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Review

A Critical Review of Residents' Satisfaction in Urban Village Sustainable Development

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Abstract: Urban village redevelopment plays an important role in advancing sustainable and inclusive urbanization, aligning with global and national priorities, including China's five-year plans. Residents' satisfaction is one of the important measures of the success of urban village development. This review focuses on residents' satisfaction in urban villages in China and its correlation to the SDGs rather than analyzing urban village transformation itself. This review employs a dual-method approach: a traditional review identifies the characteristics of urban village development phases, and a systematic review examines the indicators influencing residents' satisfaction and their alignment with Sustainable Development Goals. This study highlights critical indicators influencing residents' satisfaction, such as building quality, green space, and sense of security, and the changing trends in the value of these indicators through different urban village development phases. The findings reveal significant challenges, including housing affordability, governance methods, and social cohesion, emphasizing the need for redevelopment strategies to be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to promote equity and create sustainable urban environments. This review provides valuable insights for policymakers and urban planners, offering a framework for providing a knowledge base to understand the dynamics of satisfaction and support sustainable urban regeneration.

Keywords: urban village development; residents' satisfaction; social sustainability; Sustainable Development Goal

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1. Introduction

Informal settlements are prevalent living environments that frequently arise amid rapid industrialization and urbanization, representing a global challenge in sustainable development. In 2022, approximately 24.8% of the world's population (around 1.1 billion) lives in various types of informal settlements [1]. In China, an urban village is a representative type of informal settlement in urban areas during the process of urbanization, consisting of several traditional rural villages that are gradually surrounded by built-up urban areas [2,3]. These urban villages comprise blocks of high-density, mid-rise buildings in a variety of morphological patterns; a large number of people choose to settle in these areas because of their central location, affordable rent, abundant employment opportunities, and a diverse range of land use types and dynamic community atmosphere [2,4]. The residents mainly include original villagers (with local/rural Hukou and collective land ownership) and migrants (refers to those who are away from their places of origin and do not have local Hukou status at their destination [5]). Hukou refers to the identification of residents who were born in or moved to the area.

China's rapid urbanization has given rise to urban villages across different regions, especially in relatively developed cities, making them a significant focus of urban planning and policy [2]. As an example, there are 4427 urban villages in eight super- or megacities (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Wuhan, Chongqing, and Dongguan), with a total built-up land area of 3524 square kilometres and a population of 55.54 million people, of which 34.71 million are non-household residents [6]. China's 14th five-year plan (2020–2025) assigns urban renewal a relevant role in the process of sustainable and high-quality urbanization. Urban renewal was first formally promoted by the central government to make efficient use of land resources, create better human environments, and improve the image of cities [7]. In the context of urban renewal, the negative consequences of urban villages, such as poor hygiene quality and narrow spaces, have made urban villages a main target of renewal [2,8].

The National New-Type Urbanization Plan (2014–2020) is a strategic initiative by the Chinese government aimed at transforming the country's urbanization process in a more sustainable and balanced manner. The plan also emphasizes that urban renewal should take into account the needs and satisfaction of residents to achieve sustainable development [9,10]. Residents' satisfaction refers to the gap between the expected and actual living conditions of residents [11]. A close gap equates to a high degree of residents' satisfaction [11,12]. Residents' satisfaction typically refers to the satisfaction of residents living in a specific place [7,13]. Urban villages, as integral components of cities, provide diverse housing options and contribute to urban resilience, social networks, and neighbourhood vitality [2,14]. Despite generally poorer living conditions compared to built-up urban areas, satisfaction in urban villages can be comparable or higher due to adaptability and community dynamics. However, redevelopment often leads to demolition and resettlement, disrupting residents' accustomed environments and sometimes lowering satisfaction. Recent policies in China advocate for people-oriented transformations to avoid large-scale resettlement, yet implementation remains unclear [15–17]. Understanding the factors influencing residents' satisfaction is essential for shaping effective policies and assessing urban village development's success in creating sustainable and inclusive neighbourhoods.

The development of urban villages in China encompasses significant socio-economic, spatial, and governance transformations across different phases, impacting the living conditions and satisfaction of their residents [3,4,18]. Different approaches to urban village development have different impacts on development layouts, functional orientation, and economic development [11,19,20]. To determine whether the transformation of urban village development supports sustainable and inclusive growth, it is essential to explore how these transformations affect residents' satisfaction specifically. Compared to the development process of urban villages, this review focuses more on the impact of development on residents' satisfaction, which is one of the most important indicators of the success of urban village development. This paper conducts a comprehensive review, including a traditional and systematic review, of the existing literature on urban village development phases, aiming to identify key factors influencing satisfaction and reveal whether the development process supports sustainable and inclusive urban development.

This review addresses a gap in the existing literature regarding the connection between urban village development and residents' satisfaction as a measure of sustainability. Although studies have examined the physical and socio-economic indicators of urban villages, there is limited research on how these critical indicators dynamically influence residents' satisfaction across different development phases. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for evaluating the success of urban renewal initiatives and ensuring they align with sustainable development principles. This review provides insights that can guide

policymakers and practitioners in managing urban village renewal in a way that enhances both sustainability and residents' satisfaction.

Additionally, this study provides a valuable reference for cities in developing countries where informal settlements are undergoing transformation, offering evidence-based recommendations for equitable and sustainable redevelopment policies. It is worth noting that urban villages in China refer to village-like urban neighbourhoods [8,21], which differ from the urban planning and urban design concepts in Western countries [4,19]. Although unique, the link between development and sustainability explored in this review paper still provides some insights that can be learnt by other countries regarding urbanization initiatives and the urban renewal of aging communities.

The primary objective of this review is to critically examine the development phases of urban villages in China, with a focus on their physical, social, and economic transformations, and to understand how these phases affect resident satisfaction. The paper aims to answer the following research questions:

- What are the characteristics of each urban village development phase?
- What are the critical indicators influencing residents' satisfaction in urban village development?

The methodology for this review includes a focused examination of scholarly articles, case studies, and empirical research on urban village development in China. The scope of this review encompasses studies on the physical, social, and economic characteristics of urban villages and studies on residents' satisfaction within these contexts. This review explores how these factors interact and influence sustainability objectives. Sources were selected based on relevance to the research questions, ensuring comprehensive coverage of various urban village development phases and their implications for satisfaction.

2. Methodology

To answer these two research questions, two review methodologies will be employed: traditional review and systematic review.

2.1. Traditional Review

This review methodology is employed to answer research question 1. A traditional review is particularly suitable for gathering and synthesizing findings from previous studies on a specific topic, such as urban village redevelopment [22]. This method involves an in-depth analysis of existing literature, including academic journals, policy reports, and case studies. Importantly, the traditional review approach allows for the inclusion of historical context and the development processes of urban villages, which are essential for understanding the evolution of their characteristics across different phases. By synthesizing these aspects, this review provides a comprehensive foundation for exploring the dynamic nature of urban village redevelopment and its implications for sustainable urbanization.

2.2. Systematic Review

To address research question 2, systematic review approach is employed.

2.2.1. Search Strategies

A comprehensive search of previous studies was conducted using the Scopus database, as it provides broad range of high-impact publications relating to urban village studies. Although Web of Science (WoS) was initially considered, it was excluded due to the significant overlap with Scopus and a comparatively smaller number of relevant studies retrieved. The Scopus advanced search was designed to collect literature most relevant to the topic, limited to the papers published in the last 14 years, from 2010 to 2024. The scope

of each article was determined by searching for keywords for all fields, and then the most relevant literature was selected. Residents' satisfaction was chosen in order to limit research efforts on other aspects of urban villages. The purpose of not limiting the timeframe was to ensure that the studies covered all phases of development in urban villages. The terms "resident's satisfaction", "Urban village", "indicator", and "China" are the main keywords. Variations in these terms, including synonyms and alternative spellings, were also tested to maximize coverage.

