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Exploring Self-Organization in Community-Led Urban Regeneration: A Comparative Analysis of Chinese Approaches

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Abstract: Self-organization has emerged as a critical approach in community-led urban regeneration, particularly in addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization and socio-spatial inequalities. In the Chinese context, where urban governance has traditionally been state-centric, self-organized initiatives represent a significant shift toward grassroots participation and localized decision-making. This study conducts a comparative analysis of four cases: Guangminglou Building No. 17 in Beijing, Kangjian Road 341 Building No. 7–8 in Shanghai, Honggang Garden Residence in Shenzhen, and Jiqun Street Building No. 2 in Guangzhou to examine self-organization in community-led urban regeneration in China. It reveals the following: (1) Residents' active participation and co-construction awareness are the foundation of successful renewal. The construction of resident self-governance and democratic decision-making mechanisms should be strengthened. (2) The government's policy support and financial guidance are vital. Local governments can mobilize social capital to participate by providing financial subsidies, tax incentives, and other means. (3) Urban planning should combine local cultural characteristics and community needs, avoiding the simple “demolish and rebuild” model. (4) Technical means can effectively improve efficiency and reduce information asymmetry and conflicts of interest. The findings suggest that self-organization is not merely a grassroots phenomenon but often operates within a hybrid governance framework, where collaboration between communities and local governments is essential. The study has significant implications for urban planning and policy, contributes to the growing discourse on participatory urban regeneration, and offers practical insights for fostering sustainable community-led initiatives.

Keywords: community planning; urban regeneration; public participation; self-organization; self-renewal



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1. Introduction

Community-led urban regeneration and participatory planning have become central paradigms in urban studies, highlighting the critical role of citizen engagement, partnerships, and innovative governance in achieving sustainable urban development. The rapid pace of urbanization globally has significantly increased the need for effective and sustainable regeneration projects. In response to this challenge, cities worldwide have turned to self-organization as a key strategy in urban renewal, recognizing its potential to address both external pressures and the internal needs of local communities [1]. As early as the 1990s, scholars such as Manuel Castells and David Harvey suggested that self-organization could offer viable solutions to urban challenges by fostering greater community resilience

and adaptability [2]. In the early 21st century, the concept of self-organization gained prominence in the field of urban renewal, particularly in the revitalization of aging neighborhoods. This shift has led to more collaborative approaches involving both public and private sectors, enabling shared investments, resources, and expertise. The importance of public involvement in urban regeneration projects is increasingly emphasized, with local stakeholders seeking to create tailor-made, sustainable solutions that reflect the unique needs of their communities [3]. Research on self-organization internationally covers diverse topics such as community participation, economic revitalization, cultural heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and public–private partnerships [4], providing valuable lessons for revitalizing old neighborhoods.

Globally, countries are actively pursuing the revitalization of aging communities, recognizing that such initiatives improve residents' quality of life and foster local economic development [5]. In the United States, a key factor in successfully revitalizing old neighborhoods has been using real estate value-added tax (VAT) as a financing tool. The Community Reinvestment Agency, for example, issues municipal bonds and pre-collects VAT to fund renovation projects [6]. In the UK, the emphasis on old neighborhood regeneration has been on promoting public participation. The New Deal for Communities (NDC) Programme, launched in 1998, stands as one of the most prominent area-based initiatives (ABIs) in England, with a strong focus on community engagement from the outset [7]. On the other hand, Japan has adopted a network-based approach to neighborhood revitalization, encouraging inter-community collaborations that facilitate the sharing of resources, information, and experiences [8]. The diverse strategies and successful practices employed internationally offer valuable insights that can inform the revitalization of old neighborhoods in China, providing lessons in governance, financing, and community engagement.

In recent decades, self-organization has emerged as a pivotal concept in urban regeneration, referring to bottom-up, community-led initiatives that complement or challenge traditional top-down urban planning approaches [9,10]. Across the globe, cities have increasingly embraced self-organization as a means to foster public participation, promote social cohesion, and enhance urban resilience [11,12]. In Europe and North America, self-organized urban regeneration often manifests in grassroots movements, cooperative housing projects, and community-led placemaking, supported by decentralized governance structures and legal frameworks that enable citizen empowerment and financial autonomy [3,6,13]. However, in China, where urban planning is traditionally state-driven, self-organization unfolds within a distinct governance, socio-economic, and institutional landscape. Unlike Western cities, where local governments often serve as facilitators of participatory planning, Chinese urban regeneration operates within a framework of authoritarian communitarianism [14,15], wherein the government retains significant control while selectively incorporating community-led initiatives into broader planning policies. This results in a hybrid governance model where community self-renewal efforts must align with government objectives and regulatory constraints [16]. Moreover, financial mechanisms supporting urban regeneration in China differ significantly from those in market-driven Western economies. At the same time, the Municipal State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) and its subordinates, real estate developers, and government subsidies play a crucial role, but independent community-led funding remains limited [17]. To explore these characteristics more deeply, this study examines self-organized regeneration across four major Chinese cities—Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou. By analyzing these cases, this paper aims to provide insights into successful community-led regeneration practices, policy implications, and planning strategies, contributing to the broader discourse on urban self-organization in both Chinese and global contexts.

China's urbanization has transitioned from rapid, extensive growth to improving existing urban stock quality. The Chinese government has consistently introduced a series of policies and guiding measures to support and promote the renovation and upgrading of old residential communities. These initiatives are designed to improve residents' living conditions, enhance urban functions, and elevate the overall quality of the urban environment. The 2019 Central Economic Work Conference strongly emphasized urban renewal, explicitly advocating for the "strengthening of urban renewal and the renovation and upgrading of existing housing", with a focus on transforming aging residential communities. In alignment with this, the State Council and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) have issued several policies to promote renovating old residential areas. Notably, in 2020, the General Office of the State Council released the "Guiding Opinions on Advancing the Renovation of Urban Old Residential Communities", calling for a comprehensive national push for such renovations. Further reinforcing this agenda, in 2022, the NDRC outlined the "Key Tasks for New Urbanization and Rural–Urban Integration Development", underscoring the need to promote these renovation efforts vigorously. In 2024, the General Office of the Ministry of Natural Resources issued the "Notice on Further Strengthening the Support for Planning and Land Policies for the Renovation and Upgrading of Old Residential Communities", highlighting the importance of policy support in facilitating land use and planning for these projects.

