

## Research on the Protection of Architectural Woodcarvings in China from Building Homogeneity: A Synoptic Review

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### Abstract

Protecting Chinese architectural woodcarvings is crucial for safeguarding the cultural heritage, understanding the architectural evolution, artistic excellence, symbolism, and cultural identity. Architecture tends to be more and more homogeneous, producing effects on traditional architecture, erosion of cultural identity, blurred distinctions, decline in quality, and urban planning challenges. This article investigates the protection of Chinese architectural woodcarvings and the facts of architectural homogeneity by looking at documents and summarising the influence of architectural homogeneity on architectural woodcarvings and their protection. It provides theoretical support for the protection of architectural woodcarvings.

**Keywords:** Architecture, Woodcarving, Preservation, Architectural Homogeneity

### Introduction

Preserving Chinese architectural woodcarvings reflects the evolution of architectural styles and techniques, providing valuable insights into different historical periods' aesthetics, beliefs, and social context. These carvings are masterpieces of artistic excellence, showcasing the creativity and skills of the craftsmen who created them. Protecting these artworks supports and promotes traditional arts and crafts, encouraging the continuation of this unique art form (Meng, 2009). Therefore, the protection of Chinese architectural woodcarvings is not only related to the inheritance of historical and cultural heritage but also involves the preservation of traditional crafts and skills, the promotion of cultural exchanges and awareness, and the development of cultural tourism industries (Pang, 2020; Pang, 2021). These aspects are significant to maintaining China's cultural self-confidence, promoting cultural inheritance and innovation, and promoting sustainable development (Wan, 2022).

Architectural similarity can be found in many urban environments due to practical considerations, construction methods, and certain architectural styles prevalent in a region with urban expansion (Mustafa et al., 2017; Yin et al., 2022). However, excessive homogeneity and a lack of diversity can negatively affect the overall urban fabric and the well-being of its inhabitants. Architectural homogenisation can significantly impact traditional architecture by erasing cultural identity, blurring architectural distinctions, decreasing architectural quality, and posing challenges in urban planning. The prevalence of architectural homogenisation can hinder the development of unique and sustainable architectural solutions.

This article investigates the protection of Chinese architectural woodcarvings and the facts of architectural homogeneity by looking at documents and summarising the influence of architectural homogeneity on architectural woodcarvings and their protection. It provides theoretical support for the protection of architectural woodcarvings.

## **Literature Review**

### **Chinese Architectural Woodcarving**

Chinese architectural woodcarving has strong regional characteristics. The survival and development of architectural woodcarving are different in the southern and northern areas, as well as in the eastern coastal regions and the western inland areas. The study of Chinese architectural woodcarving is carried out according to the regions, mainly from the existing status and threats on architectural woodcarving.

First, the basic situation of Chinese architectural woodcarving is introduced. Woodcarving is an essential component of Chinese traditional wooden architecture, particularly in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Brackets, intricately carved wooden elements, can be found in various buildings, including ancestral halls, temples, and offices. The bracket culture in Chinese architecture represents the essence of traditional architectural culture, with its fleshy or light shapes and fantastic carving skills (Azmin et al., 2021). Woodcarving is found in Chinese traditional wooden architecture, representing the essence of traditional architectural culture (Chen, 2022).

The load-bearing and enclosure structures of Chinese traditional wooden frames are important characteristics (Du Shuang, 1999). The column network formed by the wooden frame is the same as the modern frame structure. The beam and column are its load-bearing structure. The wall only plays the role of the enclosure. The doors, windows, partitions, and internal and external walls can be flexibly arranged. Therefore, woodcarving's architectural Decoration mainly concentrates on doors, windows, partitions, and walls (Wu, 2008).

