media of people staying in homestays or their reviews on the homestay's accounts or the physical guests' book, which the owners sometimes provide. The second is by interviewing tourists visiting the homestays during the fieldwork. The interviews may involve tourists on-site or recruiting them in situ to schedule an interview, either in person or online. The third is administering surveys to tourists. While interviews allow for a deeper understanding of tourists' expectations and preferences on the subject, the third approach, which is a survey, enables a larger sample of tourists to be involved. The survey could be administered by leaving them in the homestays and encouraging the owners to distribute them to the tourists staying in their units. And over time, I can collect and analyze them.

Of the three ways I proposed for collecting tourists' data, the goal is to explore topics such as tourists' perceptions of the traditional architecture-based accommodation provided, their expectations and preferences, and their understanding of local culture and traditions before and after their visits. Additionally, another possible method is archival research from other sources, such as national and corporate surveys, as shown in some of the literature I listed above (Luekveerawattana, 2024; Zaim et al., 2025; Anil, 2023).

The fourth part of the questions is: What responses were made incorporating tourists' reviews, if any, and, if not, why? This question explores how tourists' reviews and feedback shape locals' understanding of their homestays. It aims to examine how tourists' experiences inform the development of homestays, whether in management or maintenance. In other words, this research examines how tourists contribute to the development of their vernacular built form and to their understanding of home and homestays. More importantly, the investigation aims to understand the motivation behind the improvements, whether related to cultural aspirations, authenticity, comfort, privacy, or economic value. In return, if no improvements are made based on tourists' experiences, the question is whether this constitutes a form of resistance and, if so, why. I would plan to conduct this part of the study using a combination of interviews and observations. Interviews with homeowners and homestay management are a possible source of information, while observation will help assess the extent of changes made.

The fifth part of the questions is: How do the homestays respond to the market and their competitors in the region? This question focuses on marketing surveys. This is to examine the homestay competitors in the region and how they influence the market and shape tourists' preferences and expectations, especially regarding vernacular-based accommodations. I imagine this study would examine the promotions, distribution, and types of tourists targeted by these other accommodation types. Additionally, this study may involve interviews with tourists and managers of

other accommodations, social media analysis of tourists' reviews across the two types of accommodations, and a comparison between them. This is to see what attracts tourists and whether the success story of one's business becomes an inspiration for others, which in turn will change the landscape of vernacular settlements in Samosir.

This study, as a marketing study, would also investigate the financial issues related to homestays and the cost of the "tourist gaze" shaped by expectations, media, and cultural norms, as introduced by sociologist John Urry (1990). This could include an analysis of nightly and annual tourist revenue and whether it offsets the program's initial costs. Another possible exploration may involve comparing homestay costs with those of adjacent hotels and their respective vacancy rates. To answer this question, archival and literature studies on corporate surveys will be critical to this study.

Additionally, while these five approaches have their own purposes, lists of questions, and related methodologies, in the realities of conducting this study, the questions may be grouped by source of information. With that, the data collection becomes more manageable.

Finally, of the five avenues of exploration regarding the consumption side of homestays, I argue that their significance all boils down to understanding how tourists imagine vernacular architecture and how it contributes to defining what vernacular architecture is in the Samosir communities. Therefore, rather than evaluating the success or failure of homestays, this part of the future study aims to find a middle ground where tourists' aspirations and activities in homestays meet and embrace the communities, and, in return, influence the realities and perceptions of their vernacular and everyday environments. Because, like it or not, tourists play an important role in reshaping the landscape of vernacular villages and their surroundings in Samosir, as well as influencing the locals' understanding of the values, meanings, and significance of their own vernacular environments.

