

# Study on the Renewal Mode and Spatial Effect of Culture-Oriented Pingjiang Road

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## Abstract

China's cultural memory has been severely damaged during the rapid urbanisation process, and culture-oriented urban renewal has become a necessary construction optimisation strategy. As a historical neighbourhood with more cultural memories, Pingjiang Road has gone through three stages of renewal: basic integration, overall renewal and steady development. Through the research and analysis of the neighbourhood, it is possible to grasp the importance of multi-party participation, resource-oriented "return" and "alienation" cultural strategies, goal-oriented "open" and "closed" spatial groupings, and the importance of the "open" and "closed" spatial groupings in the urban renewal. Through the research and analysis of the neighbourhood, the characteristics of multi-party collaborative participation, resource-oriented "return" and "alienation" cultural strategies, and goal-oriented "open" and "closed" spatial organisations were identified. Through spatial and data analyses, the socio-spatial effects of culturally oriented urban regeneration are characterised by land replacement, neighbourhood gentrification, ageing population and commercial homogenisation.

## Keywords

Historical District; Urban Renewal; Culture-Oriented; Renewal Mode.

## 1. Introduction

As the world becomes more connected and the process of urban land intensification accelerates, "culture and memory" play a crucial role in the development of urban characteristics and the promotion of history. Under this influence, culture-orientated urban regeneration has emerged, emphasising culture as the driving force and goal of urban regeneration, pursuing to reshape the cultural connotation of the city in the process of spatial reproduction, and enhancing the cultural attractiveness of the city. [1].

From the 1990s to the beginning of the 21st century, in the face of the phenomenon of repeated destruction of urban fabric in large-scale urban renewal, urban planning scholars put forward the theory of organic renewal and protective development, and culture-oriented urban renewal has been widely carried out in China, and has been implemented for more than 20 years, with initial results in the development of more mature neighbourhoods.

Suzhou is one of the first historical and cultural cities in China, and since the 1980s, the Suzhou government has begun to renovate and renew the traditional historical and cultural neighbourhoods as a whole under the guidance of the city's master plan and historical and cultural city protection plan. Since the renewal of the neighbourhood is relatively mature, it has a strong reference significance. In this paper, the Pingjiang Historic District of Suzhou City is selected as the research object, and through literature reading and collation, the spatial morphology changes of the research object and the history of neighbourhood renewal are sorted out, and the POI data of the research object in the past years are processed by ArcGIS

software to analyse the differences in density and spatial distribution, in order to explore the socio-spatial reconfiguration and the effect of the culture-orientated urban renewal drive [2].

## 2. Location of Pingjiang Road and Characteristics of Urban Renewal Paths

The Pingjiang Historical and Cultural Quarter is located in the north-east of the ancient city of Suzhou, stretching from Baita East Road in the north to Ganzhong Road in the south, adjacent to Linton Road in the west and the moat in the east, and occupies an area of about 116.5 hectares, which is one of the most well-preserved areas in the ancient city of Suzhou so far.

The optimisation and renewal of the Pingjiang Road Historic Quarter has been a long process, and since 1986, the Suzhou Municipal Government has been working on the restoration of the physical space and the continuation and adjustment of its functions. At this time, the positioning of Pingjiang Historic District was "a comprehensive district for living, commercial services, leisure and tourism with unique cultural and historical characteristics of Suzhou" [3]. 2002, the protection and improvement project of Pingjiang Historic and Cultural District, which was a combination of governmental enterprises and public participation, was officially launched to protect and renew the district in phases, from housing reconstruction, environmental improvement, and functional replacement, and so on. In recent years, there has been a great deal of interest in the "ecology" of the neighbourhood. In recent years, people's call for "ecocultural tourism" has been increasing year by year, and the Suzhou Municipal Government revised the "Interim Provisions on Certain Mandatory Contents of Urban Planning and Management in Suzhou" in 2012 to strengthen the protection of the historical style of Pingjiang Neighbourhood, focusing on ecological environment restoration.

