

# Historical and Cultural Blocks Protecting and Developing

— Take Italy as well as China, for example

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## Abstract

Cultural heritage is the physical symbol of human civilization's long history and is human beings' precious national, spiritual, and cultural wealth. With the acceleration of China's urbanization and new rural construction, China's cities face the contradiction between protecting and developing cultural heritage. Solving and balancing the relationship between the two requires sorting out the characteristics and protection problems of China's historical and cultural heritage and drawing lessons from the mature experience of foreign countries.

**Keywords:** Historical and cultural district, China, Italy, Protection and development

## 1. Introduction

It has been 40 years since the Chinese State Council approved and announced the first list of famous historical and cultural cities in 1982. The number of famous national historical and cultural cities in China has expanded from 24 to 141 now. In 1996, the protection of historical blocks (international) seminar jointly held by the Ministry of Construction, the Urban Planning Society of China and the Architectural Society of China clearly pointed out that "the protection of historical blocks has become an important part of the protection of historical and cultural heritage". "Historical and cultural protection area" has developed into the concept of "historical and cultural blocks" in the revision of the Cultural Relics Protection Law in 2002, the Planning Regulations for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities in 2005, and the Regulations on the Protection of Historical Cities, Towns and Villages in 2008. Over the years, both policies and regulations have been gradually improved, and new problems have constantly emerged.

## 2. Overview of the study area

### 2.1. Summary of China's historic districts

China's historical and cultural blocks refer to the blocks with high historical and cultural value and traditional cultural characteristics, which is an important space for integrating history, culture and urban development. Historical and cultural blocks usually have a long history, preserving a large number of traditional buildings and cultural heritages, such as alleys, courtyards, century-old shops, etc. These elements show the history, cultural

traditions and social environment of the past. At the same time, in these blocks, people can also feel the influence and value of traditional culture, including customs, folklore, art, architecture, literature and other fields. Our historical and cultural blocks is very wide, you can see around have their own historical and cultural blocks, including gu village street (Shanghai), Qingming Shanghe street (Kaifeng), the lion mountain street (Zhenjiang), at pingkang road five-arched (Suzhou), south luofu Xiang (Beijing), gold temple street (Lanzhou city) and so on. These blocks are the historical and cultural witness of the city as well as an important resource which can attract tourists and realize urban development. In the process of protecting and developing historical and cultural blocks, it is necessary to respect the historical and cultural characteristics, and combine the modern urban planning and tourism needs to realize the harmonious coexistence of historical and cultural urban blocks and modern urban development.[4]

### 2.2. Summary of Italian historical and cultural blocks

Italy is located in southern Europe, and along the Mediterranean Sea. The country has many different geographical areas, including hills, mountains, plains, and coastline, etc. These geographical features provide a unique background and environment for the historical and cultural development of Italy. Secondly, Italy has a rich and colorful cultural and historical background, which makes the country's local conditions unique. At the same time, the Italian historical and cultural heritage block has a rich number of historic buildings, these types of buildings, including ancient Roman public buildings,

medieval churches, Renaissance palaces and villas, etc. These buildings not only have a very high aesthetic value, but also provide a precious historical testimony for future generations. In addition, the urban planning of Italian historical and cultural heritage blocks is unique, reflecting the urban planning concept of ancient Rome, such as chessboard street layout, square space, etc. These urban plans not only makes the blocks look more orderly and aesthetic, but also reflect the social structure and cultural characteristics of different historical periods.

Take Italy as an example, which has rich resources of cultural relics and historic sites. In order to effectively protect these cultural heritages, the Italian government has issued the Cultural Relics Protection Law. The law stipulates the scope of cultural relics protection, the subject of responsibility, source of maintenance funds and other aspects. In terms of protection measures, Italy has adopted a variety of means, such as the classified management of cultural relics and the establishment of cultural relics protection funds. However, in practice, there are also some problems with the law, such as the unclear protection provisions of private buildings and the unequal distribution of repair funds. To solve these problems, the Italian government is gradually improving the relevant laws and regulations.

### **3. Existing problems in the protection of historical and cultural blocks in China**

#### **3.1. Questions**

Although some progress has been made in the protection and development of historical and cultural blocks in China, there are still some shortcomings and difficulties in practice.

The protection of historical and cultural blocks requires a large amount of capital investment, including building repair, facility maintenance, environmental protection, etc. However, many blocks cannot be effectively protected due to government underinvestment and the participation rate of social funds is low. The lack of funding has left many historic buildings without timely repairs and maintenance, and the overall environmental quality of the block is declining. Protection regulations are not perfect. At present, the laws and regulations on the protection of historical and cultural blocks are not perfect, and lack specific implementation rules and policy support. As a result, in the process of protection, law enforcement is not enough, and many behaviors that destroy historical features are not effectively restricted.