2.2.2. Selection Process

The initial list of 1797 studies was filtered and analyzed to ensure relevance. Several steps were involved in this process. Initially, studies were further narrowed down, titles were assessed for relevance, and content was briefly scanned for relevance to the question under investigation. Further assessment was then carried out based on document type (articles and reviews) and period of publication (2010–2024). The SLR was conducted on articles published between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2024.

2.2.3. Data Extraction

In the screening stage, 270 articles were assessed based on article titles, abstracts, and keywords that met the criteria, matched, and were relevant to the scope of the study, and the content was briefly reviewed based on the validity of the study data and its relevance. To ensure methodological consistency in assessing residents' satisfaction, this review primarily includes studies that employ quantitative survey-based approaches or mixed-methods research where clear satisfaction indicators are defined. Since interview-based studies, including observation, often lack structured quantitative indicators and do not provide access to original interview transcripts, they were excluded from the selection process unless they explicitly presented measurable satisfaction criteria. This approach was necessary to facilitate direct comparisons across studies and ensure that the findings aligned with the research objectives. The inclusion criteria were structured around four key questions designed to ensure that the selected studies directly contributed to understanding residents' satisfaction in China's urban villages: Q1. "Are the objectives of the study clearly stated?" This criterion ensures that the study explicitly defines its purpose and research focus, allowing for a transparent evaluation of its relevance; Q2. "Are the research areas urban villages?" Since this review focuses exclusively on urban villages, this criterion eliminates studies discussing broader urban renewal projects or rural developments; Q3. "Are the indicators influencing residents' satisfaction clearly provided?" This ensures that studies include explicit satisfaction indicators, such as building quality, infrastructure, and social well-being, making them suitable for comparison; Q4. "Is the results clear and useful for the subject?" This criterion ensures that findings contribute valuable insights that align with the research questions, improving the overall applicability of this review (Table 1). The process involved scoring based on how closely the answer matched research question 2. The scoring system was as follows: "Relevant = 2", "Possible = 1", or "Irrelevant = 0". A total relevance score was produced at the end. An acceptable score was then assigned, and other studies had to fall within this range to be accepted. The qualifying studies were also required to have a score greater than 50% of the percentage score. This systematic selection approach helped to ensure that only highly relevant and rigorously conducted studies were included in this review. By applying these criteria, we strengthened the consistency and comparability of the final dataset, allowing for a more structured analysis of residents' satisfaction in urban village redevelopment. This system excluded 250 articles, given their lack of adherence to the minimum assessment score. A total of 20 articles were finally selected for detailed analysis, as outlined in Figure 1. The data from these selected articles

will also be used to examine the relationship between residents' satisfaction and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

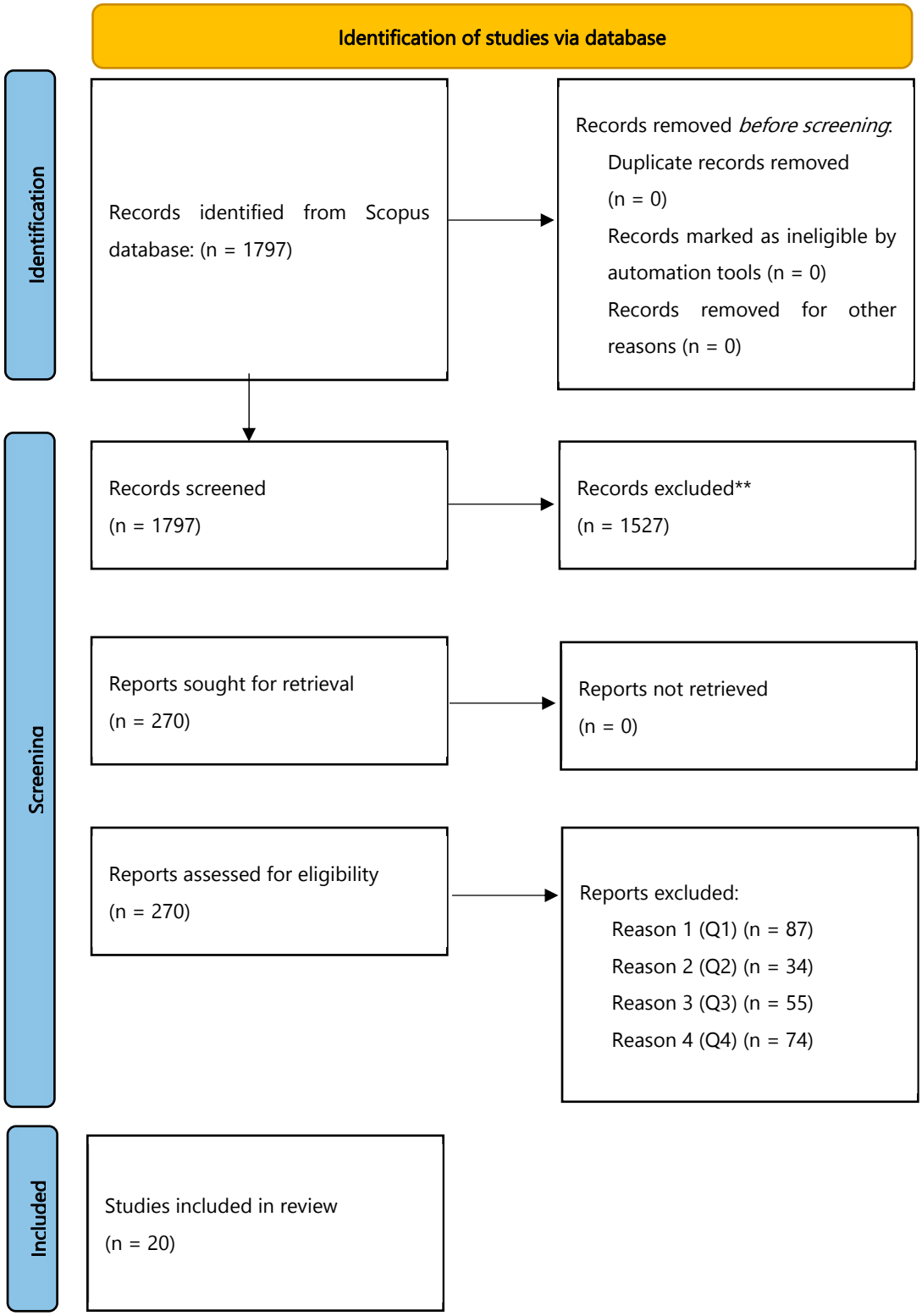

Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram (Source: Author). Note: ** Records that are not relevant to the research question, are not of article and review type, and are published outside the period 2010–2024 are excluded.

Table 1. Study inclusion criteria quality checklist (Source: Author).

ID	Checklist Question
Q1	Are the objectives of the study clearly stated?
Q2	Are the research areas urban villages?
Q3	Are the indicators influencing residents' satisfaction clearly provided?
Q4	Are the results clear and useful for the subject?

3. Urban Village Development in China

3.1. History Timeline

The urban village phenomenon in China, a by-product of the nation's rapid urbanization, presents a distinctive trajectory of development. Historically, these urban villages emerged from rural settlements, enveloped by the expanding urban fabric, yet retained a degree of socio-cultural and administrative autonomy (Figure 2).

(1) Pre-Reform Era (Before 1978): Originally rural settlements, these villages existed on the fringes of cities, with residents primarily engaged in agriculture [23].