**Table 1.** Renewal phases of Hirakawa neighbourhood [4]

Basic Preparation	1986-1992	Preservation of Landscape Repairing the old as it was in the past	Integration of government and residents	Street combing Housing Rehabilitation
	1992-2002			Government-led Initiative Shop Consolidation Replacement of functions
Overall update	Initial consolidation Period 2002-2004	Authenticity Integrity Readability Sustainability	Government-led, developer-supported, Public participation	Home remodelling, River channel dredging, Roads road repair, Infrastructure infrastructure upgrading
	Commercial Transformation Stabilisation 2004-2006			Street space remodelling, Commercial Functions Improvement
	Stabilisation Development Period 2006-2012			
Mature stage of development	2012-			Ecological restoration

### 3. The Process and Impact of Culturally Oriented Urban Renewal

#### 3.1. Characteristics of the Process of Culturally Orientated Urban Regeneration

The development mode of culture-oriented urban regeneration is mainly in the form of cooperation led by the government with the participation of capital. The government develops historical and cultural districts or areas with cultural history for the purpose of tapping cultural capital to enhance local image and create economic benefits. The government develops historical and cultural districts or areas with cultural history for the purpose of tapping cultural capital to enhance the image of the place and create economic benefits.

##### 3.1.1. Progressive Process of Multi-party Participation

The cooperation in the reproduction of urban consumer space in the context of historical renovation is usually manifested in the government's power to regulate and the developer's economic control [5], while in the practice of neighbourhood renewal, the public and scholars often take on some of the functions as well. The participation of different groups in neighbourhood The degree of participation of different groups in neighbourhood renewal is closely related to the stage of project promotion.

In the early stage of regeneration, the local government takes the lead in defining policy boundaries and proposing development directions, and in the case of historically protected neighbourhoods, the government often carries out restoration and remediation work first; in the second stage, capital is introduced, and through the gradual infiltration of the economy, it takes the lead in neighbourhood operation; and in the later stage of regeneration, in addition to the control by the capital, other groups join in the process of neighbourhood development in different contexts, eventually forming a multi-participation operation mechanism. In the later stages of regeneration, in addition to capital control, other groups also join in the process of neighbourhood development in different contexts, eventually forming a multi-party operation mechanism.

The establishment of the Leading Group of Old City Renovation in Suzhou in 1985 led to a wave of development of Suzhou's cultural neighbourhoods, and in 1996, Pingjiang Road was designated as a historical and cultural conservation area, and restoration and improvement works led by the government with the cooperation of various departments were subsequently launched. In order to revitalise the neighbourhood and revive its commercial functions, the government introduced capital to take over the operation of the neighbourhood, completing the remaining construction and solicitation work. Pingjiang Road is now operated by both the capital and the government.

##### 3.1.2. Resource-orientated Cultural Strategies

The cultural strategy of Pingjiang Road culture-oriented urban renewal can be broadly summarised as "return" and "alienation" two types of direction [6], that is, the development of culture as the object of orientation is the object of protection or value medium. Pingjiang Road with culture as the object of protection, mainly through commercial development and scenic spot shaping to achieve the purpose of cultural continuity, followed by the realisation of the functional repair of the old city.

Pingjiang Road is part of the old city of Suzhou, and its deep historical roots have brought about a rich material and cultural heritage. 1985, Suzhou City set a new approach to urban construction, and the neighbourhood was included in the scope of the ancient cityscape that needed to be comprehensively preserved. Based on the need to protect the ancient city, the neighbourhood was renewed with the aim of expressing the culture as it is, as a showcase of Suzhou's traditional culture.

### 3.1.3. Logic of Goal-oriented Spatial Organisation

The spatial structure of the cultural district is related to its construction base, and the spatial organisation of the district under the background of stock planning and incremental planning has significant logical differences. From the comparison of historical images, it can be seen that the relationship between the overall spatial pattern of Pingjiang Road and the surrounding space has not changed significantly in 15 years.



