

Review

What Drives Urban Village Redevelopment in China? A Survey of Literature Based on Web of Science Core Collection Database

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Abstract: The recent economic advances made by China have now obliged the country to address the need for sustainable urban redevelopment. Unlike other recently developed areas in China, urban villages are in dire need of improvement. Consequently, the redevelopment of urban villages has garnered considerable public and academic interest. However, a comprehensive understanding is lacking on the drivers of urban village redevelopment in China. This study aims to fill this gap through a comprehensive survey of existing literature on redevelopment of urban villages. A total of 167 papers have been retrieved from the Web of Science Core Collection database. A bibliometric analysis and a critical content analysis are conducted on the bases of these papers. We found at least three main processes which have driven urban village redevelopment in China. First, the growth of urban population and their income level has created a strong emerging demand to improve urban living conditions, which has triggered the restructuring of urban villages with sub-standard built environment into high-quality urban spaces. Second, from the production side, the market-oriented land reforms and the developers' pursuit of land-related investment returns from land rent gap is also a strong driving force for demolition and redevelopment of urban villages. Lastly, the states and local governments have played a critical role in promoting urban village redevelopment and integrating informal urban spaces into formal urban areas. This research concludes with an evaluation of current studies on urban village redevelopment and provides suggestions for further research in the future.

Keywords: urban village redevelopment; driving forces; informal space; literature research



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1. Introduction

Given its rapid urbanization and the emergence of substantial demand for urban land, China is currently facing an unprecedented challenge of sustainable urban development and economic growth. Some large cities in China are at the bottleneck of urban development because the land resources for further development have become finite. Against this background, urban renewal has become a crucial component of urban development [1,2]. In Chinese cities, collective land exists in urban villages, which results from village-led land conversion and construction activities [3,4]. Dominated by villagers' interests, village-led development of urban villages has led to multifarious negative outcomes, such as limited land property rights [5,6], inadequate infrastructure [7,8], potential safety hazards [9], and inefficient land use [6,10]. To the governments, the problems of urban villages require urgent solutions, and the governance of urban villages is the main issue in urban development [11–13]. Therefore, urban village rebuilding has become an important component in the practice of urban renewal in China to meet the emerging land-use needs, attract further investment, and sustain economic growth.

Urban village redevelopment generally refers to the demolition and rehabilitation of urban village buildings, involving several complicated processes, including urban

space rebuilding [6], land ownership transformation [14], land value increment [15], and spatial benefit redistribution [16], which have attracted serious attention from the academic community in the past decades. A wealth of studies have investigated the role and relations of different stakeholders in the redevelopment processes based on empirical cases [16–18]. The main participants in the urban village redevelopment include the local governments, real estate developers, and local villagers [19]. Different types of governance modes have been adopted in the processes of urban village redevelopment, such as the government-led model [16,20,21], market-led model [22,23], and collective-led model [14,22,24], to name a few. Different governance models have led to dissimilar collaborative relationships among the relevant stakeholders [25]. Some studies focused on the socio-economic consequences of urban village redevelopment. Urban village redevelopment has been well recognized as having brought profound and diversified impacts to various social groups and urban spaces. On the one hand, the urban village redevelopment has improved land use efficiency [6,26] and has been found to have positive effects on the surrounding housing prices [27]. On the other hand, urban village redevelopments have resulted in a large-scale displacement of migrants [21,28,29] and have brought negative impacts to these people who have made fundamental contributions to urban development [30–32]. Another pool of literature has made efforts to propose strategies for better redevelopment of urban villages in the future. More inclusive governance and planning strategies are necessary for sustainable redevelopment [26,33]. To realize the diverse objectives of urban development, a better understanding on the driving processes of urban village redevelopment is a prerequisite. However, a lack of comprehensive understanding persists on the drivers of urban village redevelopment in China.

This study aims to address this question through a comprehensive survey of existing literature. A total of 167 papers have been retrieved from the Web of Science Core Collection database. A bibliometric analysis and a critical content analysis are then conducted on the bases of these papers. The next section introduces the research methods, followed by an overall picture of the existing research achievements. Section 3 explores the driving forces of the urban village redevelopment from the following perspectives: (i) the emerging demand for improvement of living conditions; (ii) capital accumulation and developers' pursuit of land rent gap; (iii) the important role of the national and local governments. The last section provides a conclusion of the findings and suggestions for future studies.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Paper Retrieval