Urban planning is not reasonable. In some urban planning, the historical and cultural heritage is often sacrificed in

the pursuit of the constructive effect of modernization. There was a conflict between the new projects and the preservation of the historic buildings, resulting in the destruction or demolition of the historic district. In addition, unreasonable urban planning may also lead to the excessive exploitation of land resources and the destruction of the ecological environment.[5]

Building repairs are not timely. Due to the lack of protection funds and weak protection consciousness, many historical buildings can not be timely repaired and maintained. Over time, these buildings gradually become dilapidated and may even become dangerous houses. Poor repair will not only affect the safety of historical buildings, but also lead to the loss of their historical value. [6]

Cultural characteristics disappear. With the advancement of globalization and the continuous development of modernization, the original cultural characteristics of many historical and cultural blocks are gradually disappearing. Although some blocks have carried out the so-called “transformation” or “renewal”, these transformations often only pursue economic benefits and ignore the cultural heritage and local characteristics. The new buildings and facilities are often not coordinated with the original historical style, resulting in the destruction of the overall cultural atmosphere of the block and losing the original uniqueness and charm. This situation will not only affect the overall image of the city, but also affect the quality of life of the residents and the sustainable development of the city.

#### **3.2., and the solution method**

Strong measures should be taken to solve these problems. For example, strengthen funding. The government should increase the capital investment in the protection of the historical and cultural blocks, and provide a financial guarantee for the protection of the blocks by setting up special funds and guiding the social capital. We will strengthen oversight. We will establish and improve the supervision mechanism for historical and cultural blocks, strengthen law enforcement, and severely crack down on acts that damage the historical features of the blocks. Change the thinking mode, pay attention to long-term development, combine the protection of historical and cultural blocks with urban development, and achieve sustainable development. On the premise of protecting the historical and cultural blocks, we should moderately promote the commercialization to attract tourists and enhance the visibility and vitality of the blocks. At the same time, excessive commercialization should be avoided, and the historical style and cultural heritage of the block should be well protected.[5]

The country should implement the planning and protection plan of historical and cultural blocks should be implemented, and the support of civil organizations and social forces should be strengthened to promote the sustainable development of historical and cultural blocks. We should also strengthen public education and cultural inheritance, improve people's cultural consciousness and historical consciousness, and promote the better embodiment of the cultural value and status of the historical and cultural blocks. Changing the thinking mode and moderately promoting commercialization. Only in this way can we better protect the historical and cultural blocks and contribute to the sustainable development of the city.

## **4. An Overview of the Italian and Chinese historical and cultural heritage**

### **4.1. Mature experience in Italy**

#### **4.1.1. Legal level**

Cultural relics and historic sites are an important part of human historical and cultural heritage, and an important carrier for inheriting and carrying forward national culture. In order to protect these precious cultural heritages, China and Italy have introduced the corresponding legal system for the protection. This paragraph will explore the Italian legal system

After consulting legal materials, Italy's laws and practices in the protection of cultural heritage and famous historical and cultural cities can be used for reference in China: Italy's Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics has made detailed provisions on the definition, classification, protection measures, and punishment for illegal acts of cultural heritage. A comprehensive and detailed legal system has been formulated. Italy's legal system for cultural heritage protection includes the Protection of Cultural Relics Law, Urban Planning Law and Architecture Law, which makes detailed provisions on the protection of historical and cultural blocks and cultural relics. This comprehensive and rigorous legal system provides China with an example to follow. On the basis of the existing legal framework, China can further improve the definition and classification of cultural heritage, and clarify the protection measures and penalties for illegal acts. the Italian government has set up the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, which takes full responsibility for the cultural heritage protecting and managing. In addition, the local governments have also set up the corresponding cultural heritage management departments, forming a cultural heritage protection and management system from

the central government to the local governments. And the Italian government attaches great importance to the repair and maintenance of cultural heritage. The Italian government has set strict standards for the repair and maintenance of cultural heritage to ensure the preservation and inheritance of cultural heritage. At the same time, the government also encourages social forces to participate in the protection and repair of cultural heritage, forming a pattern of cultural heritage protection with the joint participation of the government and society.[3]

In terms of the protection of famous historical and cultural cities, Italy requires local governments to consider the protection and utilization of historical and cultural heritage when making urban planning. This combination of urban planning and cultural heritage protection is conducive to the sustainable development of the city. China can learn from this experience and pay more attention to the protection of historical and cultural heritage in urban planning and reconstruction, so as to promote the inheritance and development of historical and cultural cities.