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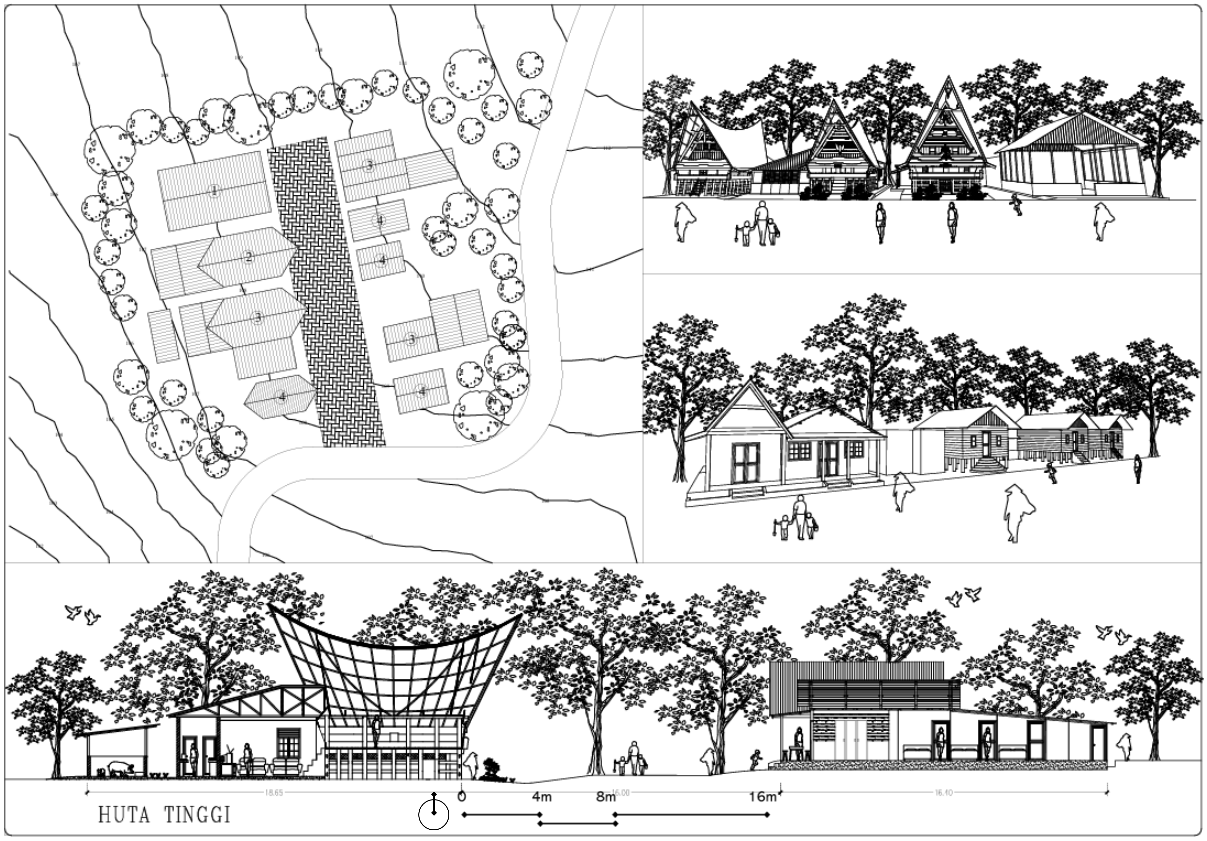
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