The partition fan is an important way to divide the space level and use function of the house, and also an essential way of building Decoration. The partition is a double function of doors and windows. The upper hollow part plays the role of ventilation and lighting, while the lower plank can block the view and maintain the indoor temperature, as shown in figure 1 and figure 2 below



Figure 1 Partition fan (I) and Partition fan (II) (Du Shuang, 1999)

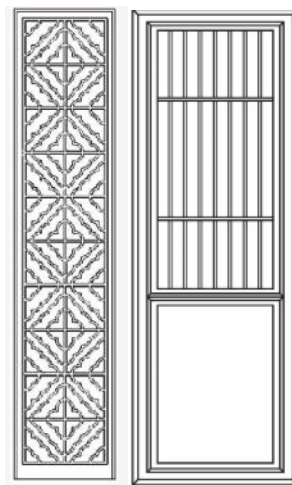


Figure 2: Two Partitions (Du Shuang, 1999)

The sill window is similar to a partition, with a window sash installed on the middle sill. The lower sill is the threshold, while the middle sill is raised and typically has brick or wood walls. The sill sash has a tapering plate at the lower part, and the window is located in the south and north, as shown in figure 3 and figure 4 below:



Figure 3 : Prismatic Window  
(Source: Du Shuang, 1999)



Figure 4: Hanging Flower Door  
(Source: Du Shuang, 1999)

China's doors are divided into two systems: single buildings with city gates and house-type gates, and integral parts like plate and lattice doors, as shown in figure 5 and figure 6 below:



Figure 5: A Gate In Beijing  
(Source: Du Shuang, 1999)

Figure 6: Moon Beam Decoration  
(Source: Baidu Image)

Bucket arch is a common Chinese wooden structure, serving as a transition between the column and roof, transferring load-bearing force and enhancing seismic resistance. The architrave, carved into various shapes, can be carved into various forms, while the joist supports the beam frame, enhancing stability and aesthetic value, as shown in figure 7 and figure 8 below:

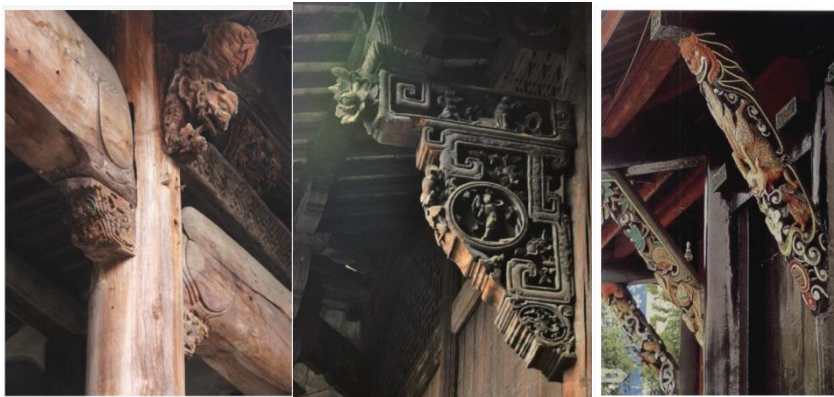


Figure 7: Moon Beam Decoration, Sparrow Decoration And Tomwood Decoration  
(Source: Baidu Image)



Figure 8: Arch Structure  
(Source: Baidu Image)

Hanging flowers and ceiling woodcarving decoration are popular in various settings, blending natural beauty with timeless elegance. Hanging flowers, located under the cornice, bear the weight of the cornice and seal the mortise hole. These decorations are commonly seen in event venues, restaurants, hotels, and traditional homes. Woodcarving technology is improving, with processes like openwork, paste carving, and inlay carving forming various textures and expressions (Li, 2021).

In second place, current status of Chinese architectural woodcarving is researched. Architectural woodcarving starts from the Decoration and processing of some components of

wooden buildings to meet the needs of architectural aesthetics and plays a major decorative role in the internal and external space environment of the building. At the same time, architectural woodcarving decoration has been integrated into the whole building and become an indispensable part of the building (Xu, 2019).

Chinese woodcarvings, particularly those of the Ming and Qing dynasties, are a cultural carrier that inherits Confucian ethics from the Xia, Shang, Zhou, and Han dynasties. They are an important language system in the inheritance of Chinese traditional culture, emphasising the unity of man and nature and the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. The origin of Chinese architectural woodcarving is not determined, but historical records indicate that buildings in the Warring States Period (453 BC to 220 BC) had the conventional practice of "accurate engraving of the red couplets." The Song Dynasty (1279 A.D. 960) recorded detailed practices and patterns of architectural woodcarving, and during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368 to 1912) reached their peak.