In parallel with the rapid economic growth, citizens have grown awareness of their rights and a heightened demand for improved living conditions. According to authoritative data from the Ministry of Housing and Urban–Rural Development, China has over 219,000 old residential communities, affecting more than 100 million residents. These communities, primarily constructed before 2000, often suffer from outdated infrastructure, inadequate public facilities, and poor living conditions, severely impacting residents' quality of life. In response to these challenges, the Chinese government has placed a strong emphasis on the renovation of these communities. In recent years, the number of renovated communities has steadily increased, particularly since 2021, when the annual number of newly renovated urban old residential communities surpassed 50,000. Additionally, central and local governments have allocated more than 30 billion RMB annually to support the implementation of these projects. Despite these positive developments, several challenges persist in the renovation process. The primary obstacle is securing sufficient funding, as available financial resources remain limited. Real estate market control policies have further constrained investment willingness from the private sector, exacerbating the funding gap [18]. A second challenge lies in the coordination of public opinion, as residents often hold divergent views on the renovation plans, including the scope of renovations, methods of implementation, and cost-sharing arrangements, which can delay or disrupt progress [19]. Additionally, institutional and procedural issues, such as lengthy approval processes and a lack of effective post-renovation management and maintenance systems, continue to impede the smooth execution of these projects. These challenges require a coordinated, multi-stakeholder effort to address effectively [20].

Urban regeneration in China has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, driven by a growing focus on participatory community planning and self-organization. These shifts are pivotal in addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization, aging infrastructure, and socio-spatial inequalities. This study aims to synthesize the key contributions to understanding self-organization, participatory planning, and their roles in urban regeneration within the Chinese context. It highlights critical theoretical developments, empirical findings, and ongoing challenges in the field. The research demonstrates that self-organization is an effective tool for community-led urban regeneration in China, fostering inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability. Through an examination of four diverse

case studies—Guangminglou Building No. 17 in Beijing, Kangjian Road 341 Building No. 7–8 in Shanghai, Honggang Garden Residence in Shenzhen, and Jiqun Street Building No. 2 in Guangzhou—the study underscores the significance of hybrid governance approaches, participatory mechanisms, and context-sensitive strategies in enabling successful regeneration outcomes. This paper presents a comparative analysis of typical cases of self-driven renovation in the old residential communities of China’s mega-cities, offering insights into the practical experiences of regeneration and transformation. It synthesizes lessons learned across four key dimensions: fundraising, multi-stakeholder involvement, planning and design, and governance and management.

As China transitions into a new stage of stock-based development and intensive growth, renovating old residential communities has become a pressing priority. This shift aligns with national goals to improve residents’ quality of life and promote urban sustainability. This study emphasizes the importance of efficiently utilizing existing community resources, encompassing the entire spectrum from project mobilization to construction and subsequent operational management. By distilling and sharing these valuable experiences, the paper offers firm support and replicable examples for promoting self-driven renovation in old residential communities nationwide. It aims to stimulate greater social participation in community renewal, thereby significantly enhancing both the urban environment and residents’ living standards. As urban challenges continue to evolve, self-organization presents a promising pathway for empowering communities to shape their urban futures. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the concepts of community-led urban regeneration, residents’ empowerment, self-organization, and participatory community planning. Section 3 provides a detailed analysis of the case studies on China’s independent renewal initiatives, while Section 4 discusses the findings and implications. Finally, Section 5 concludes with key takeaways, policy recommendations, and directions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Community-Led Urban Regeneration and Residents’ Empowerment

Community-led urban regeneration is rooted in the idea of empowering residents to take an active role in shaping their environments, fostering sustainability, and addressing socio-spatial inequalities. Foley and Martin (2000) highlight that community-led initiatives often reflect a divergence between grassroots perspectives and central government viewpoints, necessitating frameworks that integrate both [21]. Similarly, Nevin and Shiner (1995) emphasize partnerships as a mechanism to bridge these gaps, advocating for a reciprocal relationship between communities and institutions [22]. Deakin and Allwinkle (2007) underscore the role of networks, innovation, and creativity in fostering sustainable urban regeneration—their work positions regeneration efforts as collaborative processes that depend on multi-stakeholder engagement [23]. The conceptual framework provided by Hofer and Kaufmann (2023) further refines this view by introducing the “actors, arenas, and aims” model, which illustrates the complexity of public participation in urban planning [24]. This framework emphasizes the need to balance diverse interests while achieving equitable outcomes. The historical evolution of community-led regeneration is another key theme. Krüger (1993) highlights the contribution of community education to urban regeneration, emphasizing the importance of capacity-building initiatives [25]. McKnight (1987) similarly stresses the regenerative potential of fostering community cohesion, arguing that regeneration is more about social transformation than physical redevelopment [26].

With the increasing residents’ empowerment in regenerating communities, participatory planning has emerged as a cornerstone of contemporary urban regeneration, offering mechanisms for inclusive and democratic decision-making. Lang et al. (2016) explore

participatory planning in the context of China's urbanization, highlighting the importance of integrating local knowledge into planning processes [27]. Building on this, Lang et al. (2022) utilize social media data to measure neighborhood vibrancy, demonstrating how participatory approaches can harness technology to enhance urban planning [28]. Hui et al. (2021) provide a case study of participatory planning in China, showcasing how such initiatives can revitalize community vitality [29]. Similarly, Pourzakarya and Bahramjerdi (2021) document a participatory action research project in Iran, illustrating how localized, context-sensitive methodologies can address unique urban challenges [30]. These case studies underscore the importance of tailoring participatory approaches to specific socio-cultural and spatial contexts. The literature points to several promising directions. Özman and Taşan-Kok (2024) advocate for a shift from entrepreneurial to responsive spatial governance, emphasizing the need for innovative strategies that prioritize inclusivity and sustainability [31]. Yan et al. (2023) document a participatory planning initiative in rural China, showcasing how such approaches can foster sustainable community development [19]. These studies highlight the potential of participatory planning to address emerging urban challenges and promote more equitable and resilient cities.