Relevant studies on urban village redevelopment were retrieved from the research database known as Web of Science (WOS) via a systematic approach. To retrieve as much related literature as possible to identify the drivers of the urban village redevelopment process, this study was not confined to articles published in a set period. We did not set a time limit or constrain the review with journal articles for the bibliometric analysis, but we did choose key published articles according to journal quality for the content analysis. The retrieval procedures are as follows: (i) Research literature was initially searched through broad phrases. In the existing literature, the urban village is also called by different terms, such as “villages in the city” or “chengzhongcun”. The formation and redevelopment of urban villages have a close relationship with the transformation of collective land. Therefore, broader search terms were combined, and the search rules used were “urban village” OR “collective land” OR “chengzhongcun” OR “villages in the city” OR “ViCs,” which were then put in the searching criterion *Topic* in the Web of Science (WOS) database with the language set to English. These rules have led to a total of 467 articles at the end of this step. (ii) Research results were further refined, considering the irrelevance of the topic. Articles with unrelated research fields, such as computer science, history, forestry, immunology, psychology, government law, and anthropology, among others, were excluded. After the subsequent exclusion process, 287 articles were retained. (iii) The abstract and introduction of each paper were read to exclude irrelevant ones. Given that

this study focuses on the drivers of urban village redevelopment, articles concerning the origin, classification, and other issues of urban villages were excluded. The outcome and evaluation of the urban village redevelopment were also excluded. At the end of the process, 167 papers were selected for the following analysis.

2.2. Review Steps

This paper reviewed the surveyed literature via two steps. First, a bibliometric analysis, which includes a co-occurrence analysis of keywords and a co-authorship analysis, is performed to review the main research fields of publications comprehensively. VOSviewer was chosen to help understand certain relationships by providing rounded and detailed illustrations of the data collected from the WOS database. The original data source containing the bibliographic information of the literature is in TXT format. Figures and tables were also adopted to show more extensive information for further analysis. Second, a critical content investigation was adopted to identify the main drivers of urban village redevelopment in China. We found at least three main processes which have driven urban village redevelopment in China.

Given the limitations of the chosen search database, this review focused mainly on literature in English. In addition, the keywords used in this research were chosen on the basis of the object of urban village redevelopment and relevant papers, which might not be thorough. Some studies on other types of urban redevelopment that provide ideas of the driving processes were omitted. Expanding the keywords to encompass urban renewal, urban redevelopment, and urban regeneration covered a broader range of literature on the drivers of urban village redevelopment and allowed for a more comprehensive review of this field. We then conducted a content analysis with a wider scope of articles published in highly ranked journals to restrict these possible prejudices, providing a more comprehensive perspective.

3. Bibliometric Analysis

3.1. Overview

Figure 1 outlines the rise in papers published on the theme of urban village redevelopment for the period from 2008 to 2020. The upwards trajectory indicates that this field attracted increased scholarly attention during the period 2008–2016. This sharp increase finally peaked in 2018, which shows that the academic circle may have some discoveries in the field of urban village redevelopment, stimulating relevant research in various disciplines once again. The number of relevant articles published in the past three years has shown a relatively stable state, indicating that the relevant research has matured in recent years. Compared with literature in the amount of research conducted on urban renewal in related fields such as gentrification, brownfield redevelopment, and single-house redevelopment, the number of articles on urban village redevelopment remains relatively small. A room remains for contributions toward a better understanding of urban village redevelopment.

3.2. Journal Analysis

The leading twenty journals from which the aforementioned papers were obtained are outlined in Table 1. The journals span various fields, including urban studies, area studies, development studies, environment sciences and ecology, public administration, science and technology, geography, and remote sensing. *Habitat International* has published 24 papers on urban village redevelopment. Many of the remaining papers were retrieved from *Cities*, *Urban Studies*, *Sustainability*, *Land Use Policy*, and *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*. Thus, research on this topic is indicated to be mostly relevant to the discipline of urban studies, area studies, and land development. The other papers were published in geographical journals.