(2) Initial Urbanization and Expansion (1978–2003): Since the opening and reform policy in 1978, an increasing number of Chinese cities have been rapidly expanding along with their rapid economic growth, and large populations are migrating to urban areas [21,24]. The wave of urban expansion was carried out in 2003, which was called the Chinese "Enclosure" movement. The government bypassed rural residential areas to reduce land acquisition compensation and conflicts with villagers and used agricultural lands with a relatively low development cost, which formed an urban–rural mixed spatial structure and landscape, namely, today's urban villages in China [18,25–27].

(3) Urban–Rural Mixed Landscape Formation (2004–2019): This period saw intensified urban expansion. The rapid development of the city as a whole and the serious lagging behind of local areas have become irreconcilable contradictions [23]. Because of China's rigid policy of restricting the infinite expansion of large cities and protecting agricultural land, many Chinese cities have begun to adjust their land development models to emphasize the transformation of urban development from extension to connotation, which has resulted in the urban renewal activities centred on the transformation of urban villages gradually receiving attention from Chinese city governments [28]. Urban villages became characterized by dense construction, mixed land use, and significant population growth. They provided affordable housing for migrants but faced challenges like poor infrastructure and a lack of planning.

(4) Current Stage and Government Initiatives (2020–Present): Recognizing the issues in urban villages, the Chinese government has initiated policies, such as "The 14th national five-year plan (2021–2025)" and "National New Urbanization Plan (2021–2035)", focusing on transformation and redevelopment, aiming to integrate these areas into the urban fabric while improving living conditions.

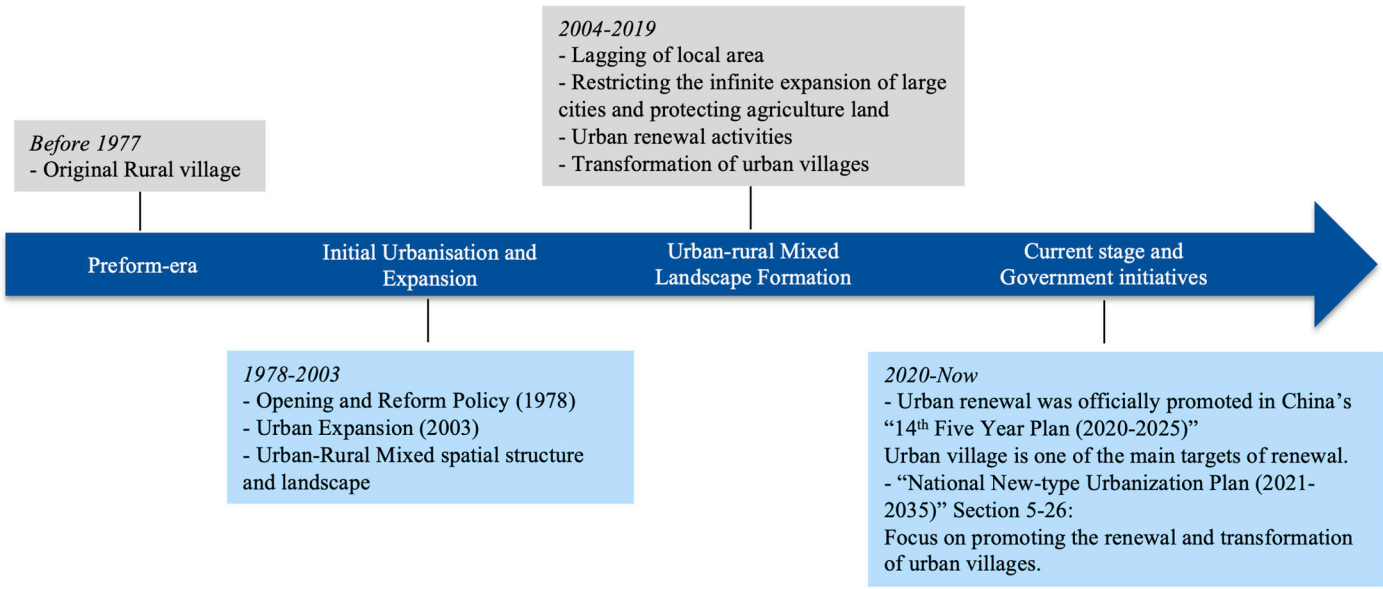

Figure 2. History of urban village development in China (Source: Author) [2–4,18,29].

3.2. Urban Village Development Process

In China, urban villages are a typical form of informal settlement found within city districts. These areas consist of traditional rural villages that have been gradually surrounded by expanding urban development during the process of urbanization [2,3]. The development of urban villages is a dynamic and complex process [30,31], and there is currently no clear definition of its developmental phases. However, it is possible to categorize these phases based on their distinct characteristics.

Previous studies have proposed different ways to categorize the development phases of urban villages, emphasizing various aspects of their growth and transformation (Table 2).

Table 2. Urban village development approaches.

Social-Economic Approach [3,4]	**Spatial Growth Approach [18,29,32]**
Initial Phase • Agriculture use → mixed residential, commercial, and industrial function. • Key housing area for migrant workers.	Expansion Phase • Villages grow outward into surrounding areas.
Transition Phase • Affordable housing. • Informal employment opportunities. • Land use mix diversifiers further.	Densification Phase • Involves internal space filling and increased population density.
Mature Phase • Replacement of informal economic functions. • Village becomes a residential area.	Intensification Phase • Grow vertically. • Replacing low-rise buildings with high-rise apartments.

While these approaches provide useful perspectives, they often focus on a single dimension of urban village development. Our study integrates these insights into a comprehensive three-phase model that captures both physical and socio-economic changes, providing a holistic understanding of urban village transformation. To establish a clearer

understanding of urban village development, a new classification can be synthesized from the common elements found across various perspectives. This classification integrates both physical and socio-economic changes, providing a comprehensive view of how urban villages evolve over time (Figure 3).

(1) Phase I (Expansion): During this initial phase, urban villages expand outward, utilizing nearby agricultural or undeveloped land to accommodate a growing population. The village transitions from a rural, agricultural economy to a more diverse set of land uses, including residential, commercial, and light industrial activities. Migrants flock to these villages, attracted by affordable housing and employment opportunities, which drive the transformation of land use.

(2) Phase II (Consolidation): As land for outward expansion becomes scarce, urban villages enter a phase of internal densification. Every available plot is used, and the village's physical environment becomes more crowded. Socio-economically, the village consolidates its role as a hub for affordable housing and informal economic activities, serving a large population of low-income residents and migrants. Economic activities diversify, supporting the growing local population.

(3) Phase III (Vertical Intensification): In this final phase, vertical growth becomes the dominant strategy for accommodating further population increases. Low-rise buildings are replaced by high-rise structures, significantly increasing residential capacity. The village becomes more integrated into the formal urban system while still playing a vital role in providing affordable housing. Its economic activities also shift, reflecting closer ties with the formal economy, though its core functions as a residential space remain strong.

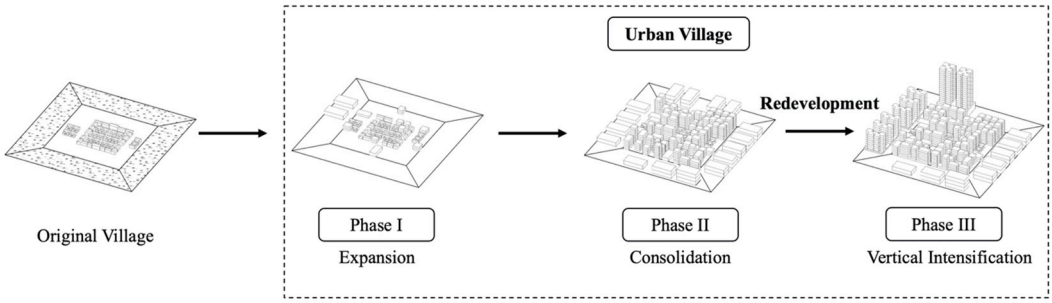

Figure 3. Three phases of urban village development (redrawn by Author) [33].