2.2. Urban Regeneration as Self-Organization

Self-organization, where communities take the initiative to address local challenges with minimal external intervention, is a recurring theme in the literature. Özman et al. (2024) analyze the pivotal role of institutionalized self-organization within entrepreneurial governance frameworks in urban regeneration, illustrating how organized community groups in Istanbul's Derbent informal neighborhood influence urban policy and challenge traditional models [31]. Edelenbos, van Meerkerk, and Schenk (2018) explore the interaction between self-organizing communities and government institutions, offering cross-case insights from three countries [6]. Their findings suggest that successful self-organization often requires a delicate balance between community autonomy and institutional support. Cardoso-Castro (2010) provides a methodological framework for facilitating self-organization in non-hierarchical communities, emphasizing the importance of trust, communication, and shared goals [32]. Nunbogu and Korah (2017) offer empirical evidence from Ghana, showcasing how self-organization can address spatial planning challenges in urban areas [33]. Their work highlights the adaptability and resilience of grassroots initiatives in the face of institutional shortcomings. At the micro-scale, Béliveau Côté et al. (2024) focus on cycling groups' participation in planning, demonstrating how self-organized groups can influence urban design and policy [34]. This aligns with insights by Van Meerkerk, Boonstra, and Edelenbos (2013), who compare two case studies of self-organization in urban regeneration to reveal the conditions under which such initiatives thrive [3]. The literature on self-organization and citizen participation in urban regeneration underscores the transformative potential of grassroots initiatives in shaping urban spaces. The studies by van Meerkerk et al. (2013) and Bisschops and Beunen (2019) provide important insights into the complexities of self-organizing efforts and their interactions with formal planning institutions [3,35]. While these initiatives face substantial barriers, including institutional resistance and the challenge of aligning with formal processes, they also offer essential avenues for advancing more inclusive, participatory urban regeneration strategies.

Knowledge co-production, where academics and communities collaborate to generate actionable insights, is another key theme in the course of self-organization in urban regeneration. Becerril (2024) examines knowledge co-production in Acapulco's metropolitan area, revealing how partnerships between urban and academic actors can address peripheral challenges [36]. Lall et al. (2023) similarly document the Main Bhi Dilli campaign in Delhi, showcasing how co-produced knowledge can inform equitable planning [37]. Baarveld,

Smit, and Dewulf (2018) explore cooperation strategies for redevelopment involving cultural heritage, highlighting the tensions between preservation and modernization [38]. These studies highlight the potential of participatory planning to democratize knowledge and empower marginalized communities. Despite its potential, community-led regeneration and participatory planning face significant challenges. Kleinhans (2017) critiques the “false promises” of co-production, arguing that such initiatives often fail to deliver meaningful outcomes due to power imbalances and institutional inertia [39]. This aligns with Bisschops and Beunen’s (2019) findings, which highlight the difficulties of co-creating institutional change in urban planning [35]. Saskia Bisschops and Raoul Beunen (2019) further argue that citizen initiatives often struggle to gain legitimacy and influence within entrenched planning systems [35]. This is echoed by Kim, Križnik, and Kamvasinou (2021), who document the challenges intermediary organizations face in Seoul as they navigate between state and citizen interests [40]. These studies underscore the need for more robust frameworks to address power dynamics and ensure equitable outcomes.

2.3. Urban Regeneration and Participatory Community Planning in China

Self-organization as a concept in urban regeneration refers to grassroots initiatives where communities take the lead in addressing urban challenges, often independent of top-down institutional frameworks. In China, where state-driven urbanization has traditionally dominated, the emergence of self-organized initiatives marks a shift in governance approaches. Hui et al. (2021) emphasize that urban regeneration in China increasingly incorporates elements of self-organization, especially in revitalizing community vitality through participatory planning [29]. These efforts focus on integrating local knowledge and priorities into urban regeneration processes, offering alternatives to the state-centric development models. The “three old renewals” strategy in Guangzhou, analyzed by Li et al. (2019), demonstrates how urban regeneration in China has adapted to include self-organized and participatory approaches [41]. This strategy, which targets old towns, villages, and factories, leverages community input to balance redevelopment and preservation. By engaging residents and incorporating their input, self-organized efforts have aligned with broader urbanization goals, demonstrating that participatory practices coexist with state-driven urban agendas. Self-organization is also linked to enhancing community resilience. Jin and Shao (2024) document two micro-regeneration projects in China, showing how co-produced initiatives build resilience by empowering local communities to address specific urban challenges [42]. These projects exemplify how integrating self-organization into urban regeneration processes can create adaptive and context-sensitive solutions, fostering more sustainable urban environments.

In addition to self-organization in urban regeneration practices, participatory community planning has emerged as a key mechanism for fostering inclusivity in urban regeneration processes in China. Zheng et al. (2021) emphasize that the participation of residents is important for sustainable urban renewal [43]. By involving residents in planning processes, participatory planning creates opportunities for co-producing knowledge and addressing local needs (Lang et al., 2016) [27]. Li et al. (2020) document how such workshops foster dialogue between stakeholders, including residents, planners, and policymakers [20]. Their study highlights the potential of these formats to bridge gaps between top-down governance and grassroots participation, enabling a more inclusive and democratic urban regeneration process. Governments and planning professionals have increasingly resorted to social media to obtain public opinion. Lember et al. (2019) explore the potential impacts of digital technologies on co-production and co-creation [44]. Dhanesh et al. (2022) emphasize the role of social media in enhancing citizen power and inclusion [45]. Lin (2022), on the other hand, points out that social media technologies