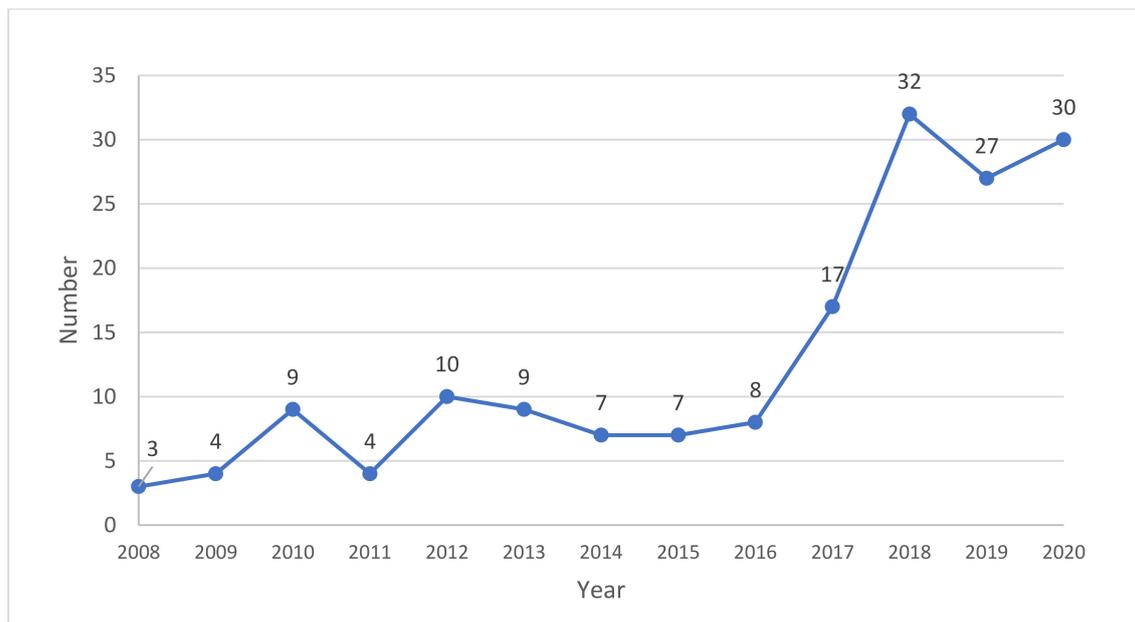


Figure 1. Number of relevant papers in the past years.

Table 1. Surveyed papers among different journals.

T	Journal Title	Number	No	Journal Title	Number
1	HABITAT INTERNATIONAL	24	11	REMOTE SENSING	4
2	CITIES	16	12	CHINA REVIEW-AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL ON GREATER CHINA	4
3	URBAN STUDIES	16	13	EURASIAN GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMICS	3
4	SUSTAINABILITY	12	14	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING REVIEW	3
5	LAND USE POLICY	9	15	ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING A	3
6	JOURNAL OF URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	8	16	LAND	2
7	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF URBAN AND REGIONAL RESEARCH	8	17	ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING B-URBAN ANALYTICS AND CITY SCIENCE	2
8	HOUSING STUDIES	4	18	ENVIRONMENT AND URBANIZATION	2
9	JOURNAL OF CLEANER PRODUCTION	4	19	GEOFORUM	2
10	URBAN GEOGRAPHY	4	20	JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY CHINA	2

3.3. Keyword Analysis

The software tool VOSviewer was employed to perform a co-occurrence evaluation of the keywords, all of which had a frequency that exceeded 8. A visual word co-occurrence network was created as a result. (Figure 2a). As seen from the keyword cluster distribution, relevant research forms multiple clusters around multiple key nodes presented in a similar colour system. The overall clustering structure of existing studies is relatively clear, and keywords of different clustering have been closely related and developed in the past

Figure 2b presents the visualization map of keywords changing with time. According to Figure 2b, recent scholarship focuses on land use, policy, space transformation, informality, and governance patterns. The keyword clustering in selected literature fields can readily be identified as concentrated in 2015–2020, suggesting that the research network has a strong concentration. From 2010 to 2015, most of the relevant literature focused on urbanization, market forces, and urban transformation. Research in the past five years (2015–present) began to incorporate concepts such as renewal policy, land property rights, and the impact of vulnerable groups into the literature for analysis. In recent years, concepts such as urban migration and urban governance, which have attracted substantial attention in the practice of renewal, have also attracted increasing scholarly attention and research. In terms of the frequency and time evolution of keywords, the research areas selected in the existing literature are from China’s first-tier cities, such as Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Beijing, and Shanghai.

3.4. Author Analysis

This section identifies authors who have contributed significantly to this research area. Table 2 presents the top ten authors who have contributed to research into urban village redevelopment and published most papers. According to Table 2, Geertman, S., Lin, Y.L., He, S.J., Wu, F.L. Lai, Y.N. and Hao, P. have all made notable contributions to the advancement of research on urban village redevelopment. Geertman, Stan, a scholar from Utrecht University, published 12 papers from 2008 to 2020. The top 10 authors listed in Table 2 are all from well-known domestic and foreign universities, three of them from Utrecht University. The domestic institutions of the authors include Hong Kong University, Shenzhen University, Hong Kong Baptist University, Wuhan University, and Sun Yat-Sen University. A co-authorship network analysis is conducted to reveal collaborative relationships among these authors. Co-authorship analysis was conducted with the counting method of full counting, which means each co-authorship link had the same weight. We constrained the minimum number of documents of each author to four and did not put a citation number limit. Of the 512 authors, 17 met the thresholds. A circle refers to one author, and the number of co-authorship links determines the size of the circle. According to Figure 3, at least five clusters of co-authorship groups exist. The authors in the same cluster collaborate with one another more than with the authors outside the cluster. Nodes with different colours are clustered closely, suggesting that the authors in the same cluster have collaborated on specific themes. These results also indicate the most active scholars and their relationships within the research field and enable easy following of the related and latest research.