While the three-phase model offers a structured approach, it has some limitations. It does not fully capture regional variations, as urban villages in different cities may follow different trajectories. The transition between phases is not always linear, with some urban villages experiencing multiple overlapping characteristics.

3.3. Characteristics of Each Phase of Urban Village

Each phase of urban village has its own characteristics (Table 3). When studying a particular urban village, it is possible to determine which phase of development the subject urban village is in based on its characteristics.

The table summarizes the characteristics of urban villages as they evolve from the initial phase to the transition and mature phases. The categorization is divided into five broad categories: Social and Demographic Characteristics, Physical Characteristics, Governance and Management, Economic Structure, and Environmental and Spatial Characteristics.

Table 3. Characteristics of urban village in three phases (Source: Author).

Aspect	No.	Characteristics	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Ref
Social and Demographic	1	Resident composition	Rural residents	Mix of rural and migrant populations	Combination of rural, urban, and migrant populations	[3,4,34]
	2	Culture retention	Retains historic culture and folk customs	Diverse culture due to migrant influx	Depends on formal urban planning and urbanization strategies	[3,4]
Physical Characteristics	3	Housing type	Single-storey, self-built houses	Mixed new and old apartment buildings	Uniformly planned multi-storey or high-rise buildings	[3,4,35]
	4	Infrastructure and facility	Lack of infrastructure	Basic infrastructure	Complete infrastructures and supporting facilities	[3,4,35]
	5	Street network	Narrow alleys (basic function)	Narrow alleys (defined by buildings)	Well-designed street network	[3,18]
Governance and Management	6	Community governance structure	Village collective, village economic organization	Community shareholding company and residential committee	Residential committee	[3,32]
	7	Land ownership	Collective ownership	Ambiguous land ownership	State ownership	[3,4]
Economic Structure	8	Source of finance	Self-financed by villagers	Mainly supported by villagers and informal markets	Combination of villager funds and government support	[3,18]
	9	Functional structure	Dominated by residential functions, limited diversity	Mixed-use, highest diversity (residential, commercial, industrial)	Residential, loss, non-residential land	[3,4]
Environmental and Spatial	10	Layout	Congested, disorganized development	High-density development, limited planning	Compact, planned, grid-patterned development	[18,32]
	11	Land use	Mixed land use (horizontal space)	Mixed land use (integrating vertical spaces)	Integrated land use, separation of residential and commercial land use	[3,4,35]
	12	Public space	Lack of public space	Public space eroded by rapid land use changes	Sufficient public space, well-planned	[3,32]

Social and Demographic Characteristics refer to resident composition and cultural retention. Villages in Phase I are predominantly rural, but as urbanization progresses, migrant populations move in during Phase II, creating a culturally diverse environment [4,18]. By Phase III, the village is home to a mix of rural, urban, and migrant populations, though the retention of cultural identity depends on urban planning and modernization efforts [3].

Physical Characteristics encompass housing type, infrastructure, and the street network. In Phase I, villages are primarily made up of self-built, single-storey houses with

limited infrastructure and narrow, disorganized alleys. As villages transition, a mix of old and new apartment buildings emerges, infrastructure improves, and street networks become better defined. By Phase III, housing consists of uniformly planned high-rise buildings, with complete infrastructure and well-designed streets that enhance mobility and resident satisfaction [3,4,35].

Governance and Management include the community governance structure and land ownership. Initially governed by village collectives, urban villages shift to more formalized management in Phase II [4], with community shareholding companies and residential committees playing a larger role. Land ownership, initially collective, becomes ambiguous during Phase II but is transferred to state ownership in Phase III, increasing property stability and improving governance [3,4].

Economic Structure focuses on the village's source of finance and functional diversity. In Phase I, villages are self-financed, with limited economic activity centred around residential functions. As they transition, economic functions diversify, incorporating residential, commercial, and industrial uses, supported by informal markets [36]. By Phase III, government involvement in financing becomes more prominent, and functional diversity decreases as non-residential land is converted into residential areas [18,35].

Environmental and Spatial Characteristics cover urban layout, land use, and public space. In Phase I, villages are characterized by congested, disorganized layouts and mixed land use [2,4,29]. During Phase II, villages develop more organized layouts and begin integrating vertical spaces to accommodate densification. By Phase III, urban villages adopt compact, grid-patterned designs with clearly separated residential and commercial zones. Public space, which is often lacking in earlier phases, becomes more abundant and well planned in the mature phase [4,32].

4. Residents' Satisfaction in Urban Village Development

4.1. Findings from Systematic Literature Review

This section presents a comprehensive analysis from the systematic literature review. Twenty articles were identified, primarily examining residents' satisfaction in residential areas within urban villages (Table 4). These articles investigated the satisfaction of residents in urban villages (Phase I to Phase III) across different cities, with most focusing on major cities. The target respondents included local residents and migrant workers, and the research data were primarily collected through questionnaires. The findings highlight key factors influencing satisfaction and the different perspectives adopted by various studies, identifying common trends and variations in residents' satisfaction with urban village redevelopment and the connection between residents' satisfaction and sustainable goals (SDGs).

Table 4. Details of selected papers (summarized by Author).

No.	Year	Authors	Development Phase	Location	Data Collection Method	Respondents
1	2013	Li and Wu [37]	Phase II and Phase III	Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou	Questionnaire, interview	Migrants, original villagers
2	2016	Gan et al. [38]	Similar to Phase III	Chongqing	Questionnaire	Migrants
3	2018	Lin and Huang [39]	Not specified		Government database	

Table 4. *Cont.*

No.	Year	Authors	Development Phase	Location	Data Collection Method	Respondents
4	2019	Li et al. [40]	Phase III	Wuhan	Questionnaire	
5	2019	Tan et al. [11]	Phase III	Guangzhou	Residents' satisfaction scale (questionnaire)	Original villagers
6	2019	Wang et al. [41]	Phase I	Xianju	Questionnaire	Original villagers
7	2020	Chen et al. [42]	Phase II	Beijing	Questionnaire	
8	2020	Yang et al. [20]	Phase II and Phase III (before and after redevelopment)	Wuhan	Questionnaire	Original villagers
9	2021	Li et al. [43]	Phase II	Shenzhen	Questionnaire, interview	
10	2021	Tong and Gu [44]	Phase III	Shenzhen	Questionnaire	
11	2021	Li et al. [45]	Phase II	Shenzhen	Online pretest, questionnaire	Migrants
12	2022	Chen et al. [13]	Phase III	Suzhou	Questionnaire	Original villagers
13	2022	Chen et al. [7]	Phase III(Old and New)	Suzhou	Questionnaire	Original villagers
14	2022	Du et al. [46]	Phase II	Chongqing	Questionnaire	
15	2022	Gao et al. [47]	Phase II	Hangzhou	Questionnaire	
16	2022	Wu and Zhang [48]	Phase III	Hangzhou	Questionnaire	
17	2023	Gu et al. [49]	Phase III	Shenzhen	Questionnaire	
18	2023	Li et al. [50]	Phase II	Shenzhen	Online pretest, questionnaire	
19	2023	Yang and Zhang [51]	Phase III	Wuhan	Questionnaire	Original villagers
20	2024	Xu et al. [52]	Phase II	Ganzhou	Questionnaire	Original villagers

4.2. Investigated Factors/Indicators Influencing Residents' Satisfaction in Urban Villages

This section introduced the factors and indicators investigated in this systematic literature review. Although they are different in each study, they can be categorized based on their similarities as follows: Socio-economic factors, Physical and Environmental factors, Accessibility factors, Social and Community factors.