possess certain potential political and social biases, necessitating a combination of online and offline approaches to engage diverse groups in the planning process [46]. Similarly, Yan et al. (2023) provide a case study of participatory planning in Fengqing County, where joint efforts between residents and planners created sustainable rural communities [19]. These examples underscore the importance of participatory methodologies in ensuring equitable and context-sensitive regeneration efforts. Zheng et al. (2023) offer further insights into the dynamics of participation by applying the “exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect” framework to analyze residents’ responses to urban regeneration in Shanghai [18]. Their findings reveal the complexity of community engagement, with residents displaying varied responses depending on the inclusivity and responsiveness of planning processes. This highlights the necessity of designing participatory frameworks that are both accessible and meaningful to diverse stakeholders. Chen and Qu (2020) identify the tension between emerging participatory approaches and the entrenched top-down governance structures in Chinese megacities [47]. Despite progress, participatory initiatives often face resistance from local governments accustomed to centralized control over urban planning. This tension limits the scope and impact of self-organized and participatory efforts. Heberer (2009) provides a broader perspective on the evolution of citizenship and community participation in urban China, describing the governance model as “authoritarian communitarianism” [4]. This model allows for limited community participation but ultimately reinforces state control. Such constraints pose significant challenges to the autonomy of self-organized initiatives and the scalability of participatory planning practices.

The above studies underscore the transformative potential of empowering communities to take charge of their development. However, significant barriers remain, including power imbalances, institutional inertia, and socio-cultural tensions. Addressing these challenges requires a commitment to inclusive governance, capacity-building, and the co-production of knowledge [48]. As urbanization reshapes cities worldwide, community-led regeneration offers a promising pathway toward more sustainable and equitable urban futures. Integrating self-organization and participatory community planning into urban regeneration processes in China represents a significant shift in governance and planning paradigms. While these approaches have demonstrated their potential to create more inclusive and sustainable urban environments, institutional resistance and power imbalances persist. As highlighted by the reviewed literature, fostering greater collaboration between communities, planners, and policymakers will be crucial for overcoming these barriers and realizing the full potential of participatory urban regeneration in China. Thus, critical areas remain that require further investigation to advance the understanding and practice of the extensive community regeneration planning process underway in China.

2.4. Theoretical Framework and Research Methods

Self-organization refers to the collective capacity of local communities to mobilize resources, shape decision-making processes, and influence planning policies by facilitating primary-level governance. This study adopts a multi-level analytical framework to explore the cutting-edge initiatives of community-led urban regeneration in China by unfolding models of Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou as case study areas. Specifically, it integrates theories of self-organization, public participation, and urban governance to systematically analyze the factors, stakeholders, and planning actions involved in these processes by concerning the actors, arenas, and aims (AAA) model, emphasizing the interactions among stakeholders, the spatial and institutional contexts in which they operate, and the overarching goals of regeneration initiatives. The research framework is structured around four key dimensions of self-organization, namely, self-organization of resources, self-organization of communities, self-organization of planning, and self-organization

of governance. By integrating insights from the four dimensions of self-organization—resources, communities, planning, and governance, this study conducts a comparative analysis to examine how governance and planning contexts shape the outcomes of self-organized community-led regeneration in China, highlighting key experiences, policy implications, and planning strategies.

The article adopts a qualitative comparative approach, supplemented by field research and interviews, to enrich the information and provide a more comprehensive understanding. This methodology allows for a deeper exploration of the nuanced differences and similarities in urban and rural planning, as evidenced by recent studies in the field. The data for the cases presented in the article are sourced from publicly available official websites. Specifically, the data for the Guangminglou Building No. 17 in Beijing are obtained from <http://www.thupdi.com/> (accessed on 4 November 2021); the data for the Kangjian Road 341 Building No. 7–8 project in Shanghai are sourced from <http://zsa.com.cn/> (accessed on 8 October 2023); the data for the Honggang Garden in Shenzhen are retrieved from <https://www.nbd.com.cn/> (accessed on 11 November 2024); and the data for the Cluster Street 2 Building in Guangzhou are derived from <https://zfcxjst.gd.gov.cn/> (accessed on 19 March 2024).

3. Case Studies Within the Chinese Context

3.1. Self-Renewal Projects in Beijing

In 2021, the Beijing Municipal Government issued the “Guiding Opinions on Implementing Urban Renewal Actions” to advance the city’s urban renewal initiatives. In 2023, the “Beijing Urban Renewal Regulations” were introduced, providing more substantial policy support for high-quality urban development and further deepening the urban renewal efforts. Furthermore, the Beijing Municipal Government has continuously introduced policies and regulations to promote the self-driven renewal of old residential communities. In 2020, the “Opinions on the Pilot Work for the Reconstruction of Dangerous and Dilapidated Buildings” (File 178) and the “Notice on Further Improving the Work Related to the Reconstruction of Dangerous and Dilapidated Buildings” (File 95) were released. In 2024, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban–Rural Development issued the “Technical Guidelines for the Demolition and Reconstruction of Dangerous and Dilapidated Residential Buildings”, aiming to ensure the lawful and orderly progress of the project and accelerate the work to improve the quality of urban development. The Guangminglou Building No. 17 Reconstruction Project is the first dangerous and dilapidated reconstruction project in Beijing’s core functional area. It was awarded the first “Best Practice Project in Beijing Urban Renewal” and provides a replicable model and framework for similar projects in Beijing from a policy perspective.

The Guangminglou Building No. 17, a three-story brick–concrete structure, was constructed in the 1960s. Located in the core functional area of Beijing (Figure 1), it has a total construction area of 1769.2 m² and houses 29 households. Before the renovation, the building posed significant safety hazards, and the residents’ living conditions were inadequate, necessitating improvements to the existing housing environment. In 2020, the Beijing Municipal Government issued the “Opinions on the Pilot Work for the Reconstruction of Dangerous and Dilapidated Buildings”, which emphasized “rebuilding on the original site without increasing the number of households”. After the reconstruction, the same residents are to continue living in their original homes, with the residents being actively involved throughout the design process. The Guangminglou No. 17 Building was the first project to implement this pilot initiative. The project followed the principle of “residents’ application, government guidance, and enterprise implementation”. The planning institute was responsible for the project, with the planning team engaging in collaborative discussions

with residents to explore design options. A cost-sharing model was established, combining “municipal government subsidies + residents’ contributions + property unit funding”. The municipal government provided a subsidy at a ratio of 1:1.2, with residents contributing toward purchasing newly constructed housing after the renovation. As the property unit, the district government covered the remaining funding requirements. Following an in situ reconstruction (Figure 2), each household had independent kitchens and bathrooms, achieving complete residential units (Figure 3). A semi-basement level was added, and the government now owns the 432 m² of new public service facilities, which were included in the renovation. This addition helped improve the public service infrastructure and effectively balanced the financial inputs for the project (Table 1).