Table 2. List of the most important contributing authors.

No	Author	Institution	Number	%
1	Geertman, Stan	Utrecht University	12	7.19
2	Lin, Yanliu	Utrecht University	11	6.59
3	He, Shenjing	University of Hong Kong	9	5.39
4	Wu, Fulong	University College London	9	5.39
5	Lai, Yani	Shenzhen University	8	4.79
6	Hao, Pu	Hong Kong Baptist University	6	3.59
7	Li, Zhigang	Wuhan University	6	3.59
8	Webster, Chris	University of Hong Kong	6	3.59
9	Li, Xun	Sun Yat Sen University	5	2.99
10	Liu, Ying	Utrecht University	5	2.99



Figure 3. Co-authorship analysis network visualization.

4. Drivers of Urban Village Redevelopment in China

Based on a critical content analysis of the surveyed literature, we found at least three main processes which have driven urban village redevelopment in China. First, the growth of urban population and income level in the ongoing urbanization process has created an emerging solid demand to improve urban living conditions, which have triggered the restructuring of urban villages with sub-standard built environment into high-quality urban spaces. Second, from the production side, the market-oriented land reforms and the developers’ pursuit of land-related investment returns from the land rent gap is also a strong driving force for the demolition and rebuilding of urban villages. Lastly, the states and the regional governments have played a prominent part in promoting urban village redevelopment and integrating informal urban spaces into formal urban areas (Figure 4).

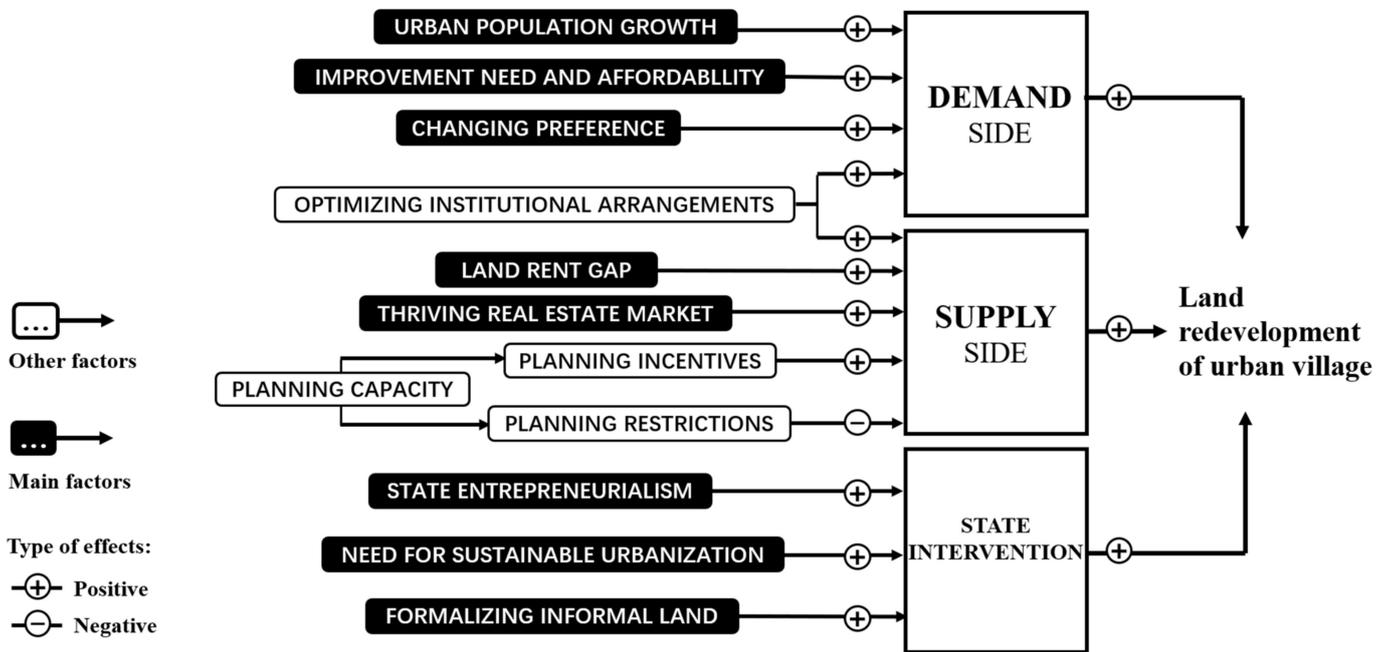


Figure 4. Simplified scheme of the main drivers identified in the literature.