4.2.1. Social Economic Factors

The Socio-economic factor is the statistical demographic characteristics of survey respondents. The primary indicator used to assess this factor is personal and household identity (A), comprising 14 secondary indicators, with the key ones shown in Table 5. The most frequently studied are age (A1), income (A7), and educational background (A8)—each examined 15 times. Gender (A2) and occupation (A4) were also notable. Socio-economic variables like family income, age, and education are found to influence residential satisfaction [53]. Higher income and education levels often correlate with greater satisfaction but may also raise expectations, potentially reducing satisfaction [54]. Households with children tend to show higher satisfaction due to preferences for safer and more socially engaging environments [54].

Table 5. Indicators under Socio-economic factor (Source: Author).

Primary Indicator	Secondary Indicators	Surveyed Times	Reference
Socio-economic factor			
Personal and household identity (A)	Age (A1)	15	[7]
	Gender (A2)	14	[7]
	Household registration (*Hukou*) (A3)	9	[7]
	Occupation (A4)	12	[7]
	Current residence (A5)	1	[7]
	Residence before relocation (A6)	2	[7]
	Income (A7)	15	[11]
	Educational background (A8)	15	[13]
	Marital status (A9)	7	[13]
	Household composition (A10)	10	[13]
	Company ownership (A11)	2	[42]
	Relocation experience (A12)	3	[41]
	Length of residence (A13)	7	[48]
	Healthy condition(A14)	1	[39]
	Homeownership (A15)	2	[46]
	Change in the structure of social status (A16)	1	[46]

4.2.2. Factors Relating to Physical and Environmental, Accessibility, and Social and Community

Table 6 outlines the indicators to evaluate residents' living conditions and environment. Residential buildings (B) are notably emphasized by researchers, featuring 13 secondary indicators, with dwelling area (B2) and building quality (B4) being the most frequently examined. Other important indicators include green space (C2), neighbour interaction (F1), and sense of security (F4).

Table 6. Indicators under the other factors (Source: Author).

Primary Indicator	Secondary Indicators	Surveyed Times	Reference
Physical and Environmental factors			
Residential building (B)	House type (B1)	3	[7]
	Dwelling area (B2)	11	[11]
	Person/each unit (B3)	1	[7]
	Building quality (B4)	8	[11]
	Layout (B5)	7	[11]
	Indoor lighting (B6)	5	[11]
	Indoor air quality (B7)	1	[7]
	Indoor ventilation (B8)	4	[11]
	Sound insulation (B9)	1	[11]
	Built-up time (B10)	2	[37,41]
	Infrastructure (B11)	4	[20]
	Housing structure (B12)	2	[20]
	Building façade (B13)	1	[52]

Table 6. *Cont.*

Primary Indicator	Secondary Indicators	Surveyed Times	Reference
Physical and Environmental factors			
Residential environment (C)	Outdoor air quality (C1)	3	[13]
	Green space (C2)	8	[7]
	Population and car density (C3)	1	[13]
	Hygiene quality (C4)	4	[20]
	Aesthetic feeling (C5)	1	[49]
	Ecological conditions (C6)	1	[20]
	Noise pollution (C7)	2	[20]
Accessibility factors			
Community convenience degree (D)	Parking convenience (D1)	5	[11]
	Supporting facility convenience (D2)	2	[7,13]
	Public transport convenience(metro/bus) (D3)	6	[7]
	Entrance convenience (D4)	1	[7]
	Traffic convenience (D5)	6	[11]
	Public spaces (D6)	4	[11]
	Leisure space (D7)	3	[13]
	Location (D8)	4	[51]
	Pedestrian safety (D9)	1	[13]
Neighbourhood and community facilities (E)	Aging care service (E1)	2	[7]
	Education facilities(E2)	5	[11]
	Medical facilities (E3)	3	[11]
	Commercial facilities (E4)	5	[11]
	Public toilets (E5)	1	[49]
	Recreation facilities (E6)	3	[44]
	Facility diversity (E7)	4	[13]
	Pipeline facility (E8)	1	[52]
Social and Community factors			
Social network (F)	Neighbour interaction (F1)	8	[7]
	Shopping preference (F2)	2	[7]
	Participation (F3)	6	[11]
	Sense of security (F4)	10	[11]
	Privacy (F5)	3	[43]
	Community attachment (F6)	5	[20]
	Neighbourhood relationship (F7)	3	[20]
Operation and management (G)	Property management (G1)	4	[7]
	Maintenance (G2)	3	[11]
	Management fee (G3)	2	[11]
	Quality of property services (G4)	2	[11]
	Rent (G5)	3	[43]

Table 6. *Cont.*

Primary Indicator	Secondary Indicators	Surveyed Times	Reference
History and culture (H)	Historical and cultural protection (H1)	4	[11]
	Historical building and cultural relic protection (H2)	1	[11]
	Folk customs (H3)	1	[11]
	Harmony of old and new architectural styles (H4)	1	[49]

4.3. Satisfaction in Different Urban Village Development Phases

Most studies conducted questionnaires [11,37,46] to evaluate residents' satisfaction. When questionnaires were used, a five-point Likert scale was commonly employed to assess indicators (1—"Very dissatisfied", 2—"Somewhat dissatisfied", 3—"Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied", 4—"Somewhat satisfied", and 5—"Very satisfied"). This section reviews the value of indicators in existing studies. The values of the indicators were determined by the survey results in each study.

Residents' satisfaction is a measurable and quantifiable index for assessing the quality of residential living, which is closely related to environmental quality, social well-being, and sustainable development [37,55]. This index represents residents' responses to their living environment, which is influenced by a variety of factors such as built form, the living environment, the socio-economic characteristics of the occupants, and their life patterns and activities.

To better understand key areas of concern for residents, the value of the secondary indicators from 20 studies is visualized using a scatter chart (Figure 4). Since a value of 3 represents neutrality, indicators with a value of less than 3 require more attention.

The data show a general increase in satisfaction with most of the indicators as the urban village progresses from Phase I to Phase III, reflecting the effectiveness of the redevelopment efforts. Indicators related to dwellings, such as dwelling area (B2), building quality (B4), and layout (B5), consistently scored higher in the later phases, suggesting that actual improvements to the residential fabric are effectively meeting the needs of residents. Improvements in these indicators are consistent with the efforts of the redevelopment strategy to provide safer, more comfortable, and better-planned housing.

Regarding the environmental aspect, the indicators of air quality (C1), green space (C2) and hygiene quality (C4) have shown moderate improvements at all phases. These trends suggest that redevelopment has succeeded in addressing some environmental issues, although progress has been more gradual than in the case of housing-related internal indicators. Ecological conditions (C6) and noise pollution (C7), on the other hand, have remained relatively stable, highlighting areas where further interventions may be needed to improve the environmental quality of urban villages.

Social indicators show a mixed trend. Satisfaction with a sense of security (F4) improved significantly from Phase I to Phase III, reflecting the positive impact of later governance reforms and security measures. However, indicators such as neighbourhood interaction (F1) and community attachment (F6) showed less improvement, suggesting that redevelopment efforts may not have fully addressed social cohesion and integration issues. These findings emphasize the importance of adopting participatory and community-oriented approaches to strengthen social networks in urban renewal projects.