The art of woodcarving has a long history, dating back 7000 years ago. The Hemudu culture of the Neolithic Age is one of the earliest woodcarvings works in China. The maturity of woodcarving art was in the Qin and Han dynasties, with the development of painting art and the Tang Dynasty's dazzling wooden Buddha statues. The Song Dynasties were more skilled in material selection, allowing for the preservation of works nearly a thousand years old.

Yuan Dynasty's maritime transport increased hard wood production, diversifying woodcarving art. State support revived the art, enabling artists to create new works. China's reform and opening up led to cultural self-confidence and global growth.

Chinese architectural woodcarvings are divided into large woodcarving and small woodcarving. Large woodcarving focuses on decorative elements like beams, architraves, arches, doors, windows, and other components, while small woodcarving focuses on joinery decoration, including furniture. Ming and Qing woodcarving can be divided into seven schools, with beams, architraves, and cornices being key decorations in buildings. Qing Dynasty architecture mainly carved opera content and traditional stories, with carved decorations at the bottom and back of the beam. Southern folk architecture features an exposed curved moon beam, with intricate patterns or carvings on the side (Qian et al., 2022). Queti, a supporting member connecting the beam, architrave, and upper part of the column, has evolved over time into seven forms, each with different woodcarving contents and methods. In folk architecture, since the Ming and Qing dynasties, equestrian Queti, Tongque ti, Xiaoque ti, and Huaya zi (hanging) have been used for Decoration. These structures often feature small birds, clouds, flowers, and figures, with finches connecting to form saddles and carve scenes of auspicious birds, animals, treasures, people, and symbols. The partition doors and sill windows in folk buildings in the Ming and Qing dynasties mainly serve light transmission, ventilation, and Decoration. The partition door is composed of outer frame, partition centre, mullion strip, skirt plate, and tapering plate, and can be divided into upper and lower sections. Woodcarvings can display auspicious patterns, traditional operas, and character stories, with the beams, architraves, and cornices being key decorative parts. In contrast to the Ming Dynasty architectural sculpture, Qing Dynasty architecture mainly carved opera content and traditional stories. The beam's top allows people to view the bottom and back, with simple patterns and grass and flower decorations. In southern folk architecture, the exposed curved moon beam supports the main building's ceiling, often featuring exquisite patterns or directly carving the moon beam into a unique shape.

Yao Jue's research on Huizhou folk house woodcarving explores its artistic image system, cultural implications, habit consciousness, craftsman influence, and house owner concept.

Drawing from art sociology and anthropology, the paper examines the development, evolution, and cultural and aesthetic consciousness of this art form, offering insights for studying architectural woodcarving in various regions (Yao, 2020).

In 2019, Attiguli Abulizi studied woodcarving decoration art in traditional buildings in Xinjiang. She used field survey, mapping, and interviews with carpenters to analyse patterns, applied parts, and technology. She proposed incorporating architectural woodcarving skills into education, offering craft courses, and adopting double-teacher teaching. She also suggested strengthening professional theoretical research and popularising protection technology using CAD and software (Abulizi, 2019).