4.1. Emerging Demand for Improvement of Urban Living Conditions

The considerable rise in the urban population and income level in the ongoing urbanization process has created a strong market demand for high-quality living spaces in cities, especially in large cities [34–36]. In the 1980s, at the beginning of reform and development, China’s urban population and income were both in their infancy. At that time, the urban population was 191 million. With the rapid development of China’s cities and the growth

of the urban economy, the urban population has increased significantly. According to the seventh national census, the national population reached 1,411,778,724 by 2020, among which the urban population was over 900 million. A large number of migrants have chosen to live in megacities for job opportunities, such as Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Nanjing [37–39]. In the case of Shenzhen, which is located in the Pearl River Delta urban agglomeration, it was originally a small fishing village before reform and opening up. In less than forty years, Shenzhen has become one of China's most populous and prosperous megacities. Shenzhen's urban population has reached more than 17 million by 2020, and most migrants still live in urban villages [3]. The rapid growth of urban population and the aggregation of well-educated people provided sufficient impetus for urban economic development, which generally increased residents' average income and consumption level [40]. The increase in urban population and disposable income has created a strong demand for high-quality housing conditions in recent years. Recent research shows that urban residents increasingly prefer new housing with a larger area, better building quality, improved environment [41,42], and sufficient facilities such as advanced medical care and high-quality education resources [43]. According to the UN, China's urbanization rate will continue to increase in the coming years and reach 70% by 2030. The need to improve urban living conditions in megacities will become even more pressing [44]. Such needs can no longer be fulfilled by the informal housing provided by urban villages [21].

However, high-quality formal housing remains extremely limited in Chinese megacities. For example, in 2007, Shenzhen boasted merely one million commercial, residential units. The number increased to 1.89 million in 2020, which can only accommodate a small portion of the urban residents living in this city. Although the municipal government has made efforts to provide public housing in recent years, the stock of developed public housing is very limited. One of the specific consequences of the urbanization and land reform processes that transpired in the 1980s is that a high percentage of land within the boundaries of megacities is occupied by urban villages [8,45]. The inner conditions of urban villages are often crowded and disordered [7]. Urban villages always have high-density and poor-quality buildings [46]. The surrounding environment of urban villages typically lacks high-quality infrastructure and public service [47], among others. In the earlier urban development stage, the presence of urban villages was critical because they served as sites of affordable housing and living space for the influx of urban migrants [48,49]. In terms of the demand side, the main driver of gentrification in the West is the desire to return to the city centre [50]. By contrast, the emerging needs of China's urban dwellers are largely reflected in the urgent demand for better living conditions. With the rising income levels, urban residents have changed their preferences of living conditions and can afford better living. Most urban villages with sub-standard environments have failed to meet the new needs for improving living conditions [41]. The mismatch between the emerging demand and the unsatisfactory urban living conditions in urban villages becomes an essential problem in megacities. In such context, the redevelopment of urban villages into high-quality formal housing estates has become an important means to fulfil the emerging housing demands [24,51].

4.2. Capital Accumulation and Developers' Pursuit of Land-Related Investment Returns

From the supply side, profit-oriented urban capital accumulation via land-related investment has become a key driver of spatial reproduction in the global urban depressed areas [52,53]. According to Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith [54], urban space is an important carrier to absorb capital appreciation. The reconfiguration of urban space has been heavily influenced by the rationale of capital accumulation which is now a symbolic representation of real estate values [55]. Accordingly, the land redevelopment process in urban renewal can be understood as a continuous spatial reproduction of urban depressed space [52], which is an important way to realize capital accumulation. A wealth of studies have investigated the vital role of capital accumulation in shaping the redevelopment process and outcomes in different local contexts [56,57]. According to Marxist geographer Neil Smith [58], the

land rent gap is a fundamental concept to understanding land redevelopment from the perspective of capital accumulation. Specifically, the land rent gap denotes the difference between the financial returns generated by a property due to current land use and the probable returns caused if the property were put to more lucrative use. When this rent gap becomes sufficiently large for developers to reap significant investment returns from this process, redevelopment will occur. From this perspective, urban capital and developers in different countries have similar aims in relation to urban redevelopment activities, not least in respect of land-related investment returns. However, their roles and influence in this sphere may vary in accordance with difference in local renewal contexts [56,57].