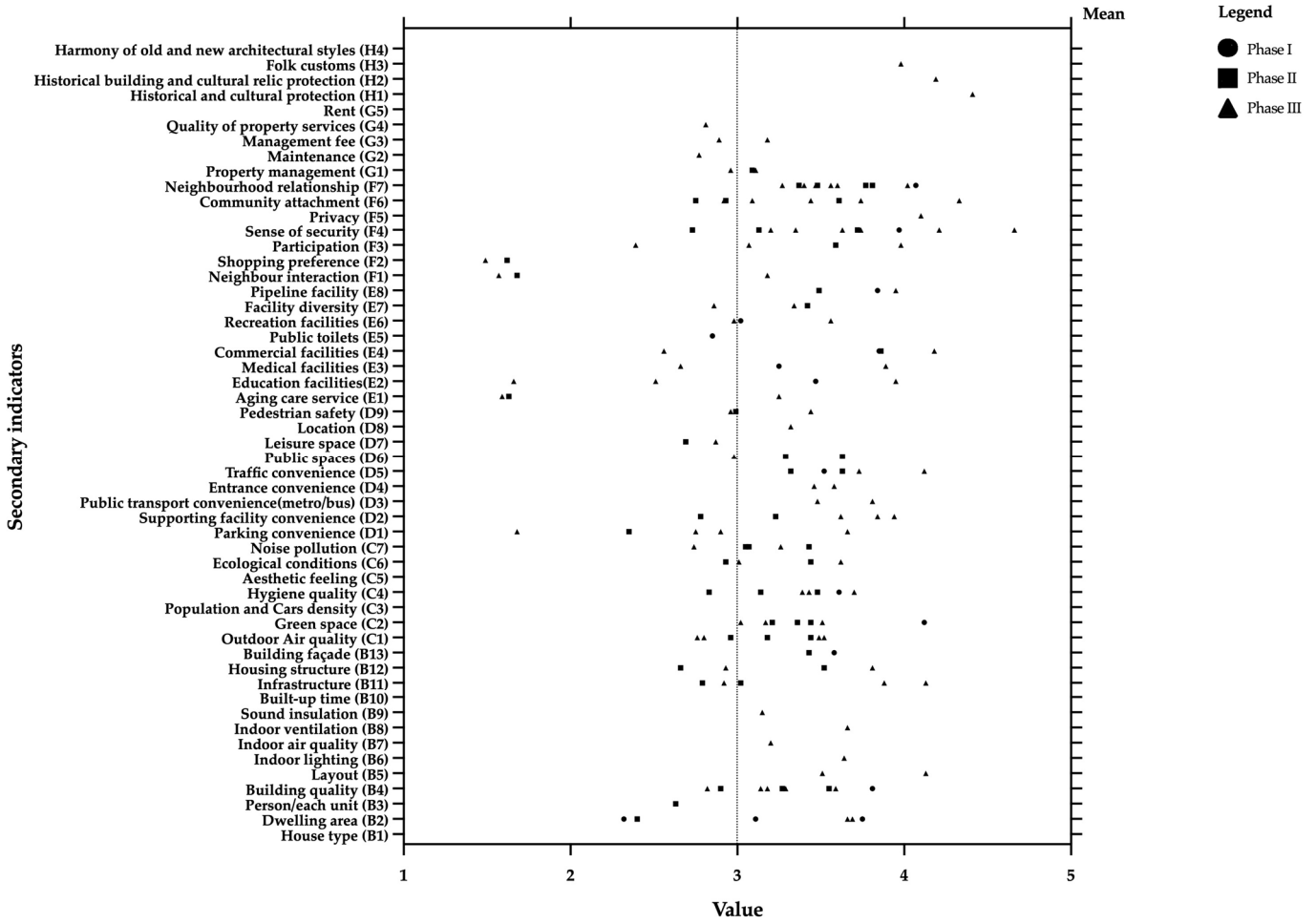

Figure 4. Value of secondary indicators (Source: Author).

In terms of the different phases of urban village development, an important phenomenon identified in the analyses is that most of the studies focused on urban villages in the second and third phases, with only one study examining urban villages in the first phase. Significant differences in satisfaction emerged between residents of Phase II and Phase III. Phase 2 residents were mainly satisfied with residential buildings (B), residential environment (C) and social network (F). In contrast, Phase III residents were satisfied with residential buildings (B), community convenience degree (D), and neighbourhood and community facilities (E), with indicator D being the most frequently mentioned source of satisfaction.

In terms of the least satisfaction, there are still large differences between the phases. Concerns were more evenly distributed among residents in Phase II, while residents of urban villages in Phase III expressed particular dissatisfaction with neighbourhood and community facilities (E) and social networks (F). Indicators such as E1, E2, F1, and F2 were the most frequently cited factors of dissatisfaction by residents in Phase III. This dissatisfaction may be due to the changes brought about by the transformation of urban villages, which have altered the traditional social structures and community ties that residents previously enjoyed.

From the 20 reviewed studies, some indicators, such as building quality, green space, and sense of security, were consistently reported as critical satisfaction indicators. The transition from informal governance to formal structured urban areas has a positive impact on residents' satisfaction [20,48]. Some studies emphasized that social network is important in maintaining residents' satisfaction, and others suggested that economic stability also

plays an important role [46,50]. Variations in data collection methods, measurement criteria, and analytical approaches contribute to inconsistencies in reported satisfaction levels. While some studies employ survey-based approaches to quantify resident perceptions, others adopt qualitative methods to capture subjective experiences. The lack of standardized satisfaction indicators further complicates direct comparisons between studies. These methodological variations highlight the need for an integrated approach to evaluating resident satisfaction more effectively.

Based on the frequency of indicators surveyed in Table 4 and visualized in Figure 4, the indicators that were surveyed ten or more times or ranked among the top three most surveyed were identified as critical indicators (Table 7).

Table 7. Critical indicators influencing residents' satisfaction (summarized by Author).

Primary Indicator	Secondary Indicators
Residential building (B)	Dwelling area (B2) Building quality (B4) Layout (B5)
Residential environment (C)	Outdoor air quality (C1) Green space (C2) Hygiene quality (C4)
Community convenience degree (D)	Parking convenience (D1) Public transport convenience(metro/bus) (D3) Traffic convenience (D5)
Neighbourhood and community facilities (E)	Education facilities(E2) Commercial facilities (E4) Facility diversity (E7)
Social network (F)	Neighbour interaction (F1) Participation (F3) Sense of security (F4)
Operation and management (G)	Property management (G1) Maintenance (G2) Rent (G5)

The assessments presented in these studies offer valuable insights into residents' satisfaction in urban villages but also highlight certain limitations, including the scale and scope of the studies, site selection, the breadth of influencing factors considered, and the methodologies employed.

4.4. Social Sustainability of Urban Village Redevelopment

Social sustainability is one of the key components of sustainable development because it meets basic human needs, improves livelihoods, and ensures social justice [56]. The quality of the living environment is particularly important as it affects the needs of residents, their daily lives, and social justice [57]. Improving quality of life (QoL) is a key component for enhancing social sustainability at the community level [7,58]. QoL means subjective satisfaction with life [59,60]. The measurement of quality of life is based on the satisfaction of the population and promotes the integration of well-being and social balance by surveying the subjective feelings of the population to ensure social equity [7]. Resident satisfaction measurement facilitates further choices on urban village redevelopment towards socially sustainable regeneration.

According to the new type of urbanization launched in 2014, urban renewal should fully consider the needs and satisfaction of residents to achieve sustainable growth [9,10].