#### **4.1.2. Technical aspects and theoretical methods**

Italy has accumulated a lot of experience in the technical means and theoretical concepts of protecting its historical and cultural heritage, and these contributions have had a far-reaching influence around the world. For example, the theoretical framework of protection should be constructed first. The protection of historical and cultural heritage should first be based on its construction background and historical evolution, and Italy has a mature theoretical framework in this respect. The book Italian Monuments published in 1981 puts forward three protection principles of "guarantee and remediation", namely, the integrity of historic sites, the unique charm of historic sites and the restoration of destroyed historic sites through remedial means. This conservation theory is widely used in the conservation and renovation projects in Italy.

Secondly, attention should be paid to the detailed protection measures. Italy pays more attention to the implementation of specific measures in the protection of historical and cultural heritage. For example, in the protection of ancient buildings, not simply repair and maintenance, but according to different ancient buildings, make specific protection plan, take piecemeal repair, and according to different styles and techniques, the new and old buildings to achieve the proper protection complementary; then emphasize the history of restoration. In the protection of historical and cultural heritage, Italy pays attention to the history of restoration. In the restoration project, it is not simply to restore and "modernize" the heritage, but to respect the original

historical background, retain and show the historical charm to reflect the continuity of cultural inheritance; finally, it is important to strengthen the application of science and technology. Italy also attaches great importance to the application of science and technology in the protection of historical and cultural heritage. For example, the use of high-end technology equipment for plastic, chemical cleaning and other processes, to ensure that the ancient buildings will not suffer more damage. Moreover, using 3D scanning and digital modeling techniques, historical images and buildings can be accurately restored to help in further research and protection.[2]

To sum up, Italy has a lot of mature experience in the technical means and theoretical concepts of protecting the historical and cultural heritage. The adoption of these measures can not only ensure the inheritance and preservation of historic sites and culture, but also play an important role in urban development and other aspects.

#### **4.1.3. Sense of public identity and government level**

In the restoration and protection of cultural relics and the blocks with historical and cultural characteristics, Italy attaches great importance to calling for the participation of the masses and to win the identity of cultural relics and historic sites. The government has made the following efforts in this regard:

**Strengthening publicity and education:** The Italian government publicizes the importance of cultural protection to the public through various channels and media, and raises public awareness and awareness. The government has also strengthened school education, incorporated the protection of cultural relics into the school curriculum, and cultivated children's awareness of the understanding and protection of the value of cultural relics from an early age.

**Public participation in restoration projects:** The government encourages public participation in restoration projects, including funding and volunteer activities. Some restoration projects will invite the public to participate, such as volunteers cleaning up ancient buildings and donating funds from citizens. These activities not only increase public participation, but also enhance their sense of identity with cultural relics.[3]

**Enhancing ties with the community:** The Italian government focuses on links with the community, working with local residents to develop conservation and restoration plans. The government also supports local residents to participate in restoration projects and provides them with training and guidance to help them better protect and inherit their local cultural heritage.

**Cultural activities:** The Italian government often holds various cultural activities, such as exhibitions,

lectures, concerts, etc., to attract public interest in and understanding of cultural relics and historic sites. These activities not only enrich the cultural life of the public, but also improve their sense of identity and belonging to cultural relics and historic sites.[2]

In short, the Italian government pays attention to the participation of the masses and wins the sense of identity of the people in the restoration and protection of cultural relics and historical and cultural blocks.

## **5. Conclusion**

Italy has provided important norms and standards for the protection of global cultural heritage, and Italy has accumulated rich experience and technology in cultural heritage protection. In recent years,[6] in the protection of historical and cultural heritage, the Chinese government has taken a series of measures to strengthen the protection and management of cultural heritage, including the formulation of laws and regulations, the establishment of protection institutions and carrying out archaeological research.

China's laws and policies are also constantly being improved and improved. The Chinese government has stepped up its crackdown on illegal acts, strengthened supervision of the cultural relics market, and gradually improved relevant laws and regulations. In addition, the Chinese government also actively promotes the digital protection of the cultural heritage, and uses modern scientific and technological means to protect the cultural heritage.

Overall, China has made a lot of progress in protecting its historical and cultural heritage. However, we also need to recognize the existing problems and challenges, such as lack of funds, backward technology and talent shortage. Therefore, we need to continue to work hard, draw on advanced international experience, and constantly improve our protection system, so that the Chinese civilization can be passed on.

Express one's thanks

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