With the reform of urban land system marked by the separation of the land use rights and state land ownership, a prosperous land market has been formed in China [59]. Capital accumulation and developers' pursuit of land-related investment returns from the rent gap becomes a powerful force for urban village redevelopment in China [10,60,61]. The public infrastructure and planning policies during dynamic urbanization have substantially impacted the land rent gap. When the surrounding urban environment and infrastructure are improved, the potential rent of the urban village area keeps rising rapidly. By contrast, due to the suboptimal land use and disorganized physical environment [62], the existing land rent in urban villages has been low for a long time. The formation of land rent gap makes it profitable for developers to redevelop urban villages for "highest and best" use (Figure 5). According to previous literature, well-located urban villages, such as in large cities or close to urban centres, are supposed to experience earlier redevelopment in comparison to villages located in outlying zones [21,63]. However, a recent study shows that the land rent gap of urban villages is also affected by many other factors like land ownership and rights, existing land use, and planned land use. These factors collectively affected the land rent gap as well as the attributes of transaction costs in the redevelopment processes and shaped redevelopment outcomes [64]. On the one hand, capital accumulation and developers' pursuit of land-related investment returns has promoted the demolition and rebuilding of urban villages and has contributed to many formal housing units via redevelopment [65]. On the other hand, market-oriented redevelopment of urban villages has brought some negative impacts to some vulnerable social groups and the city. Migrants have been forced to move out of urban villages. This phenomenon will inevitably threaten social sustainability in urban development [27,66].

4.3. Important Role of the States and Local Governments

The local states have played a critical role in the land redevelopment processes [18,67,68]. Along with the constant market-oriented reforms over the past years, the state increasingly relies on market approaches to stimulate redevelopment activities and realize developmental objectives known as "state entrepreneurialism" [69–71]. With limited resources, fierce competition exists among local governments for urban growth and development [59,68]. Under such a background, the local states have strong motivations to attract investments and migrants for urban development [72]. However, the widely existing informal urban lands, such as urban villages, have become a huge obstacle to sustainable development [73,74]. A large-scale informal urban space based on collective land lacks legal property rights and is outside the urban planning and land management system [75], which fails to support high-quality urban development [76]. In the case of Shenzhen, where land resources are extremely scarce, urban villages (393.3 km²) accounted for more than 55% of the entire urban area (703.5 km²) at the end of 2006 [3]. Such informal space developed by the villages has led to a disordered built environment with inadequate public infrastructure and service provision. In this context, demolition and rebuilding of urban villages have been imperative for achieving the objective of sustainable urban development. To the local governments, urban village redevelopment has a strong potential to achieve multiple development goals. In contrast to the passive intervention responses to the dominant market mechanisms, such as fixing externalities of urban redevelopment [77,78], Chinese

national and local states are more proactive in shaping the processes and outcomes of urban redevelopment.

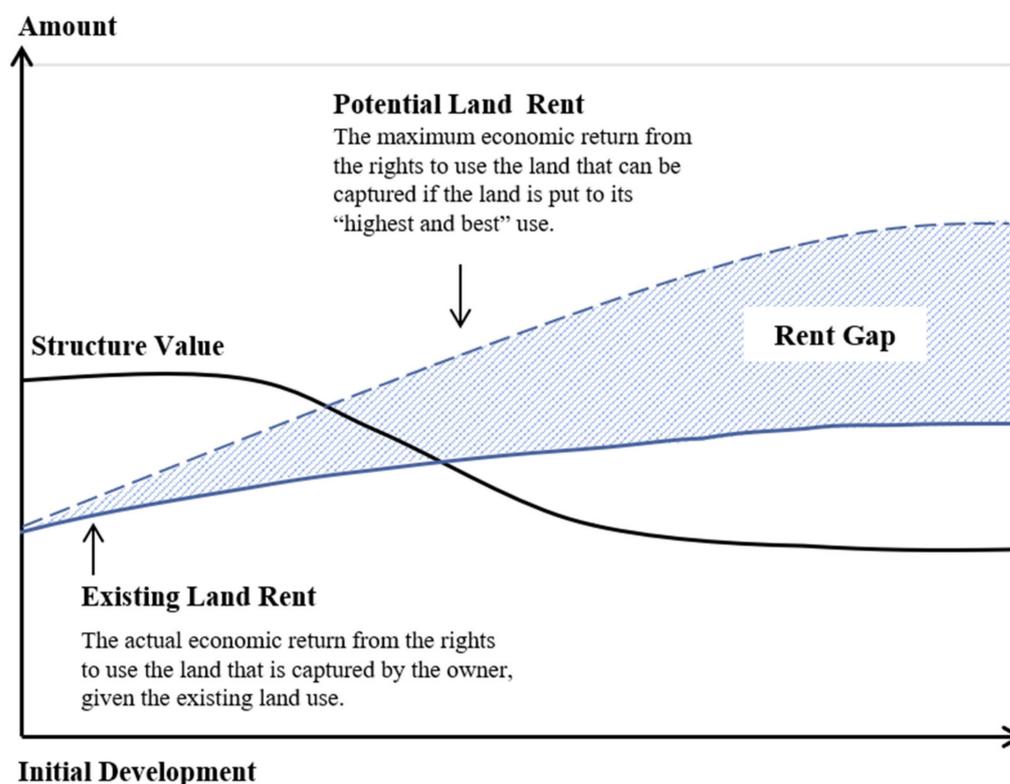


Figure 5. Development of rent gap in urban villages.