Redevelopment must carefully balance improvements in infrastructure, housing quality, and environmental conditions with the preservation of social cohesion and affordability [2]. These efforts directly influence satisfaction trends by tackling issues such as overcrowding, limited accessibility, and environmental degradation. Urban village redevelopment aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the areas of social inclusion and environmental sustainability, by addressing the evolving needs and satisfaction trends of residents throughout different development phases. By revealing relevant critical resident satisfaction indicators—such as building quality, green space, and neighbourhood interaction—it is clear how these redevelopment efforts align with SDGs (Table 8).

Table 8. Alignment of satisfaction indicators with SDGs (Source: Author).

Dimension	Aligned SDG [1]	Satisfaction Indicators	Description
Environmental Dimension	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Dwelling Area (B2)	Adequate living space and improved housing conditions.
		Building Quality (B4)	Safe, affordable, and quality housing.
	SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)	Outdoor Air Quality (C1)	Clean air and improved environmental health.
		Green Space (C2)	Access to green and public spaces.
	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Parking Convenience (D1)	Efficient and convenient parking solutions.
		Public Transport Convenience (D3)	Accessible and sustainable public transport options.
Social Dimension	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	Neighbourhood Interaction (F1)	Strengthening community bonds and social networks.
		Sense of Security (F4)	Promoting safety and security within the community.

A significant observation from the analysis is that most studies focused on urban villages in Phase II and Phase III, with only one study examining Phase I villages. Due to the limited sample size for Phase I villages, no comparison was made for this phase. The critical indicators associated with SDGs were screened from selected studies, and the satisfaction values were visualized to derive the change in satisfaction for urban village development Phases II and III (Figure 5).

The indicators dwelling area (B2) and building quality (B4) are consistent with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Whilst the satisfaction level for dwelling area (B2) has increased significantly from 2.32 in Phase II to 3.04 in Phase III, this improvement reflects the expansion of living space in the urban village over the course of its development. This increase suggests that redevelopment is addressing overcrowding, ensuring more adequate and comfortable housing for residents, and enhancing urban resilience, safety, and sustainability.

Building quality (B4) remains relatively high in both phases, increasing slightly from 3.24 in Phase II to 3.26 in Phase III, indicating that structural improvements have been maintained throughout the redevelopment process. This stable level of satisfaction emphasizes the importance of building safe and resilient housing in line with SDG 11.1, which aims to provide safe and resilient housing.

The environmental dimension is consistent with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Neighbourhoods), providing important insights into

the impact of urban village redevelopment on environmental sustainability and the health of residents.

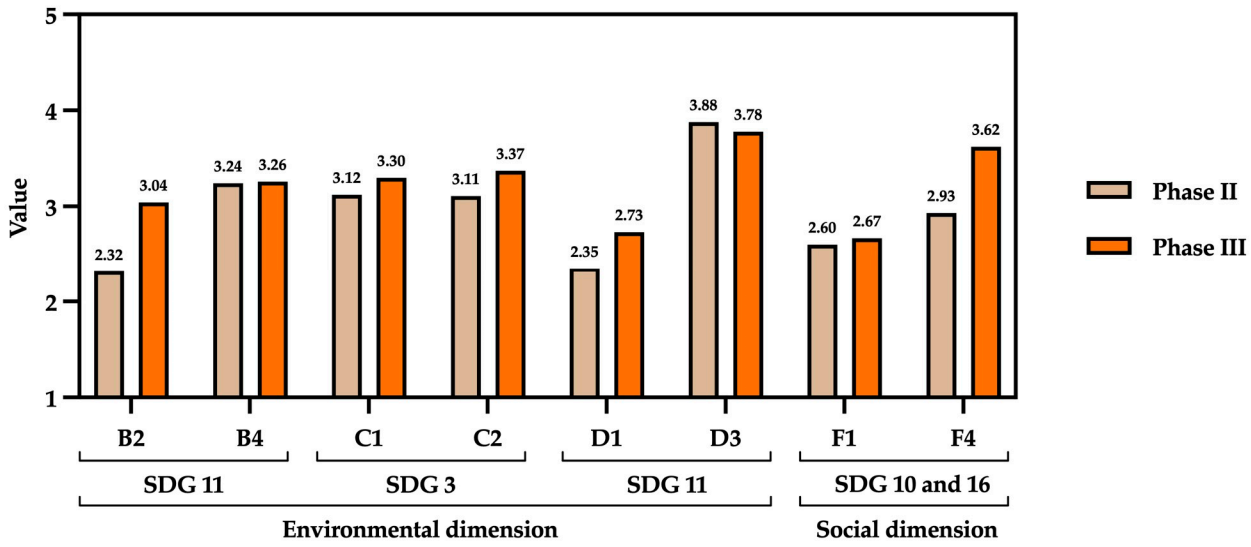

Figure 5. Changes in satisfaction related to SDGs in Phases II and III (Source: Author).

Satisfaction with air quality (C1) increased slightly from 3.12 in Phase II to 3.30 in Phase III, while satisfaction with green spaces (C2) showed a similar upward trend from 3.11 to 3.37. These improvements show that the redevelopment has made great strides in improving environmental conditions, particularly in the provision of cleaner air and more accessible green spaces, which contribute to SDG 11.7. These improvements are in line with SDG 3, as a healthier living environment has a direct impact on the overall well-being of the population.

In terms of accessibility, there has been a slight improvement in accessibility to parking convenience (D1), in line with SDG 11, from 2.35 in Phase II to 2.73 in Phase III, reflecting continued efforts to address traffic congestion and parking issues. Whilst the increase is modest, it is indicative of a gradual improvement in infrastructure, although more may need to be performed to fully meet residents' needs in this area.

In contrast, public transport convenience (D3) remains relatively high, dropping slightly from 3.88 in Phase II to 3.78 in Phase III. Despite the slight drop, the high level of satisfaction suggests that public transport continues to be a strength of urban village redevelopment and fits well with SDG 11.2, which emphasizes the importance of accessible and sustainable transport systems. Maintaining a positive performance in terms of public transport accessibility is essential to ensure that urban villages remain connected to the wider urban fabric.

The social dimensions, focusing on SDG 10 (Reduce Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), reveal important trends in residents' satisfaction with community and social factors.

Neighbourhood interaction (F1) has improved slightly from 2.60 in Phase II to 2.67 in Phase III, reflecting a slight increase in social cohesion. This is in line with SDG 10, which emphasizes reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion. However, this small increase suggests that whilst redevelopment may improve living conditions, the social fabric of the urban villages still requires more efforts to strengthen social ties and interactions amongst residents.

Sense of security (F4) rose even more sharply, from 2.93 in Phase II to 3.62 in Phase III. The large jump in satisfaction highlights the impact of better governance and safety

measures in redeveloped urban villages, which is directly in line with SDG 16. Improved security not only provides residents with greater peace of mind but also promotes inclusive and just neighbourhoods where residents feel safer and more connected.

The data show that the transformation of China's urban villages has generally made positive progress on both environmental and social fronts, clearly aligning with SDGs 3, 10, 11, and 16. Residents' satisfaction with housing, environmental quality, and social cohesion has increased as the urban villages have progressed from Phase II to Phase III, suggesting that redevelopment has been successful in improving residents' quality of life.

However, certain areas, such as social interaction, may need more attention to ensure that these gains are evenly distributed across all indicators. Continued attention to the balance between infrastructure improvements and social inclusiveness will be key to ensuring that urban village redevelopment achieves its full potential in advancing Sustainable Development Goals and promoting sustainable and inclusive urbanization.

5. Limitations, Challenges, and Future Research in Urban Village Redevelopment from Review

5.1. Limitations

While this review provides a comprehensive review of residents' satisfaction in urban village development and redevelopment, certain limitations should be acknowledged.