**Figure 1.** Satellite image map

This paper mainly analyses the spatial organisation from the perspective of the functional layout of the neighbourhood and the path connection, in which the urban space is divided into three categories, namely commercial space, residential space and public service space, and the path linkage is divided into two categories, namely internal traffic and external traffic.

Pingjiang Road retains the original street form, around the main street with commercial space to replace part of the residential space, the status quo commercial and residential space without obvious demarcation line, as the core area of the ancient city, Pingjiang Road is a parallel waterway checkerboard pattern, and the neighbouring plots through the streets and alleys to achieve a more accessible traffic links, in the renewal of this advantage to make the replacement of the commercial integration of the urban space, the formation of an open and natural atmosphere of the street, focusing on creating a pedestrian commercial street, therefore, the path relationship atmosphere of internal traffic and external traffic. The focus is on creating a pedestrian commercial street, thus forming a complete pedestrian system.

### 3.2. Multiple Impacts of Culturally Oriented Urban Regeneration

Culturally oriented urban regeneration has a significant impact on urban social space through the replacement of physical space and the implantation of functions. This paper explores the socio-spatial effects of culturally oriented urban regeneration and its trend characteristics at different stages, taking into account the impacts of neighbourhood regeneration on land use, economy, population, environment, culture and other aspects of cities. This paper explores the socio-spatial effects of culture-oriented urban regeneration and its trend characteristics at different stages.

### 3.2.1. Land Use Characteristics

The process of neighbourhood regeneration is accompanied by changes in land use functions. Through administrative means, the land use has changed from mainly residential land to a mixed pattern of residential, commercial and public service facilities. After a period of market regulation, the pattern of land use changed according to demand. After a period of market regulation, the land use pattern was adjusted according to the increase or decrease in demand, and there was even a spontaneous change from neighbouring houses to shops.

#### A. Commercial land dominates and replaces other land uses

The author's classification survey of the current businesses in the neighbourhood shows that there are small commercial facilities on Pingjiang Road that are owned by residents or rented out for commercial use. The proportion of such businesses is nearly one-third. Neighbourhood regeneration has led to the replacement of residential land by commercial land, and the scale of replacement has increased with the development of the neighbourhood.

In order to further study the change of commercial In order to further study the change of commercial businesses, this paper classifies commercial facilities into four major categories: shopping, dining, financial services, and accommodation services. food, financial services, and accommodation services, and the kernel density analysis is carried out using ArcGIS software with the POI data of 2012, 2016, and 2018. Kernel density analysis is carried out by using ArcGIS software.