The role of the local governments has experienced a marked change in triggering and enabling the urban village redevelopment during the past decades [67,70]. Traditionally, the local governments dominated the process of urban renewal. They have rights to select redevelopment sites, make a top-down land use planning system for redevelopment [67,79], choose developers for redevelopment, and resettle affected villagers in the redevelopment process [21]. Such a state-led redevelopment process of urban villages has negative externalities. For example, the high cost and inefficiency of redevelopment fail to meet the requirements of high-speed urban development [80]. Meanwhile, such forced demolition and reconstruction also somewhat neglected the rights and interests of diverse stakeholders [14], leading to a large number of displacements of local villagers [31,81]. Along with the market-oriented reforms on land (re)development, the role of the local governments has profoundly transformed in the redevelopment of urban villages. They have strong incentives to promote the urban village redevelopment to integrate the informal settlements into formal and governable urban spaces. In many cities, the traditional state-led model of land redevelopment is supplemented with bottom-up market instruments [70,82]. In Guangdong Province, the land transfer is no longer required to get through a state requisition process. To improve the efficiency and reduce the cost of the redevelopment process, the local states increasingly rely on market actors to achieve redevelopment goals. In this case, market entities such as developers, property owners, and investment capital have become the most important actors to initiate and implement redevelopment projects in recent years [22,24,83,84]. The local states have paid increasing attention to regulatory guidance in redevelopment [66,85]. For example, they make regulations on the requirements of surveying the willingness of property owners and the qualifications of developers. Urban planning standards are carried out to guide the private planning for individual redevelopment projects [64]. The changing rules and policies have effectively promoted the redevelopment of urban villages in recent years, especially in Guangdong

Province [3,14]. Nonetheless, the local states play critical roles in stimulating and regulating the redevelopment in the dynamic socio-economic environment.

5. Discussion

As China is steadily moving towards neoliberalism [66,86], the role of market forces has become even more critical in urban village redevelopment. At the same time, the states and local governments continue to play important roles in stimulating and regulating land redevelopment, which directly shape the processes and outcomes of urban village redevelopment. Despite the rapid promotion of urban village redevelopment under a market-oriented pattern, the emerging demand from urban citizens and the critical role of the state should not be ignored. Rapid urbanization and the increasing number of urban dwellers mean that the demand for improved urban living conditions in megacities will become even more pressing. The mismatch between the emerging demand and the unsatisfactory urban living conditions in urban villages will remain a strong driving force in the redevelopment processes. In the future, market forces will remain the main impetus of urban village redevelopment in China. With the gradual improvement of the real estate development system and gradual development of the national land market towards stability, the investment behaviour of urban capital and developers seeking economic returns in land redevelopment activities will become more rational. Developers will place greater value on cooperation with local governments and the impact of government intervention. Hence, their project choices will accommodate urban planning and development strategies. Moreover, the trend towards neoliberalism means that the urban village redevelopment cannot unconditionally depend on market mechanisms. Instead, this form of development needs national and local authority power in conjunction with the influence of the market. Many existing studies indicate that state intervention can create the optimal conditions for market operation [68,87,88]. Against this background, how national and local governments respond to the laws of the market, allocate power, and formulate urban planning must be considered, in addition to how redevelopment policies and systems adapt to local conditions. These considerations are central to the successful redevelopment of urban villages.

The aims and roles of Chinese and Western governments in promoting urban redevelopment are dissimilar. Early Western governments tended to promote and initiate urban redevelopment with the objective of solving urban issues. This dominated the entire redevelopment process. Gentrification, one of the main forms of urban redevelopment in the West, is considered a national strategy implemented by governments to mitigate social conflict, reduce crime, and address urban poverty [50]. The British and American governments have promoted gentrification policies, and the Dutch central government has introduced *residential re-differentiation*; the objective of all these governments is to achieve social integration [89,90]. The role of the state and local governments in promoting urban village redevelopment has changed during the past decades. Urban entrepreneurialism has also received growing attention [91–93]. An increasing number of studies confirm that the important driving force in local governments' promotion of urban renewal is embodied in greater local competitiveness and the ability to attract local investment. Taking Europe as an example, in response to the urban renewal initiatives and the ever-developing entrepreneurship of the local authority, the Dublin government reformed the urban planning and established particular purposed urban renewal institutions [77]. Urban renewal in the United States is more dependent on the collaboration between the local authority and downtown commercial interest groups to promote declining inner cities competing with burgeoning suburbs [78].