5.1.1. Generalizability of Findings

The findings are based on a systematic review of 20 selected studies focusing on residents' satisfaction in urban villages in China. While these studies provide valuable insights, their applicability to urban village redevelopment in other countries with different governance structures, socio-economic conditions, and urban planning frameworks may be limited. Future research should incorporate comparative analyses of urban village redevelopment approaches in other developing and developed countries.

5.1.2. Potential Biases in Literature Selection

The systematic review process, while rigorous, is subject to potential publication bias. Studies reporting positive findings on urban village redevelopment and satisfaction levels may be overrepresented, while studies highlighting negative experiences, displacement issues, or policy failures may be underreported. Additionally, reliance on English-language publications could lead to the exclusion of relevant studies published in Chinese or other local languages. Future reviews should incorporate multilingual literature databases to mitigate this bias.

5.1.3. Methodological Constraints in Urban Village Development Stages

Although our three-phase classification provides a structured approach to understanding urban village development, it does not fully account for regional variations. Some urban villages may exhibit characteristics of multiple phases at the same time, especially in cities undergoing rapid redevelopment. Future research should explore hybrid approaches that better reflect the dynamic and context-specific nature of urban village transitions.

5.2. Challenges

Urban village redevelopment must overcome a number of challenges to achieve truly sustainable and inclusive outcomes. The displacement of low-income residents and the erosion of traditional social networks remain significant barriers to inclusiveness [42,45]. As satisfaction with the dwelling area (B2) and building quality (B4) improves, the associated rise in rents threatens to exclude vulnerable groups, especially migrants, who are often the

most economically disadvantaged. This dynamic undermines the principles of equity and social inclusion at the heart of SDG 10 and SDG 11.

The limited improvement in neighbourhood interaction (F1) highlights the difficulty of maintaining social cohesion in the face of rapid modernization. Redevelopment tends to disrupt established community structures, especially for the original inhabitants, and immigrants face obstacles in integrating into the new social environment. In Phase III, the management system shifted from traditional village collectives to a more formalized model but often failed to fully engage residents, thus further weakening the sense of community [20]. These issues highlight the need for participatory governance approaches that prioritize social inclusion and community participation in line with SDG 16.

Environmental sustainability also faces challenges. While satisfaction with air quality (C1) and green spaces (C2) has improved, these gains are not evenly distributed across all urban villages. Some areas continue to face significant environmental degradation, highlighting the need for redevelopment strategies that ensure equitable access to environmental benefits. In addition, the small improvement in parking convenience (D1) suggests that problems of congestion and urban mobility remain, which need to be addressed to achieve a sustainable transport system in line with SDG 11.

5.3. Future Research

To address these challenges, future research needs to focus on promoting sustainable and inclusive practices in urban village redevelopment. A key area of investigation is the impact of redevelopment on social cohesion and inclusiveness. The limited improvement in neighbourhood interactions (F1) suggests the need for research that explores how participatory governance models and community-driven initiatives can strengthen social networks and improve integration between indigenous residents and migrants. Such research would provide valuable insights into fostering cohesive and inclusive communities.

Housing affordability remains a key area for future research. While satisfaction with dwelling area (B2) and building quality (B4) has improved, rising costs associated with redevelopment highlight the need for policies that balance modernisation with affordability. Research into mixed-income housing models and affordable housing policies could provide practical solutions to ensure that redevelopment benefits all residents, including low-income groups.

Environmental sustainability also requires further attention. While improvements in air quality (C1) and green space (C2) are promising, future research should explore long-term strategies for sustaining these gains and extending them to underserved areas. Research into green infrastructure, pollution control measures, and equitable access to environmental amenities will help ensure that all urban villages contribute to SDG 3 and SDG 11.

The transport and accessibility challenges highlighted by the small increase in parking convenience (D1) and the slight decrease in public transport convenience (D3) are also worthy of study. Future research should focus on integrated transport planning and smart infrastructure solutions that improve mobility while minimizing environmental impacts.

The role of governance in driving sustainable and inclusive redevelopment also needs to be explored. While progress has been made, as evidenced by the marked improvement in the sense of safety (F4), the lack of substantial improvement in other social indicators suggests the need for reforms in governance practices. A study of participatory governance models and their impact on resident satisfaction could provide actionable recommendations for policymakers seeking to align urban village redevelopment with SDG 16.

In addition, future research should strengthen the study on the satisfaction of residents of different social groups, such as migrant workers, the elderly population, and low-income

residents. It is important to find out whether age, family structure, and other factors have a significant impact on satisfaction. There is a lack of comparative analyses of the development strategies of different urban villages in the current study, which can be supplemented in future studies.

Given the continuous nature of regional development processes, future research should conduct a systematic analysis of projected developmental trajectories and transitional patterns for urban–rural settlements of varying scales and population densities. Such an analysis should be supported by evidence-based projections that account for demographic shifts, economic transformations, and governance reforms. A comparative approach examining different urbanization models across regions will help identify key trends and best practices in achieving sustainable and inclusive urban development. By integrating spatial and socio-economic forecasting methods, researchers can offer actionable insights for long-term urban planning and policy interventions.

6. Recommendation and Conclusions

To enhance residents' satisfaction, policymakers and urban planners could enhance participatory decision-making, promoting residents to be actively involved in urban planning through community consulting, public hearing, and participatory budgeting process. Inclusive governance could foster a sense of ownership, reducing conflicts and improving satisfaction levels [61]. Also, urban village redevelopment should be guided by clear legal frameworks that protect the rights of original residents and migrants, ensuring fair compensation and relocation policies. Furthermore, an adaptive developing policy framework is necessary. Policymakers should adopt flexible and adaptive urban planning approaches that allow for context-specific solutions rather than a one-size-fits-all redevelopment model. To ensure sustainable and inclusive urban transitions, future redevelopment strategies should integrate evidence-based projections of regional developmental trajectories to anticipate demographic, economic, and governance shifts, thereby enabling more adaptive and resilient urban planning.

This review highlights the critical role of residents' satisfaction in understanding and guiding urban village redevelopment within the framework of sustainable and inclusive development. By analyzing satisfaction trends across social and environmental dimensions, this study demonstrates how key indicators of living quality evolve through different phases of urban village transformation. These insights are essential for aligning redevelopment efforts with national priorities for people-centred, socially sustainable urbanization as outlined in China's five-year plans.

The analysis of satisfaction indicators revealed notable variations in their frequency of surveyed indicators, enabling the identification of critical indicators of building quality, green space, and sense of security. These important indicators emerged as the most frequently surveyed and ranked among the top. They also provide a clear focus on addressing residents' needs and improving satisfaction across different phases of urban village development.

The findings underscore the importance of incorporating residents' satisfaction evaluations into planning and decision-making processes for urban regeneration. Satisfaction trends not only reveal the effectiveness of implemented interventions but also identify areas requiring further attention, such as housing affordability, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. By addressing these dimensions holistically, redevelopment can achieve greater inclusivity and long-term resilience.

However, urban village redevelopment faces challenges, including balancing increased density with affordability, ensuring participatory governance, and maintaining social cohesion. This review emphasizes the need for policies and strategies that prioritize

equitable access to resources and integrate residents' voices into planning processes. Such efforts are critical for achieving socially sustainable urban transitions that promote a sense of belonging and well-being among residents.

In conclusion, residents' satisfaction functions as both a measure of progress and a driving force for sustainable and inclusive urban village redevelopment. By bridging satisfaction data to inform planning strategies, urban regeneration projects can align with broader goals of improving quality of life, reducing inequalities, and advancing sustainable urbanization. This review provides a foundation for further research into satisfaction dynamics and their role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in urban village contexts.

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