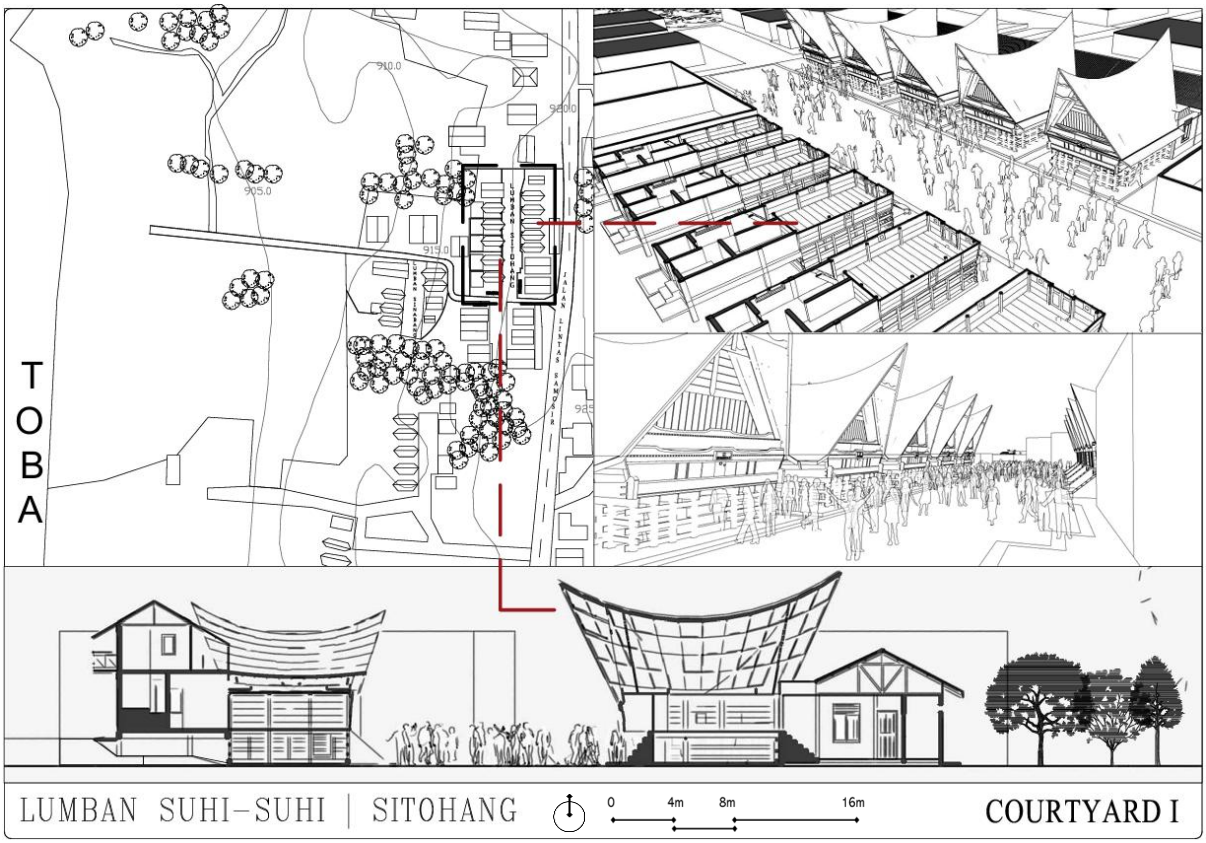
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