In comparison, emerging local elites have propelled China's urban renewal in a more efficient and low-budget instrument. The Chinese local government is willing to rely on market forces to stimulate redevelopment activities and realise developmental objectives [20]. In China, emerging local elites use decentralised state power to pursue sustainable urban development and rapid economic growth in the soaring real estate

market. For example, governments in the West usually attract capital through economic means, such as capital investment, to achieve the goal of slum eradication and inner-city regeneration [77,78]. In China, the government shapes the processes and outcomes of redevelopment activities directly through urban planning, development intensity control, or other forms of policy interventions. The governments of cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou have the power to decide on projects or areas for urban redevelopment and set the direction and planning layout of redevelopment [66,85]. In Shenzhen, market players such as developers and village collectives are given the right to declare new redevelopment projects, whilst the Shenzhen government plays a role in target planning and regulatory control [3]. Therefore, future research should fully consider the local institutional background. In addition, Western urban redevelopment has formed a redevelopment pattern based on the cooperation of government, enterprises, and the public, whereas China's urban village redevelopment still needs to be optimised in terms of residents' demands.

The investigations into the process of urban village redevelopment have undergone rapid growth in the past decade. However, findings derived from existing literature are not always inconsistent. For example, some studies focus on market demands for high-quality urban housing driving the redevelopment of urban villages, whereas others claim that land redevelopment happens mainly through state-led actions. With the continuous deepening and expansion of relevant studies, recent research has paid increasing attention to the various local contexts and the roles of different actors in the reconstruction process of urban villages. Indeed, the redevelopment of urban villages involves intertwined processes and is driven by multiple forces. The inconsistency of findings from different studies may also arise from the different study areas. In the Chinese urbanization process, significant differences exist in different regions with various socio-economic contexts and urban development patterns, which have shaped diversified processes and outcomes of urban village redevelopment. Furthermore, a review of the existing literature shows that some limitations remain in the studies of urban village redevelopment. First, most of the existing studies on urban village redevelopment are based on individual case studies in different cities. Understanding is lacking on the bigger picture of the institutional diversity and multiple driving forces of large-scale urban village redevelopment. This study will hopefully proffer a more profound understanding on the driving forces of urban village redevelopment in China. Second, most of the existing studies are largely qualitative. Quantitative efforts are insufficient to estimate the impacts of distinct factors on the redevelopment of urban villages. For example, some policies are believed to have promoted the redevelopment of urban villages. Nevertheless, it remains unclear to what extent and how. To overcome these issues, extra efforts on both theoretical frameworks and empirical analysis are needed to better understand the changing urban villages in the future.

6. Conclusions

Redevelopment of urban villages has been a hot research topic in the past decades. However, a comprehensive understanding is lacking on the drivers of urban village redevelopment. This study fills this gap through a comprehensive survey of existing literature with the employment of a bibliometric analysis and a critical content analysis. This review enhances the understanding of the main driving processes of urban village redevelopment in China and provides a strong basis for researchers investigating the field of urban village redevelopment. Over the last decade, there was a substantial rise in the number of academic papers devoted to the study of urban village redevelopment, indicating an increasing research interest in this subject. The published journals span a variety of fields, which include urban studies, geography, and development studies. A strong market demand exists for high-quality living space; capital accumulation by realizing land rent gap and the strategy of the state and local governments are the main forces driving urban village redevelopment in China. The role of market forces in urban village redevelopment is becoming increasingly important as China moves towards neoliberalism. Simultaneously,

the state and local governments continue to exert a significant effect in terms of incentives and regulation of land redevelopment, which directly impact the processes and outcomes of urban village redevelopment. Over the past years, decentralization and market-oriented policy reforms have redefined the relations between the government and the market and promoted urban village redevelopment. Further studies exploring the role of the state and local government in the market-oriented redevelopment processes would be worthwhile. However, problems persist in the redevelopment of urban villages according to the existing studies. For example, the rights and needs of the massive groups of migrants living in urban villages are still largely ignored in the redevelopment of urban villages after so many years of redevelopment practice. The rebuilding of urban villages has brought profound and negative impacts to these people, who have contributed their life to the urbanization process and economic growth in the past years. However, they continue to be excluded in the redevelopment process. How to protect these people's interests and rights in the urban village redevelopment warrants future research attention.

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