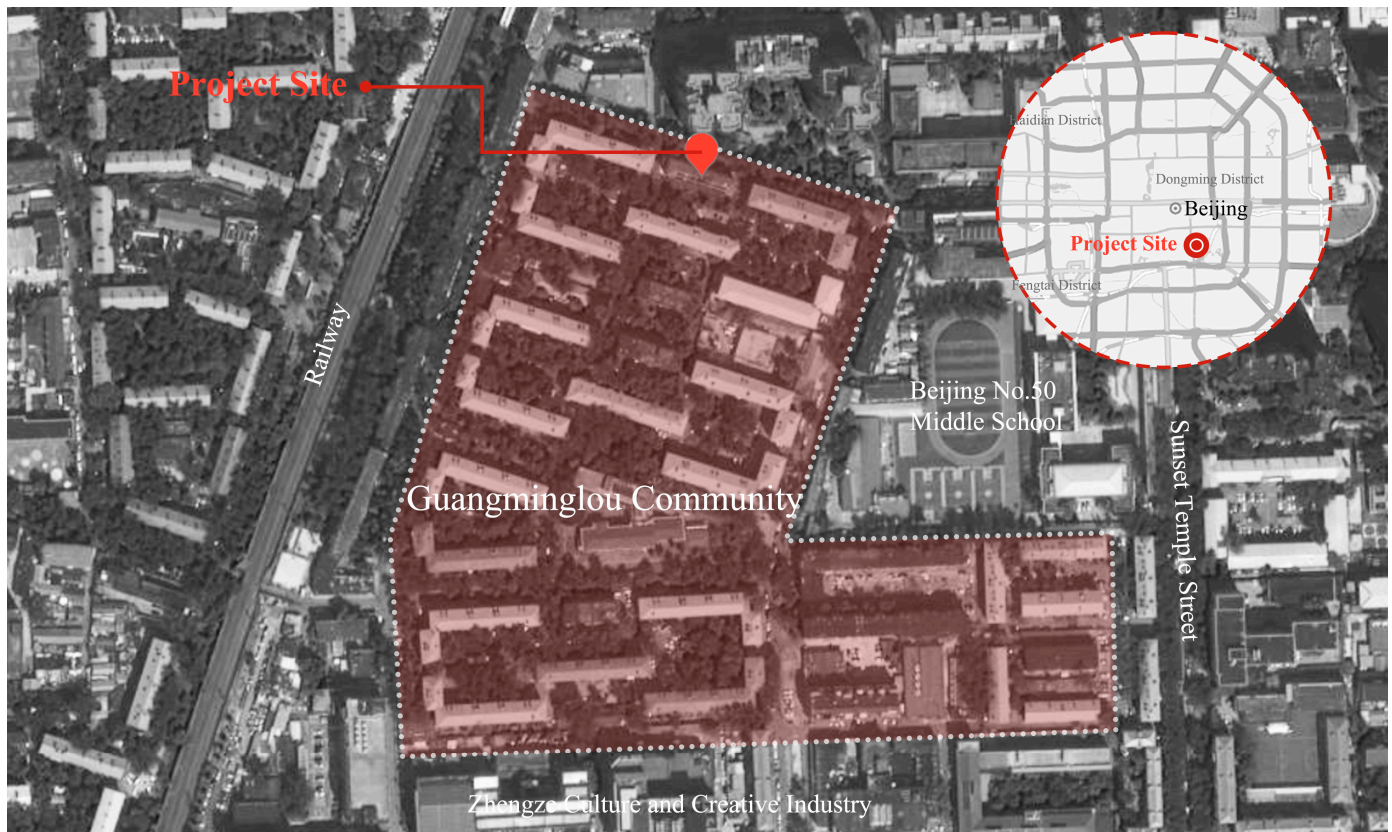


Figure 1. Location of the study area in Beijing. Source: Beijing Tsinghua Tongheng Urban Planning and Design Institute, 2022, available at <http://www.thupdi.com/> (accessed on 11 November 2024).