Li Jingjing studied the construction experience and skills of white tower craftsmen in traditional architectural carpentry at the Baita Temple in Hezhou. This research deepened regional architecture research and provided clues for studying local history, culture, and ethnic communication. The analysis of skills generation, spread, and evolution provided architectural evidence. Targeted protection strategies were proposed to promote inheritance and protection of technology. Comparative study of construction techniques of various craftsman departments helped clarify relationships and build a system of traditional Chinese architectural techniques (Li, 2019). Li Xiaojian studied architectural woodcarving in Chinese traditional residential buildings, focusing on beams, architraves, purlins, beads, railings, pendants, arches, sparrows, braces, doors, and windows. He analysed the artistic characteristics, theme, and auspicious meanings of these carvings, revealing the cultural scene influenced by the environment, culture, and customs of the Chinese nation (Li, 2013). Tao Weiwen's research on Huizhou traditional folk houses' woodcarving doors and windows explores cultural background, types, characteristics, creative techniques, and artistic characteristics. This research enhances architectural woodcarving research and improves its depth. It also discusses the application and development direction of woodcarving doors and windows in modern design, aiming to serve as a reference for Chinese academic and design circles (Tao, 2018). Architectural woodcarving development is influenced by factors like geographical location, human factors, social background, economic environment, feudal beliefs, and western culture. Guangzhou rose woodcarving uses high-grade hardwood, while Chaozhou uses common woods (Xue, 2012). Architectural woodcarving varies over time, with Ming and Qing dynasties exhibiting distinct styles and themes, with Ming carving being simple and rough and Qing carving complex and exquisite (Ni, 2012). Cheng Juan studied traditional folk house carved patterns in Langzhong, focusing on semiotics. The study highlights Chinese culture, ethical and moral orientation, comfort, and prayers for family, career, and life (Cheng, 2009). Du Wenchao studied the traditional woodcarving culture and art and its application in interior design, analysed the characteristics of woodcarving in Langzhong architecture in different dynasties, and analysed the historical and cultural reasons behind these characteristics, which provided an important theoretical basis for the application of woodcarving (Du, 2008). Yi-ning Chen studied the craftsmanship, composition, and cultural implications of woodcarvings in the Ancestral Temple of Chen Family, focusing on historical and cultural significance. Examples include the Bronze Sparrow Terrace feast and Jiantu Conference (Yi, 2015).

In third place, the protection of architectural wood carvings in Chengdu, China is affected by the homogenization of buildings. The traditional Chinese woodcarving craft is fading due to efficient production and diverse wood types, causing a decline in its market and a shortage of inheritors. While traditional art institutions provide courses, many lack value (Wang, 2010), leading to diminished interest and heirs. Neglect in technology advancement hampers

innovation and modern art integration. Sichuan's ancient architecture, influenced by Taoist principles, showcases elegant woodcarving. Local opera's prosperity since the Ming and Qing dynasties has driven woodcarving's use in various settings (Li,2013).

Recent urbanization homogenizes cities, erasing regional culture and memory (Wang ,2015). Xu Jiang criticizes urban focus on greenery, air, and function, neglecting nostalgia and memory (Sun, 2010).

This study explores Chengdu's urban architecture changes in the past 80 years, focusing on the 13th Five-Year Plan. Sichuan's urbanization has surged since 2016, optimizing spatial layout. By 2025, the province aims to be a central city with over 60% permanent population. Chengdu's population will hit 22 million by 2021, and high-rises now replace Bashu-style structures, marking urban progress.



*Figure 9: Comparison Of Tiantian Plaza In Chengdu In The 1960s And Early 21st Century*

Lastly,China has no specific protection policy for architectural woodcarvings, but its intangible cultural heritage policies are applicable to their protection. The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage states that parties should take necessary measures to ensure the protection of intangible cultural heritage in their territory. In 2005, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Strengthening the Protection of my country's Intangible Cultural Heritage" stating that the goal of intangible cultural heritage protection is to establish a relatively complete protection system with Chinese characteristics. The country has explored and established management mechanisms, laws, and policies that are in line with China's national conditions and characteristics of intangible cultural heritage. The country has promulgated the "Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China," formulated the "Chinese Traditional Crafts Revitalisation Plan," launched the "China Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors Research and Training Program," and actively carried out the declaration of UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list. Targeted protection methods, such as holistic, rescue, and productive protection, have been proposed, and national-level cultural and ecological protection areas and special funds for intangible cultural heritage protection have been established. Public awareness of intangible cultural heritage protection has been improved through exhibitions, publicity activities, and the establishment of a "Cultural Heritage Day."

The state encourages the designation of protection standards for intangible cultural heritage, such as the Chinese architectural woodcarving. Some provinces in China have issued relevant standards to promote the development of intangible cultural heritage. The "Sichuan Province "14th Five-Year Plan" Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Plan" proposed protection plans for intangible heritage inheritance experience facilities and the construction of a national Qiang cultural and ecological protection zone (Wang et al.,2012). The plan supports cities in building intangible cultural heritage museums and encourages social forces to establish heritage experience facilities. It also improves inheritance and experience functions, including demonstration bases, inheritance bases, experience bases, and study centres. These facilities

enrich the material carriers of intangible cultural heritage display, exhibition, experience, research, and other inheritance activities.