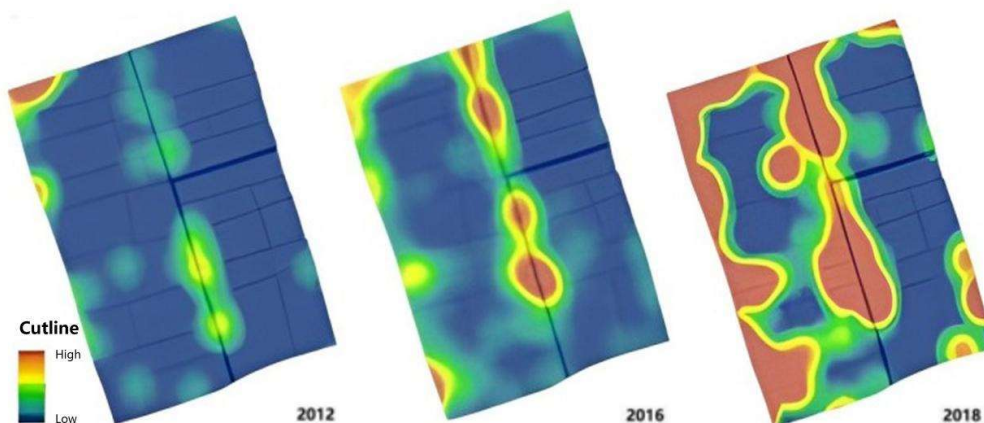


Figure 2. Distribution map of catering facilities

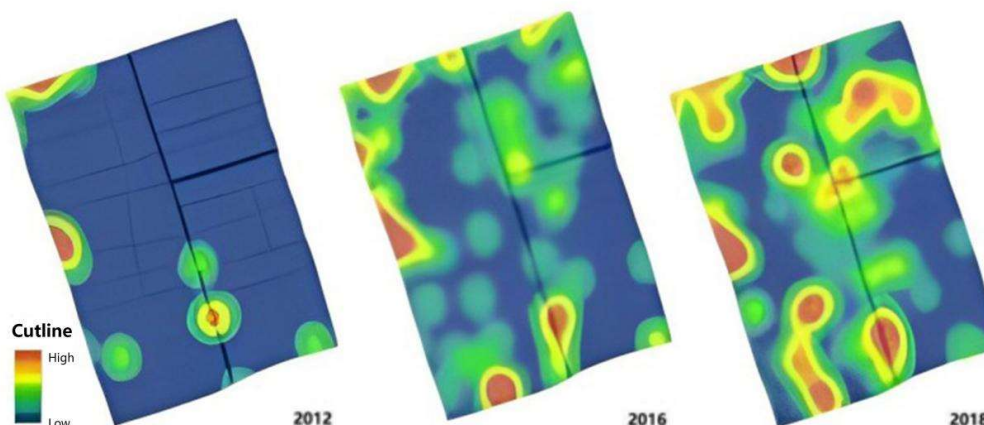
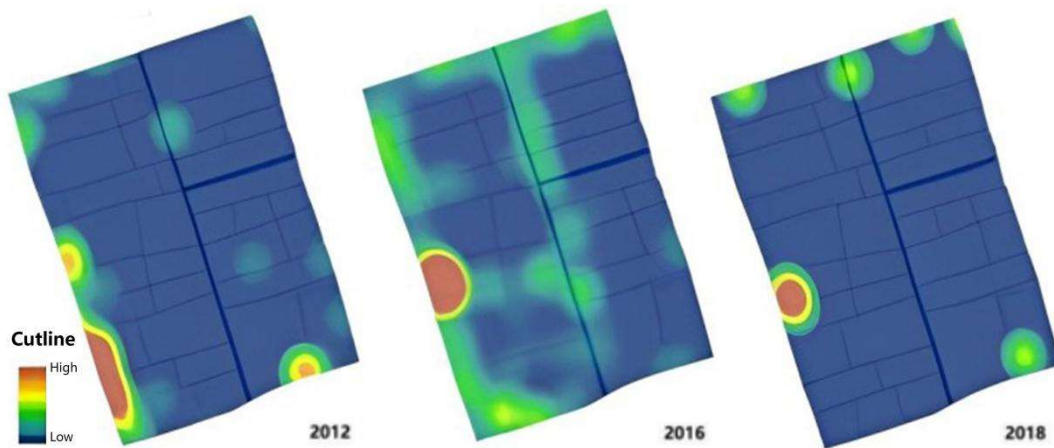
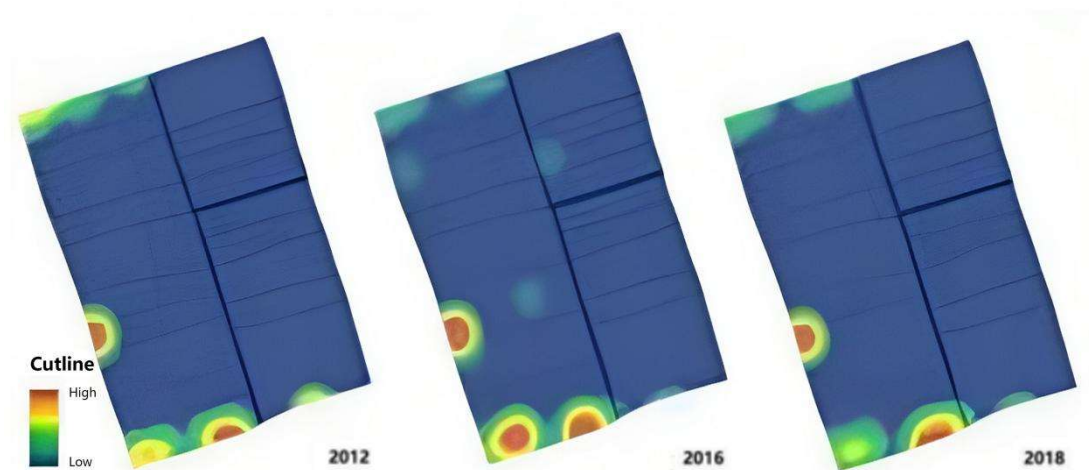