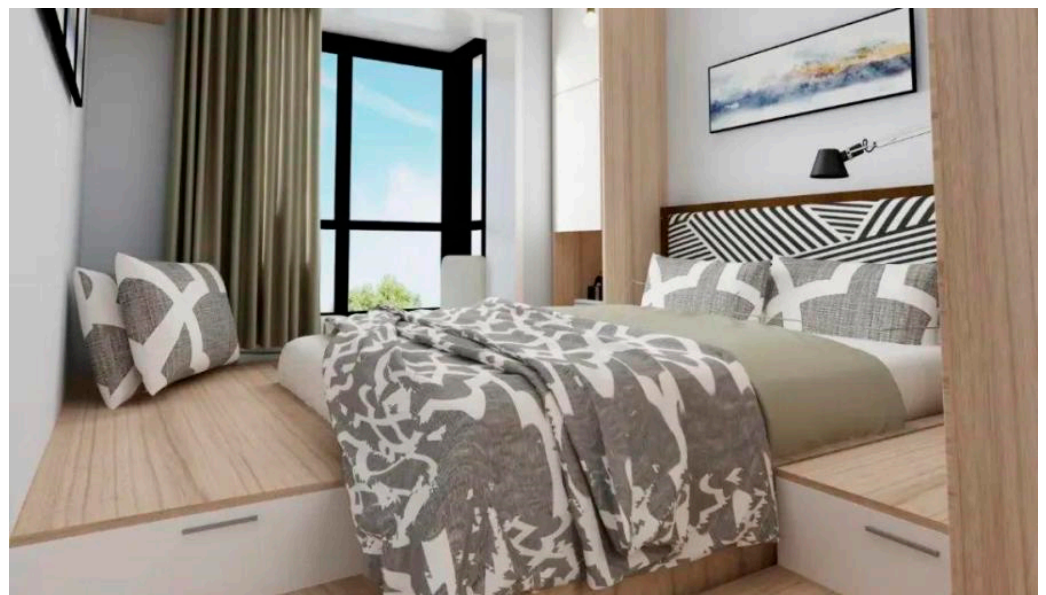
The advantages of the Guangminglou Building No. 17 project lie in the involvement of a planning institute as an intermediary in the renewal process, with architectural design serving as a platform for negotiation and guiding residents to participate in the design actively. This approach helped reach a consensus on various aspects of the plan. A multi-party funding model was also established to achieve economic efficiency in the reconstruction. The project also utilized an innovative parallel approval process, reducing the project timeline and ensuring residents could return to their homes as quickly as possible. Further promotion of self-driven renewal in old communities requires consideration of land efficiency. While improving the living conditions of original residents, the project should also explore the addition of sellable commercial housing units to reduce the financial cost and burden on the government. Moving forward, Beijing plans to coordinate the development of a comprehensive renovation plan for its old residential communities, transforming these communities into livable and beautiful homes following related policies and initiatives.



(a)



(b)



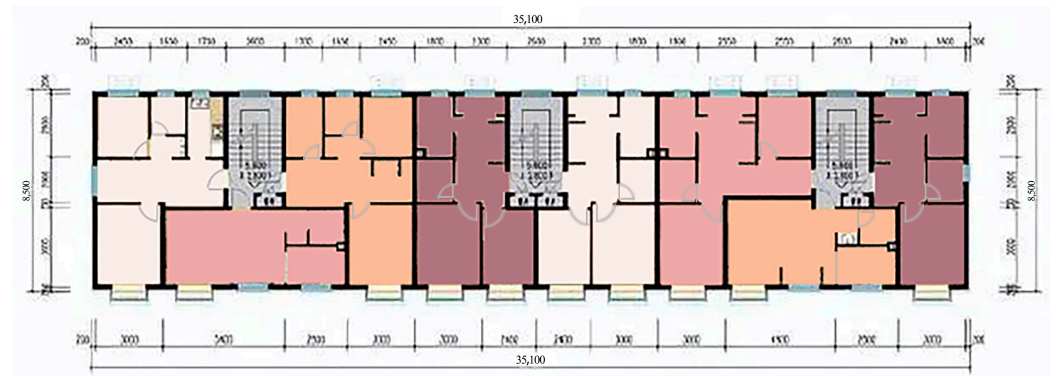
(c)

Figure 2. Renovation design rendering and completion of construction. (a) Guangminglou Building No. 17 residential premises before regeneration. (b) Aerial view of the visualization. (c) Indoor environment after renovation. Source: Beijing Tsinghua Tongheng Urban Planning and Design Institute, 2022, available at <http://www.thupdi.com/> (accessed on 11 November 2024).

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of factual state before and after reconstruction.

Criteria	Before Reconstruction	After Reconstruction
Construction Site Area	376.81 m ²	376.81 m ²
Gross Floor Area	1014.662 m ²	1446.662 m ²
Height of the Building	10.92 m	10.92 m
Total Number of Households	29	29

Source: the authors.

**Figure 3.** Layout plan of the renovated residential building. Source: Beijing Tsinghua Tongheng Urban Planning and Design Institute, 2022, available at <http://www.thupdi.com/> (accessed on 11 November 2024).

3.2. Self-Renewal Projects in Shanghai

In September 2021, the Shanghai Municipal Government officially implemented the “Regulations on Urban Renewal of Shanghai” (hereinafter referred to as the “Regulations”), elevating urban renewal to the legislative level of the People’s Congress. This marked the beginning of the gradual establishment of a policy system centered around the “Regulations on Urban Renewal of Shanghai”. In 2023, the “Shanghai Urban Renewal Action Plan (2023–2025)” was issued, promoting the orderly advancement of urban renewal actions and facilitating high-quality urban development. In recent years, Shanghai has seen numerous successful cases in areas such as transforming old factories, updating commercial facilities, and renovating “two olds and one village” (old houses, old communities, and villages). In April 2023, the buildings at No. 7–8, Lane 341, Kangjian Road, Xuhui District, were included as a key project for the district’s annual “Two Olds and One Village” renovation initiative. This paper summarizes the practical experience of self-driven renewal in Shanghai’s old residential communities based on the case of autonomous renewal at No. 7–8, Lane 341, Kangjian Road, Xuhui District.

The building at No. 7–8, Lane 341, Kangjian Road, Xuhui District, was constructed in the 1950s, with a total of 27 households and a building area of 862 m² (Figure 4). It was part of the public housing for the Shanghai University of Applied Technology and the Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions Cadre School, serving as a staff dormitory. Before the renovation, the building was in poor condition, with a deteriorating environment, sanitation issues, and significant safety risks (Figure 5). Relevant departments in Shanghai have introduced a tailored optimization policy to support urban renewal, aiming to implement personalized urban regeneration measures based on the distinct characteristics and needs of different regions. The renovation of this building adopted a “property transfer” approach. With support from relevant municipal authorities and the Shanghai University of Applied Technology, the property was transferred to a state-owned enterprise (SOE) under the jurisdiction of Xuhui District. The SOE became the primary entity responsible for the

renovation, with funding provided by the district's financial resources. The residents' relocation was coordinated with the design process, forming a “one-household, one-plan” model (Figure 6). Following the reconstruction, the total building area of the residential complex increased to 4770.6 m² (Table 2). The newly added housing units were allocated to residents displaced by the district's old housing renovation projects and those waiting for various types of affordable housing. The project, from initiation to completion, took just one year, marking the fastest construction timeline in the history of old housing demolition and reconstruction projects in Shanghai.