China has three main categories of standards for intangible cultural heritage: identification, protection, and related sites. The first category focuses on identifying intangible cultural heritage projects and their inheritors, such as the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List. The second category includes specific projects, such as the Zuoquan Folk Songs, the Sihui Traditional Craft Production Specifications, the Heilongjiang Manchu Cheongsam Production Techniques, and the Lake Pen. The third category is the normative system for protecting intangible cultural heritage, including the "Trinity" Inheritance Base and the Wenzhou's Code for the Construction and Service of Intangible Cultural Heritage Experience Base. The following three tables are the details regarding the standards of Chinese skills, standards for intangible cultural heritage sites or derivative industries in China and Chinese woodcarving intangible heritage project.

Table 1

*Relevant standards of Chinese skills*

<b>Relevant standards of Chinese skills</b>		
<b>Standard number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Release time</b>
<u>DB65/T 4135-2018</u>	Production process of mulberry paper of national intangible cultural heritage	2018-09-01
<u>DB65/T 4134-2018</u>	Production facilities, environment and observation requirements of national intangible cultural heritage	2018-09-01
<u>DB1407/T 017-2020</u>	Intangible cultural heritage protection Zuoquan Xiaohua Opera	2020-08-14
<u>DB1407/T 016-2020</u>	Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Zuoquan Folk Songs Blossom	2020-08-14
<u>DB3211/T 1011-2019</u>	Code of practice for ordering tea for intangible cultural heritage protection	2019-12-20
<u>DB4101/T 24-2021</u>	Non-material cultural heritage sesame sugar production technology (Zheng's)	2021-12-30
<u>DB34/T 4156-2022</u>	Intangible cultural heritage protection Mingde folding fan production technology	2022-03-29
<u>DB4101/T 35-2022</u>	Non-material cultural heritage Zhengzhou ancient pottery firing technology	2022-09-23
<u>DB23/T 2673-2020</u>	National intangible cultural heritage Manchu embroidery (Bohai Mohe embroidery)	2020-09-11
<u>DB34/T 1756-2012</u>	Intangible cultural heritage protection Dinggu generous production technology	2012-12-24
<u>DB1311/T 019-2022</u>	Technological procedures for making traditional mohair of intangible cultural heritage	2022-08-25
<u>DB4101/T 34-2022</u>	Intangible cultural heritage Yellow River Chengni inkstone production technology	2022-09-23
<u>DB3416/T005-2021</u>	National intangible cultural heritage Huatuo Five-animal Opera standard system	2021-12-31
<u>T/HHYB 001-2021</u>	Specification for manufacturing technology of cold lake moon cake of intangible cultural heritage.	2021-11-19



<u>DB3211/T 1018-2021</u>	Specification for the traditional craft of Xihu, an intangible cultural heritage.	2020-11-17
<u>DB3211/T 1018-2020</u>	Specification for the traditional craft of Xihu, an intangible cultural heritage	2020-11-17

Table 2

*Relevant standards of Chinese skills*

Relevant standards for intangible cultural heritage sites or derivative industries in China		
Standard Number	Title	Release Date
DB4503/T 0019-2021	Norms for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage	2021-12-15
DB3303/T044-2022	Construction and service specification of intangible cultural heritage experience base	2022-03-07
DB3303/T043-2022	Requirements and evaluation of characteristic homestay of intangible cultural	2022-03-07
T/ZAS 3019-2022	Guidelines for the development of intangible cultural heritage tourism resources	2022-05-20
DB3205/T 1055-2022	Code for evaluation of construction of hotels with Jiangnan cultural characteristics	2022-11-22
DB3301/T0391-2009	Specification for evaluation of intangible cultural heritage characteristic hotels and homestays	2022-12-05
DB42/T 1942-2022	Protection and utilization of intangible cultural heritage in traditional villages	2022-12-05