Figure 3. Distribution of shopping facilities



**Figure 4.** Distribution of financial facilities

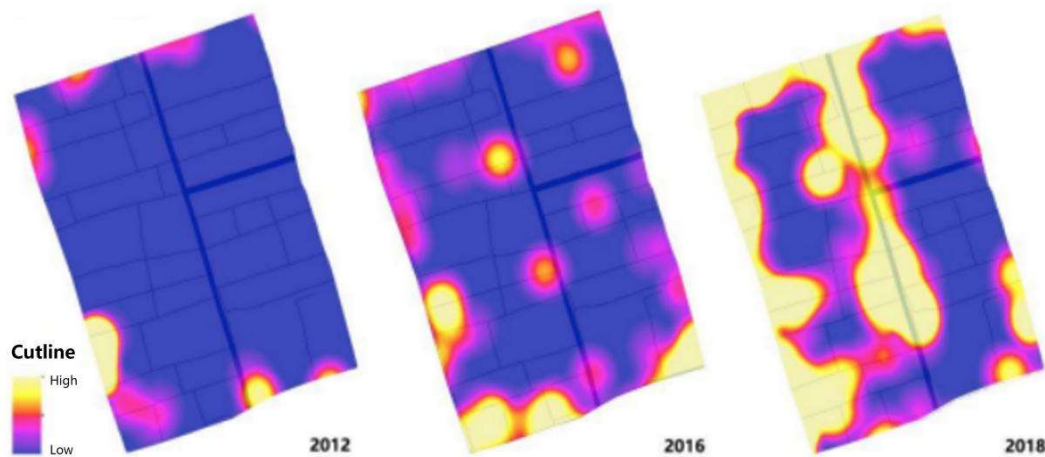


**Figure 5.** Distribution of Accommodation Services Facilities

There is a clear growth process between the catering facilities and accommodation services in the Pingjiang Road neighbourhood. Food and beverage establishments are gradually expanding from the main road to the side streets on both sides of Pingjiang Road, while accommodation services are scattered in the neighbourhood, mainly in the form of self-owned B&Bs. The shopping facilities here mainly refer to daily necessities and convenience stores, which are fewer in number inside the neighbourhood and are mainly distributed in the periphery of the neighbourhood near the city road. The shopping facilities here are mainly daily necessities and convenience stores, which are fewer in number inside the neighbourhood. Financial facilities are less affected by the renewal of the neighbourhood and remain almost unchanged.

**B.The proportion of land for service facilities has increased**

In addition to the external expansion of commercial land, the scale of public service land also grows with the increase in demand. The kernel density analysis of the POI data of transport facilities for the three years of 2012, 2016 and 2018 using ArcGIS software yields the trend of the number of service points in the neighbourhood.



**Figure 6.** Distribution of transport facilities

According to the heat map of the facilities, it can be seen that in Pingjiang Road, the proportion of transport facilities has experienced a significant increase in the process. Transportation facilities mainly include car parks, public transport stations, etc., which are important carrying factors for the flow of people in the neighbourhood. The increase in the number of transport facilities visually expresses the trend of increasing traffic flow in the cultural district. Science, education, culture and health facilities are mainly related to the number of permanent residents in a certain area, less affected by the flow of people, and in general, their proportion of land use is less related to the process of commercialisation and renewal of the neighbourhood. This is mainly related to the nature of the Pingjiang Neighbourhood Historical and Cultural Conservation Area.