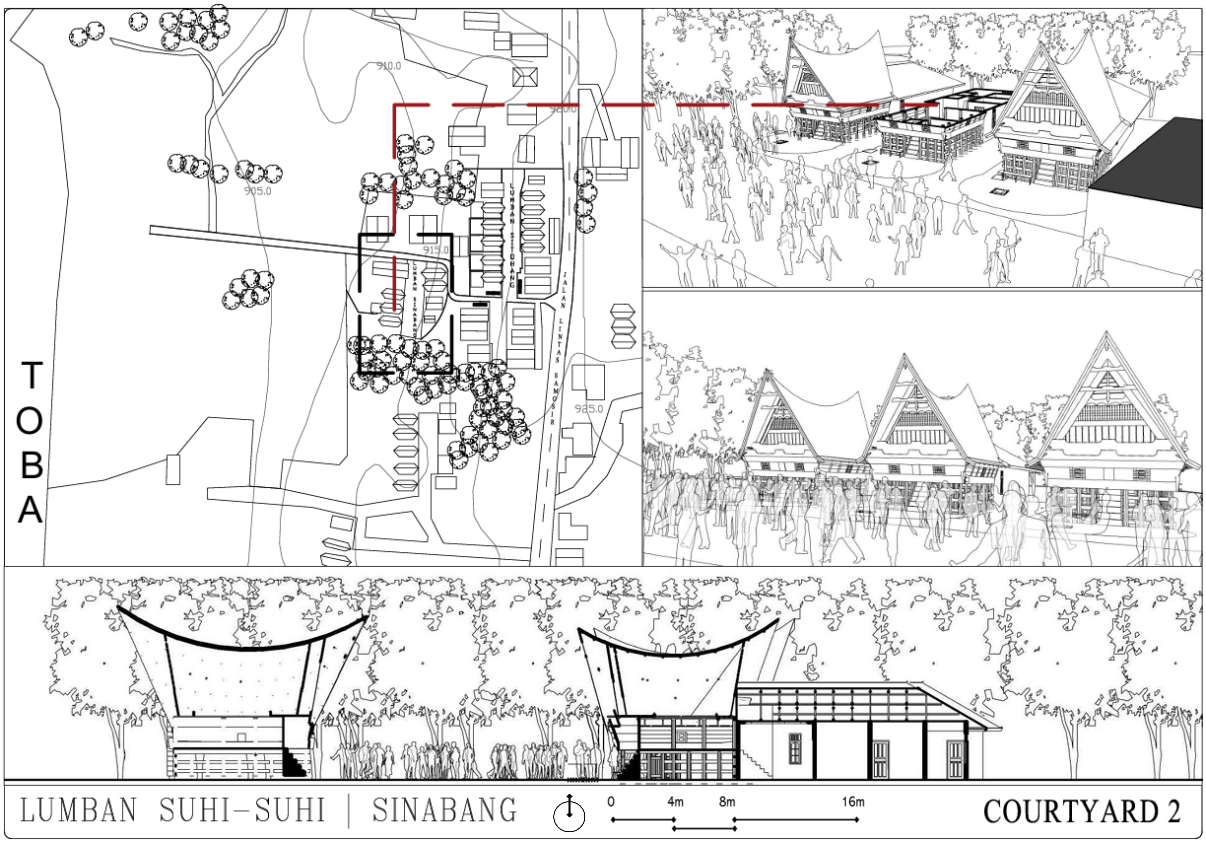
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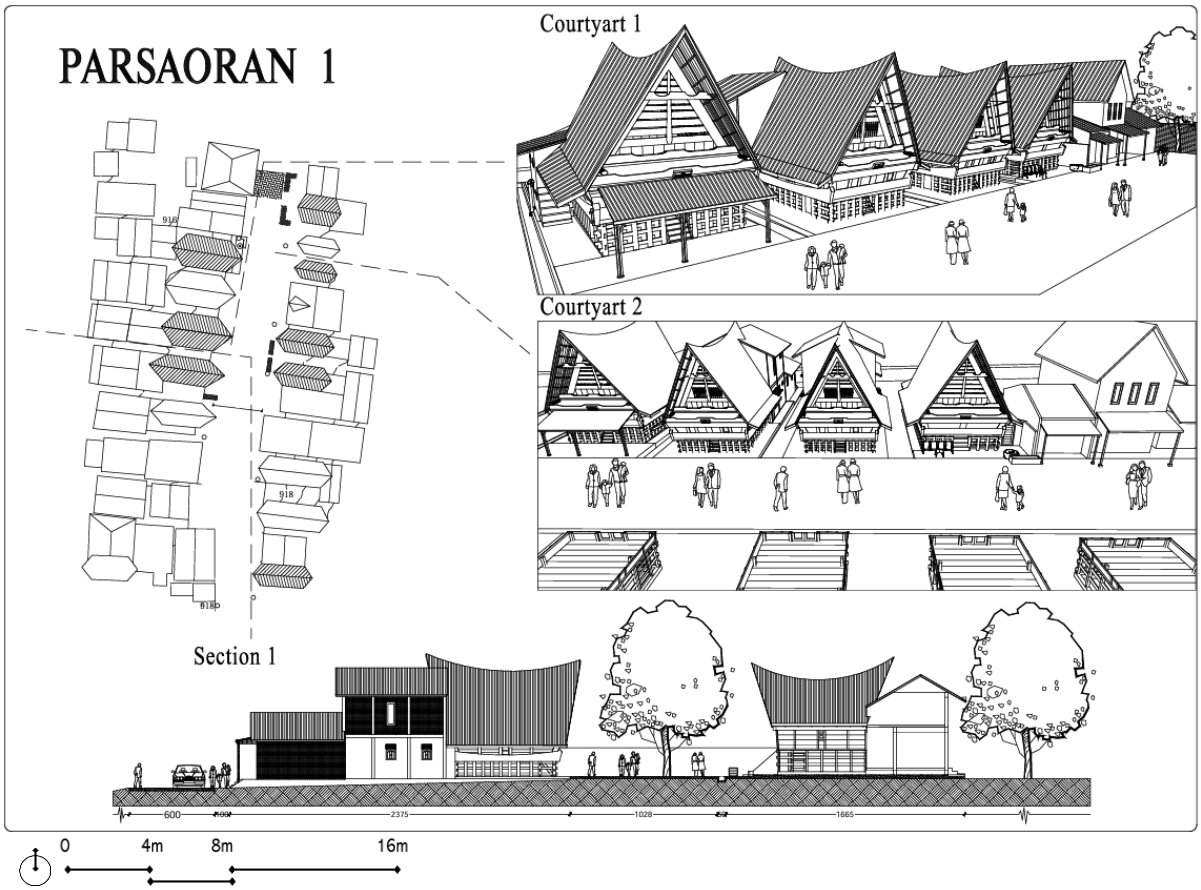