Table 3

*Relevant standards of Chinese skills*

Chinese woodcarving intangible heritage project			
Serial	Name of intangible cultural heritage	Year of declaration	Subordinate region
1	Chaozhou woodcarving	2006	Chaozhou City, Guangdong
2	Chaozhou woodcarving	2008	Jieyang City, Guangdong
3	Chaozhou woodcarving	2008	Shantou City, Guangdong Province
4	Ningbo Zhujin lacquer woodcarving	2006	Ningbo City Zhejiang Province
5	Yueqing boxwoodcarving	2006	Yueqing City, Zhejiang
6	Boxwoodcarving	2008	Xuhui District, Shanghai
7	Dongyang woodcarving	2006	Dongyang City, Zhejiang
8	Woodcarving (Qufu Kai Woodcarving)	2008	Qufu City, Shandong Province
9	Woodcarving (Statue of Macau)	2008	Macao Special Administrative
11	Woodcarving (rosewoodcarving)	2011	Chinese Rosewood Museum
12	Woodcarving (rosewoodcarving)	2011	Shanghai Municipality
13	Woodcarving (Putian Woodcarving)	2011	Putian City, Fujian Province
14	Woodcarving (Rose Art)	2011	Chengmai County, Hainan
15	Woodcarving (Jianchuan	2011	Jianchuan County, Yunnan
16	Woodcarving (Jianchuan	2014	Jianchuan County, Yunnan
17	Woodcarving (Traditional statues of	2014	Qingyuan District, Ji 'an City,
18	Woodcarving (Tongshan	2014	Tongshan County, Hubei
19	Woodcarving (Quanzhou	2021	Quanzhou City, Fujian
20	Woodcarving (Caoxian Woodcarving)	2021	Cao County, Heze City,
21	Woodcarving (Fengjie Woodcarving)	2021	Fengjie County, Chongqing
22	Woodcarving (Tibetan sacking	2021	Shannan City, Tibet
23	Furniture making skills (Beijing Woodcarving Ware)	2021	Dongcheng District of Beijing

To sum up, there are more than 20 standards related to the intangible cultural heritage of Chinese arts, which are second to none in terms of the number of standards in the Chinese cultural circle. Due to the vast territory of China, woodcarving has different characteristics under the influence of environment and culture. There are 23 projects of woodcarving as intangible cultural heritage in all parts of the country. Therefore, as a kind of intangible cultural heritage of art, architectural woodcarving has been protected by the state in recent years, but China has not specifically approved protective measures for architectural woodcarving. In the process of urbanisation, Chinese architectural woodcarving continues to lose its place of existence, thus the way to develop and inherit Chinese architectural woodcarving is the subject of this study.

### **Building Homogenisation**

Some policies lead to the phenomenon of architectural homogenisation. China has entered a stage of high-quality development, with the 18th National Congress of the

Communist Party of China stating that standardisation is crucial for modernising the national governance system. Openness, high-quality life, and other aspects play a fundamental role in promoting high-quality development with high standards. China will actively implement a standardisation strategy, promoting innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development. It is willing to work with other countries to deepen standard cooperation, strengthen exchanges, and mutual learning. Construction planning norms have improved China's urban construction and development, while also allowing for homogenisation of buildings. The "DB51/T 2917-2022 County Smart Tourism City Construction Guidelines" issued by the Sichuan Province in 2022 guide planners and builders on how to plan and build car tourism cities. Zhejiang aims to mature and assimilate tourism in all counties in the Sichuan Province.

Some norms lead to the homogenisation of buildings, such as the establishment of some standardisation. Wang Meiqi's research on Chinese contemporary homogenised public buildings focuses on the reasons for this trend, including China's imitation of the West after reform and opening up. He also discusses historical reasons for architecture, cultural convergence in human development, and building construction materials. However, these studies lack targeted quantitative research theory. Gao Feng's research on the human-machine interface of consumer digital products highlights the standardisation brought about by homogenisation as a means of extending professional advantages.