### 3.2.2. Economic Impact

The cultural neighbourhood is essentially an economic process, as it intervenes in the economic activities of the neighbourhood through commercial development, and becomes a means to stimulate the economy of the area. At the beginning of the regeneration of the neighbourhood, a small increase in commercial activities and revenues is the first step. Along with the growth of commercial activities and the number of consumers, neighbourhood regeneration itself is subject to market feedback, which leads to price increases, rent increases, land premiums. The operating costs of low-end businesses increase, the consumer market shrinks, and the neighbourhood develops towards high-end businesses.

-Mr L, 74 years old

"There was nothing on this street when I first came here eighteen years ago. We were the only three shops that have remained open until now. There used to be a laundromat and a small supermarket here, but now they are all gone. I used to do good business, but now I have more shops, and most of the people who come here are still my old customers."

The rent of the same shop with the same area was 30,000-50,000/year in 2001, and in 2019, the rent has risen to 200,000-500,000/year. At the early stage of the renewal of the neighbourhood, the market for the business is mainly a small range of citizens, with the intention of recreating the scene of life; at the later stage of the renewal, the popularity of the neighbourhood is increased, gradually opening up the tourist market, the development direction of the neighbourhood is adjusted to the tourists to show the picture of life in Gusu as a place of excursion, and the business then began to turnover. From the life-oriented service industry with a strong living atmosphere and low business profit to the tourism-oriented industry with gorgeous shops and experience consumption, Shantang Street has gone through

the inevitable process of marketisation, and eventually its commercial effect has overflowed into the neighbourhood and radiated to the surrounding land.

The economic significance of culturally orientated urban regeneration is evaluated differently from different perspectives. At the macro level, it is a growth point for the regional economy, which is conducive to government revenue and business atmosphere; at the micro level, for the early commercial tenants, the increase in costs has squeezed the survival of low-end businesses. At the micro level, for the early commercial tenants, the increase in costs squeezes the space for low-end businesses to survive.

### 3.2.3. Social Impacts

The social impacts of culturally oriented urban regeneration mainly include the replacement of the population in the neighbourhood, the influence of population metabolism patterns, and changes in community awareness. The factors of social impact include age structure of the population, tendency of population mobility, proportion of occupation and education of the population, and sense of belonging to the community, etc. Therefore, this paper analyses the above factors through questionnaire surveys and structured interviews with residents, tourists, and merchants in the neighbourhoods.

Therefore, this paper analyses the above factors through questionnaire surveys and structured interviews with residents, tourists and businesses.

#### A. Population Ageing and Community Identity in Residential Neighbourhoods.

-Grandma C, 78 years old

"I married from Wuxi more than 50 years ago and have a daughter who lives in the high-tech zone. Most of us are old neighbours here, and we are very close."

-Aunt L, 58 years old

"We are still old neighbours who have known each other for decades and are used to living here. I quite like to sit together like this and brag."

-Grandpa Y, 72 years old

"I've lived here since I was a child, and many of my neighbours have lived here all my life, so I know them very well. There are also people who have moved away, and those who are still in regular contact with ..... people who have come to rent a house are less likely to come into contact with me, so I don't deal with them in general."

The population of Pingjiang Road shows an "inverted pyramid" age structure, facing the same aging problem as the whole ancient city. The elderly population has a relatively low acceptance of foreign things, and the social circle of most of them is the old neighbours around their houses. neighbours.