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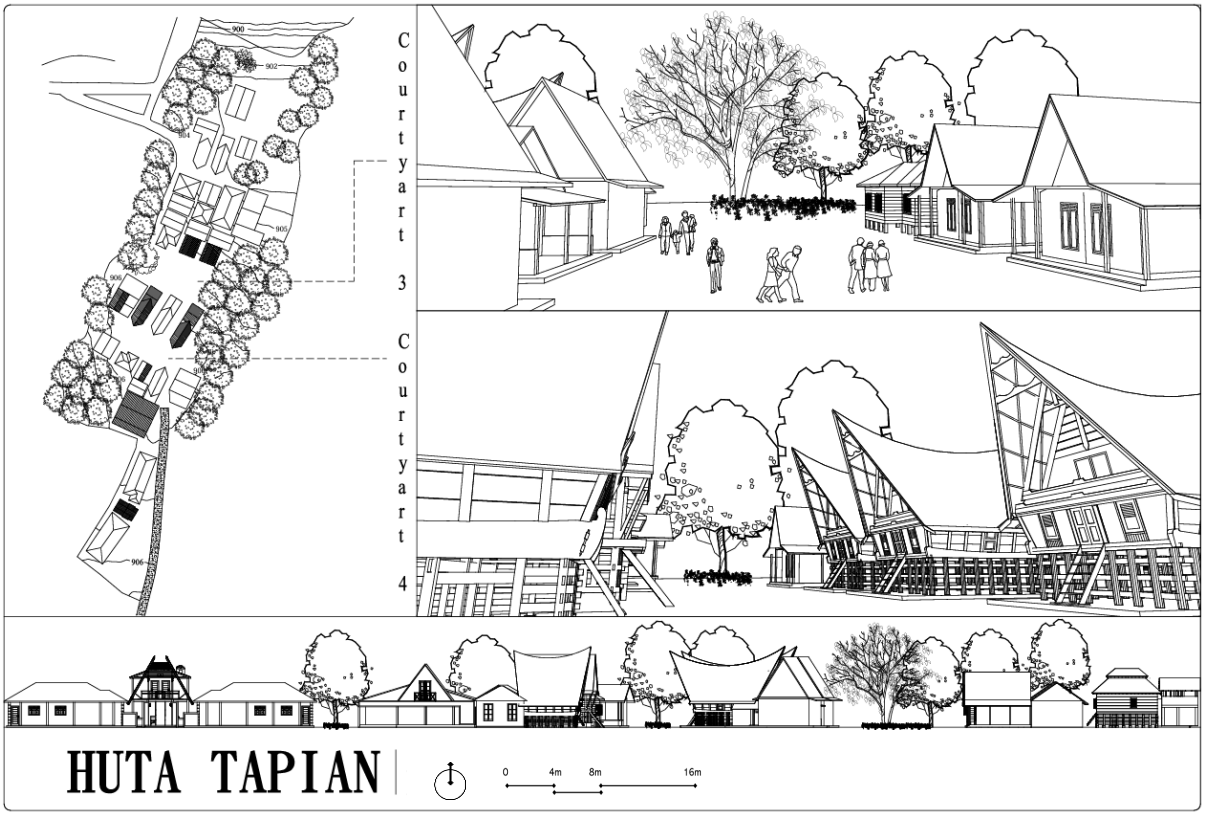
APPENDIX A: SITE DRAWINGS