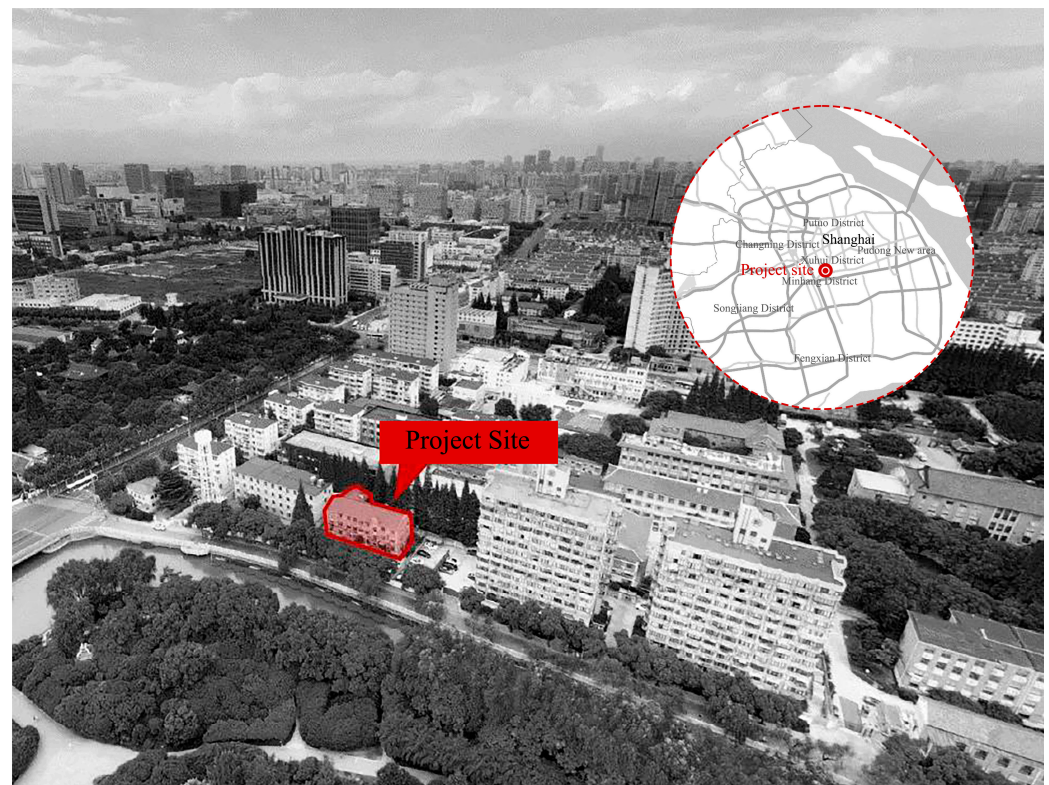


Figure 4. Location of the study area in Shanghai. Source: ZSA, 2024, available at <http://zsa.com.cn> (accessed on 11 November 2024).

The Kangjian Road 341 Building No. 7–8 project clarified rights and responsibilities through property rights transfer, resolving issues related to the central entity responsible for renewal and financing. At the same time, the property rights transfer mechanism utilizes market-based approaches, such as the transfer of development rights and land consolidation, to stimulate the participation of market entities in the construction of public facilities. The project significantly shortened the renovation cycle by employing parallel approval processes and integrated inspections. Moving forward, Shanghai plans to comprehensively promote the experiences and practices of Kangjian Road 341 Building No. 7–8, focusing on the goal of transforming “three olds” (old houses, old communities, and old villages) into “three news”. The city aims to accelerate the renovation of “two olds and one village” and the organic renewal of urban areas with faster speed and higher quality.