The standardisation process involves industry and enterprise experience accumulation. The Industrial Building Evaluation Standard was released in January 2016, and the State Council's opinions on reducing capacity in the iron and steel industry and poverty alleviation and development in February 2016 emphasized positive development. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council's recommendations on urban planning and construction promoted steel structure building construction. In 2022, new-type urbanization and urban-rural integration development aim to improve residents' quality of life and accelerate the homogenisation of residential buildings in towns and towns.

Investigation and analyses of the social factors lead to the homogeneity of architecture. Chinese scholar Cui Yiqun took a model architect and his representative works as a sample, from multiple perspectives such as design techniques and cultural imagery, as well as the technical application of architectural functional materials. Quantitative data analysis and sorting of these creative achievements are carried out, and the statistical four-quadrant analysis method is introduced. Based on the works, the architects are positioned in the quadrant, and the gathering of architects in the quadrant reveals the homogenisation phenomenon behind the "Hundred Flowers Blooming" of Chinese contemporary architectural creation (Dong et al., 2018).

### **The impact of building homogenisation practice towards architecture woodcarving preservation in the Sichuan province**

The Housing and Ministry of Urban and Rural Development has developed a standardised engineering construction standard system to standardise the real estate market, supervise construction, and ensure safety in construction quality projects. The system covers building construction, planning requirements, and traditional wooden buildings, including structural systems, component design, connection design, earthquake and wind resistance, waterproofing, fire prevention, construction acceptance, maintenance, and dismantling. (Camagni, 2002; Cheng, 2014).

Standards are crucial governance tools that address shortcomings in historical models and forms. In the 21st century, countries are implementing standardisation strategies to optimize industrial structures and enhance development. Standards supplement traditional methods and promote the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage. While law has inherent disadvantages, standards can effectively address these shortcomings. They provide detailed and standardized requirements for governance, such as decomposing government responsibilities, post-operation requirements, and processing time limit requirements.

On the other hand, standards have incomparable advantages over official documents. Organ official documents are documents with specific effectiveness and normative style for party and government organs to implement leadership, perform functions and handle official affairs, notification and exchange of information, etc. "Regulations on the Processing of Official Documents of Party and Government Organs" (Zhong, 2012). However, while official documents play a role, there are also some obvious deficiencies and shortcomings that require standards to play a greater role in governance (Mouratidis, 2018; Mouratidis, 2019). Standard mechanisms in China involve social organizations and the public in formulating and revising standards, promoting a network-based, diversified governance model. These standards are rigorous and scientific, with official documents prepared and released within party and government organs. The standard-setting process is divided into nine stages, with standard quantity controllable due to numerous issuing agencies and diverse document types. The integrity of the standard is strong, addressing conflicts and promoting a diverse and inclusive governance model. Mandatory standards have technical regulations, while industry, local, and group standards are also valid within the community implementing the standard (Li, 2021).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework (see Figure 10) highlights the needs of the value of architectural woodcarvings. Besides under the background of the homogenization of architectural wood carvings, the value of architectural wood carvings can be brought into play in architectural design, and then play the role of protecting architectural wood carvings, and at the same time, the cultural, social and economic values of architectural wood carvings can be brought into play.

Research on architectural woodcarving can be carried out from five dimensions: history and development, technology and craftsmanship, style and characteristics, culture and symbolism, social influence and cognition. In-depth study of the historical evolution of architectural woodcarving, examine its development trajectory from the perspective of different historical periods and regions, and understand the styles and technical characteristics of different periods. Explore the production technology and process of architectural wood carving, analyze the use of different techniques, tools and materials, and the way of technology inheritance. Compare and analyze architectural woodcarving styles in different regions and cultural backgrounds, and explore their unique characteristics in different cultural environments. Study the symbolic meaning of architectural wood carvings in culture, religion, and traditional customs, and explore its cultural expression and meaning in architecture. Examines the impact of architectural wood carving in society, such as its implications for public perception, community cohesion, and cultural heritage preservation. The research on architectural homogenization mainly collects first-hand evidence through field investigations to prove the impact of architectural homogenization imagination on

architectural wood carvings, and on this basis, draws up strategies for the protection of architectural wood carvings, and further puts forward hypotheses.