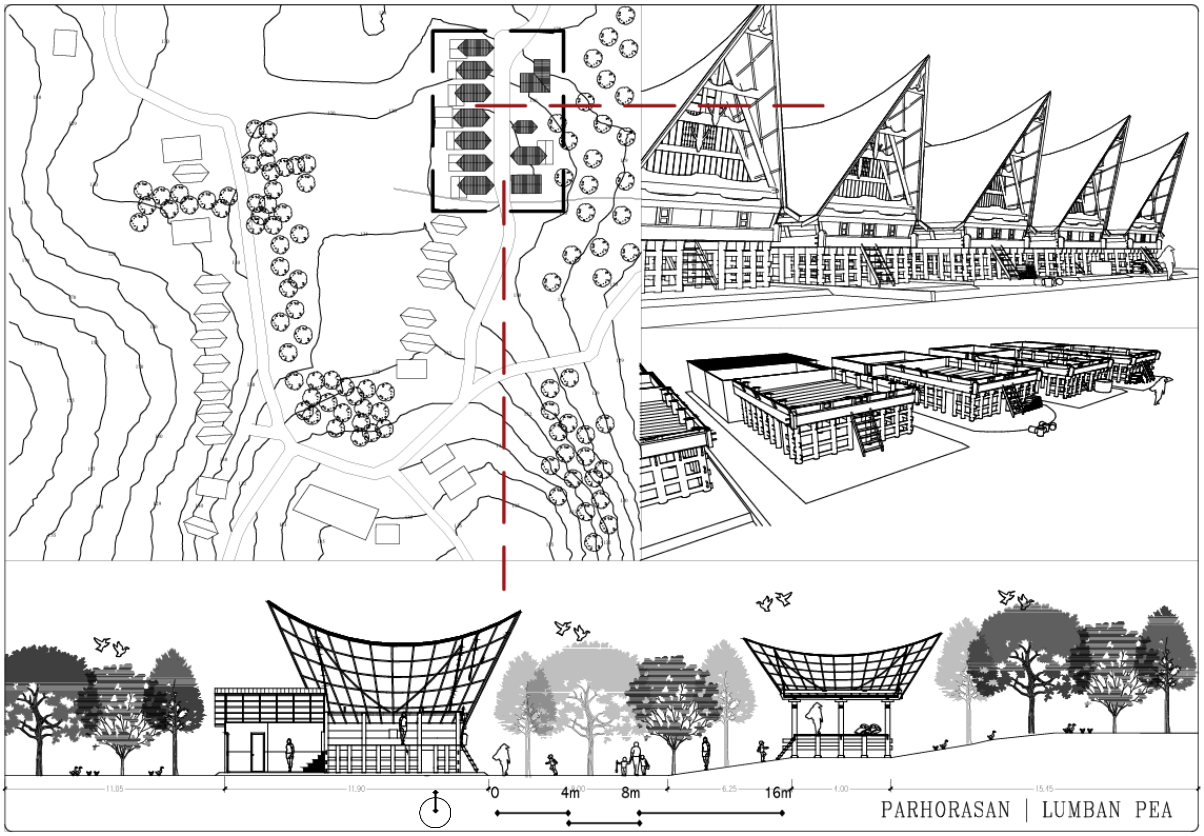



TOBA
LUMBAN SUHI-SUHI | SITOHANG
0
4m
8m
16m
COURTYARD I

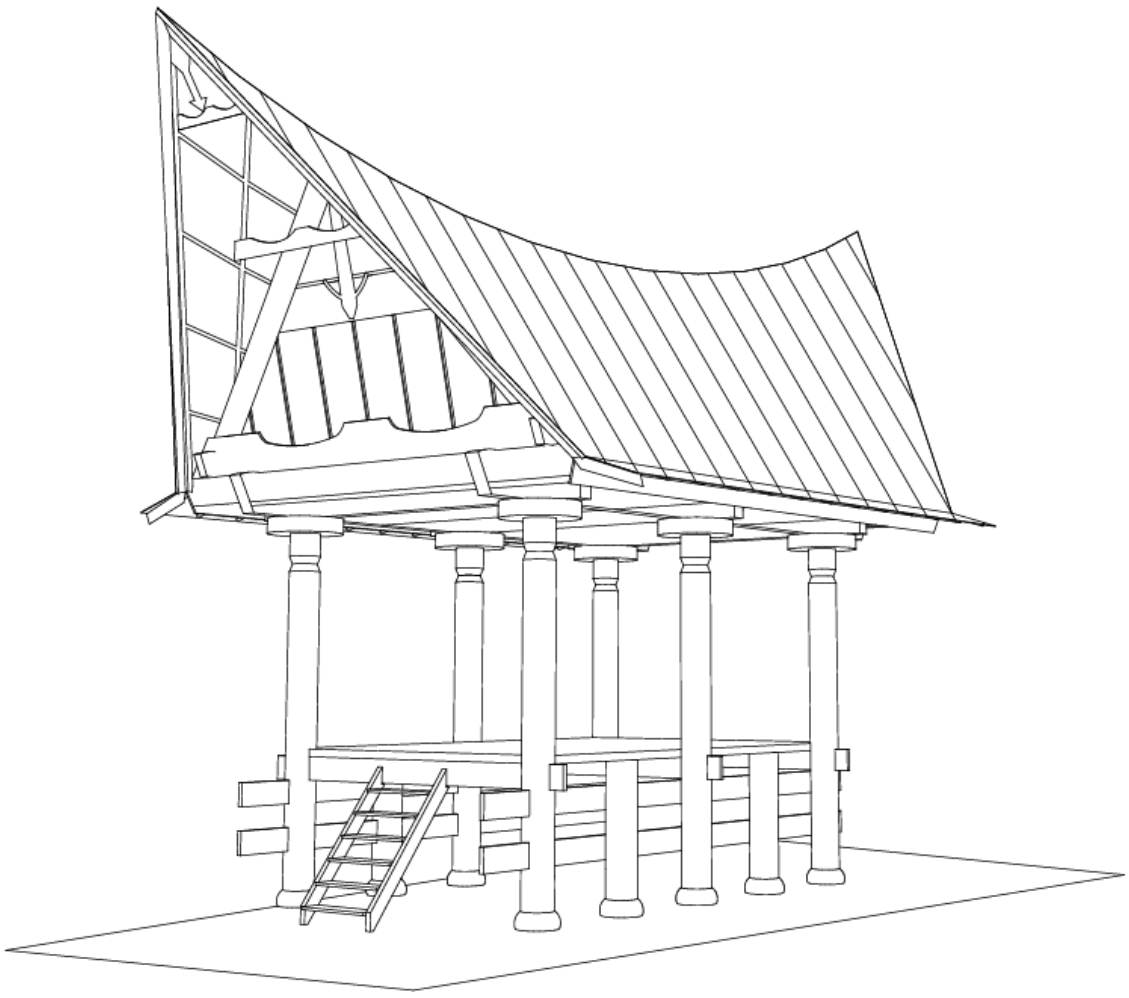

TOBA
LUMBAN SUHI-SUHI | SINABANG
0
4m
8m