Most of the residents interviewed have a sense of identity based on the community or lane as a unit, and form a close-knit group within a small area. Most of the residents do not have a sense of identity in the "Pingjiang Historic District". After the renewal and reconstruction of the neighbourhood, Pingjiang Road has been transformed from a part of the life of the old city to a higher level of cultural imagery, and its cultural meaning is no longer exclusive to the residents. Residents' sense of belonging to the community comes from communication and activities, and the introduction of tourists into the cultural neighbourhood to occupy the public space has created a gap in the residents' identity.

#### B. Displacement and Segregation of Indigenous Residents and Employed Migrants.

-Aunt C, 50 years old

"We have too many foreigners here. I think the government should let us all move out, either by converting all of them into scenic spots or by giving them all housing."

-Grandma C, 78 years old

"Some of the newcomers are from the countryside, but I treat them well. We have to look after each other and have good neighbourly relations."

Commercial functions introduced by culturally oriented urban regeneration have provided service-oriented jobs and led to the development of related industries, such as the two takeaway stations in the Pingjiang neighbourhood. Urbanisation attracts foreigners for employment, and the residence of these people creates demand for accommodation in the surrounding area. The out-migrating residents of the old residential areas rent out their houses, providing a more economical accommodation option for migrant workers. The process of replacing local residents with foreign employment is completed through housing rental and sale. Due to the differences between the old and new residents in terms of cultural background, occupational form and age structure, the original residents and foreign workers are easily separated, and the original community structure is broken. The original community structure is damaged [7].

#### 3.2.4. Cultural Influences

The essence of culturally oriented urban renewal is to use existing cultural resources to create additional value, so as to support business and people through culture. On the one hand, cultural neighbourhoods serve as places of consumption, stimulating economic development with culture as a special selling point; on the other hand, cultural neighbourhoods are part of the urban public space. On the other hand, cultural neighbourhood is a part of urban public space, which undertakes the function of continuing the urban cultural lineage and creating a humanistic leisure place for citizens.

### 4. Conclusion

The socio-spatial effects of culturally oriented urban renewal can be divided into two stages according to the positioning of the neighbourhood: the early stage of commercialisation and the mature stage of tourism development. In the first stage, the government controls the development of the neighbourhoods and promotes the revitalisation of their functions and the continuation of their cultural lineage through commercial development; in the second stage, the intervention of capital influences the development of the neighbourhoods, and a commercial development mode aiming at the tourism economy gradually emerges. Through a longitudinal comparison of the social spatial effects, two dimensions can be concluded.

First, the socio-spatial effects of culture-oriented urban regeneration and its development orientation are causal to each other.

The positive impacts of culturally oriented urban regeneration on material factors such as economy and land are higher than those on non-material factors.

A longitudinal comparison of economic, land, cultural, social and environmental factors shows that culturally oriented urban regeneration has an obvious positive impact on the economy and land use; in the early stages of neighbourhood regeneration, cultural impacts grow significantly, but the positive impacts on culture are weakened by over-commercialisation, and there is even a risk of a negative impact; In terms of social impacts, in the early stage of commercialisation, there is a driving effect on the vitality of the neighbourhood, while in the stage of tourism development, such impacts gradually turn negative; and the difference in the speed of environmental maintenance and the introduction of people flow results in differences in environmental impacts, when the neighbourhood is being renewed, there is a tendency of negative impacts. The difference between the speed of environmental maintenance and the introduction of people causes the difference of environmental impacts, and when the speed of population inflow is too fast, the environmental aspects are mainly negative impacts.

Through the statistics on the characteristics and selling points of the current commercial products in the neighbourhood, most of the commodities in the cultural district do not have the traditional cultural characteristics of Suzhou, and there is a phenomenon of homogenisation and massification of the industry. More and more pseudo "Suzhou characteristics" products appear in the neighbourhood, which sell assembly line products under the banner of culture, and their thin profit-multi-selling mode squeezes out the original characteristic shops in the neighbourhood, resulting in the effect of bad money driving out good money. Excessive commercialisation of cultural neighbourhoods leads to confusion and erosion of authentic culture, and It is not conducive to the preservation and promotion of traditional culture.

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