With the in-depth discussion on the history and development, technology and craft, style and characteristics, culture and symbol, social influence and cognition of architectural wood carving, as well as the research on the influence of architectural homogenization on architectural wood carving, it is proposed to improve the understanding of architectural designers. The protection awareness of architectural woodcarving, a traditional skill, combines the development of architectural woodcarving skills with cultural tourism, and promotes public participation to form a top-down protection system protection strategy.

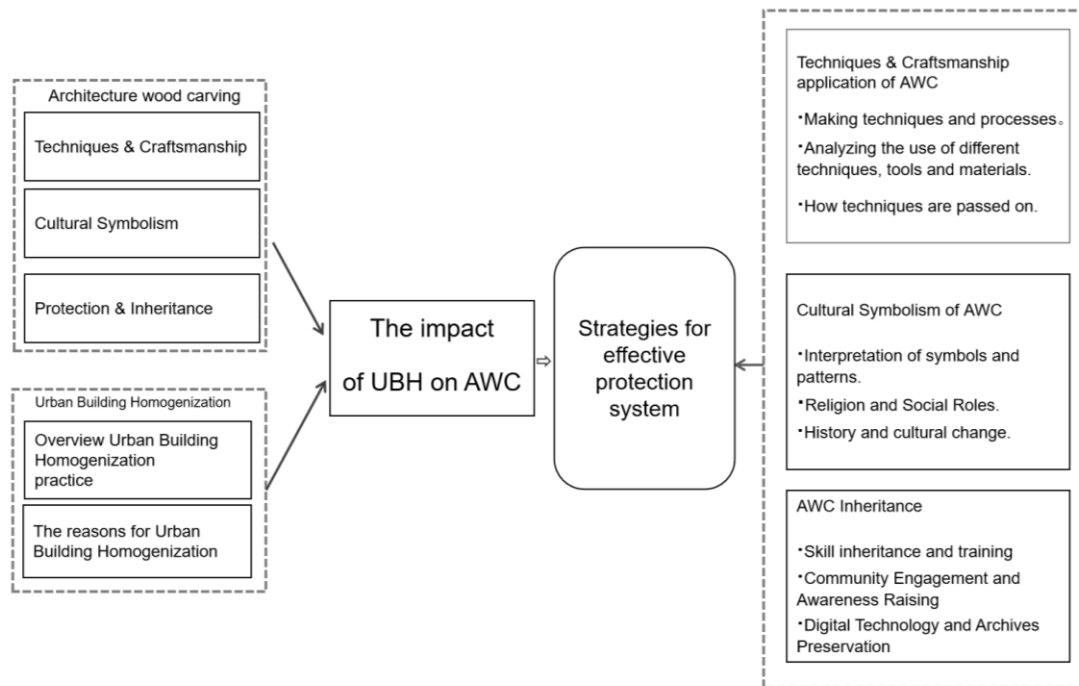


Figure 10: Conceptual Framework

## Conclusion

Three key research gaps were identified. First, prior studies lacked problem-oriented research methods, relying mainly on philosophical justification. Second, a theoretical gap existed as prior research focused on decorative patterns, carving techniques, and cultural implications, neglecting protection and inheritance of architectural woodcarvings. Third, the common phenomenon of "building homogeneity" wasn't explored, revealing a knowledge gap.

Architectural homogenization, notably in Chinese woodcarving, has eroded traditional skills. Loss of traditional Chinese architectural Decoration affects culture, religion, and customs. Traditional woodcarving holds significant historical and appreciation value, yet lacks adequate protection systems. China's state has general intangible heritage management, but not specific policies for architectural woodcarvings.

China's scholars prioritize intangible heritage protection, using top-down and bottom-up approaches, including digital methods. Comprehensive protection of architectural woodcarvings requires studying their use, function, patterns, and cultural significance. A "top-down" protection guideline is proposed to conserve woodcarvings. Government ministries promote their integration into modern architecture, contributing to cultural preservation. Such guidelines enable craftsmen to inherit skills and organizations to benefit from policy guarantees.

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