16m
COURTYARD 2


PARSAORAN 1
Courtyart 1
Courtyart 2
Section 1
600
2375
1028
1665
0
4m
8m
16m


Courtyart 3
Courtyart 4
HUTA TAPIAN
0
4m
8m
16m

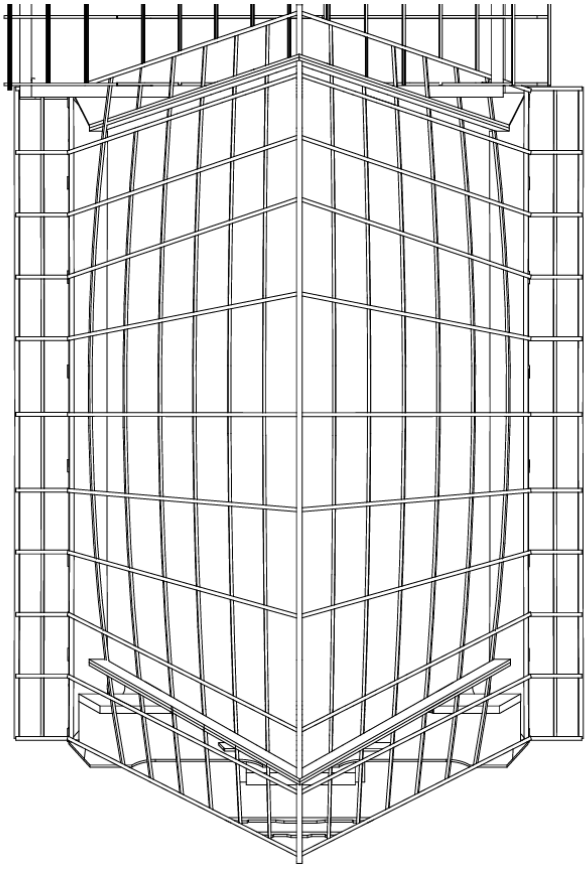

0
4m
8m
16m
PARHORASAN | LUMBAN PEA

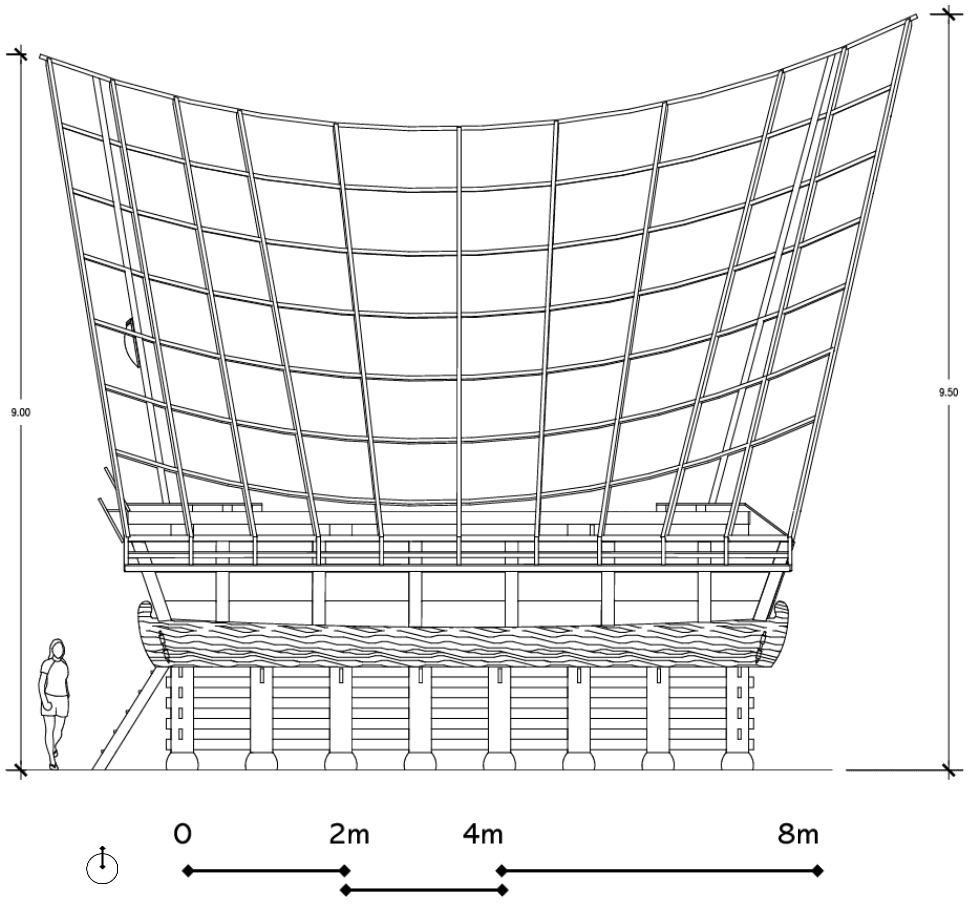
APPENDIX B: 'SOPO' (GRANARY)



Scale 1:30

APPENDIX C: WOODEN STRUCTURE





APPENDIX D: COLONNADE