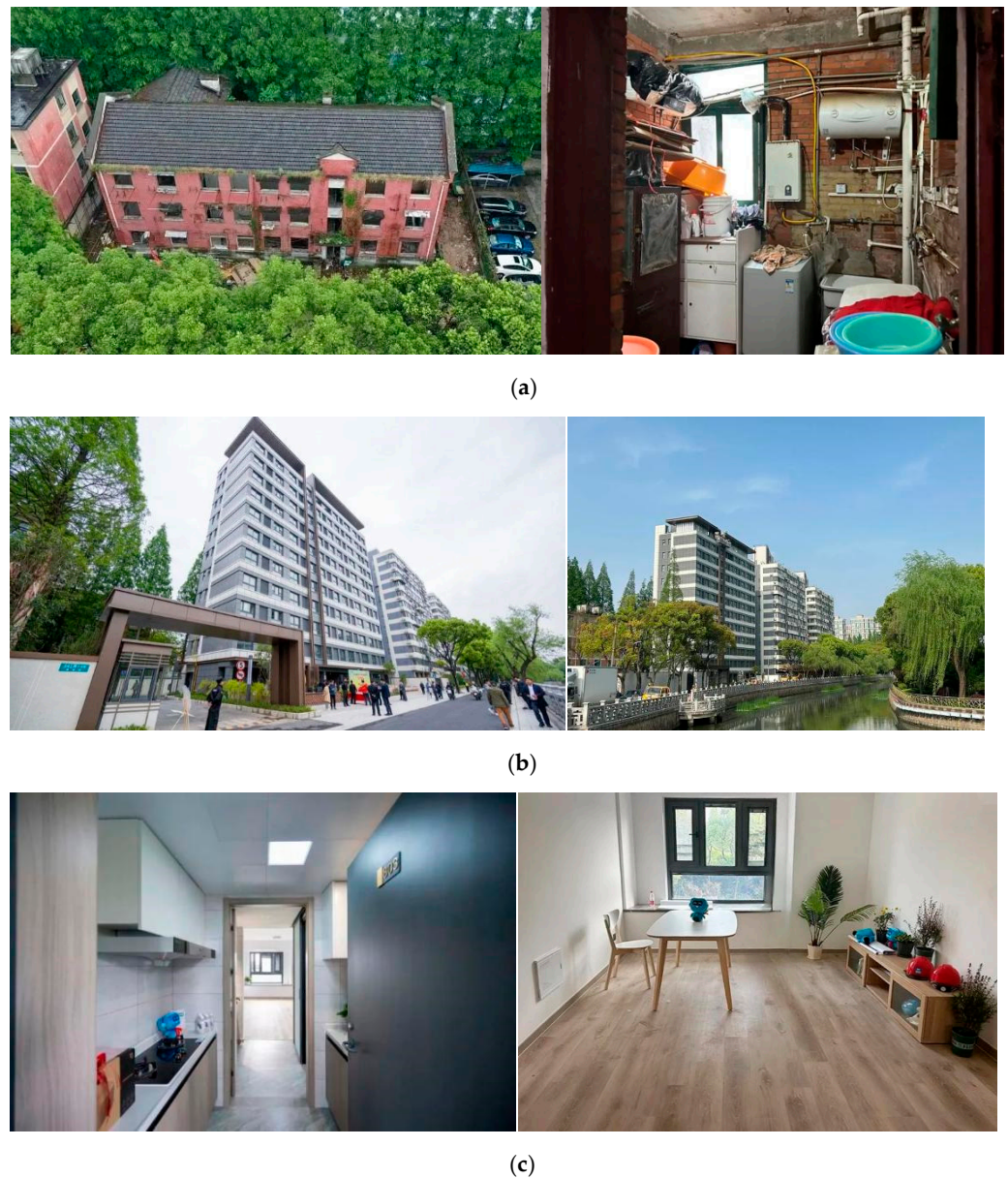


Figure 5. Renovation design rendering and completion of construction. (a) The Kangjian Road 341 Building No. 7–8 project before regeneration. (b) Aerial view of the visualization. (c) Indoor environment after renovation. Source: ZSA, 2024, available at <http://zsa.com.cn> (accessed on 11 November 2024).

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of factual state before and after reconstruction.

Criteria	Before Reconstruction	After Reconstruction
Construction Site Area	288 m ²	288 m ²
Gross Floor Area	862 m ²	4770.6 m ²
Total Number of Households	27	87

Source: the authors.

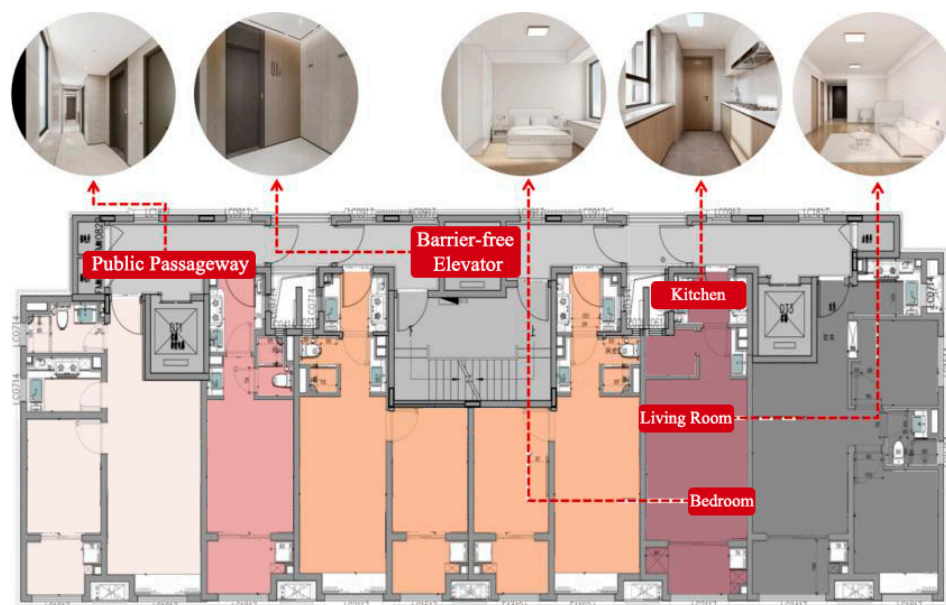


Figure 6. Layout plan of the renovated residential building. Source: ZSA, 2024, available at <http://zsa.com.cn>.

3.3. Self-Renewal Projects in Shenzhen

Due to its relatively small metropolitan area, a significant constraint on Shenzhen's development has long been the insufficient space for expansion. As a result, Shenzhen has innovated a mechanism of "government guidance, market leadership, and multi-party consultation", which has shaped the "Shenzhen Model". The core of the city's rapid urban renewal development over the years lies in its market-driven approach, which has significantly accelerated the urban renewal process. In 2024, the General Office of the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government issued the "Implementation Opinions on Actively and Steadily Advancing the Renovation of Urban Villages to Achieve High-Quality Development", aligning with national principles.

The Honggang Garden Residence, located in the Qingshuihe area of Luohu District, Shenzhen, is the city's first pilot self-demolition and self-reconstruction residential community (Figure 7). Built in 1987, the complex is nearly 40 years old, comprising 18 buildings covering an area of 3320 m². Several buildings have been rated as Grade C hazardous structures, and the community faces various issues, including difficulty in parking and insufficient public facilities (Figure 8). The renovation process of Honggang Garden Residence has experienced numerous setbacks. The first attempt at redevelopment occurred in 2010 when a relevant company entered the project and began preparing for the renovation. However, this effort was postponed due to some homeowners' refusal to sign agreements. In May 2019, the community once again had the opportunity for redevelopment with the government's new policy on urban renewal. Preliminary work was quickly launched, and the signing rate exceeded 95%. Nevertheless, the renovation plan was put on hold due to changes in the policy environment, funding issues, and complications with the planning and design stages.

The successful implementation of the "self-demolition and self-construction" model depends on residents' willingness and factors such as funding support, planning and design, and policy guarantees. Due to the lack of clear policies, the progress of old community projects in Shenzhen is still exploratory, with the overall implementation rate of urban renewal remaining relatively low. In the new era, Shenzhen remains confident in its own renewal model, appropriately learning from the successful experiences of other cities,

and continues to rely on market forces to address emerging challenges in development, ultimately achieving innovation and advancement in the model.

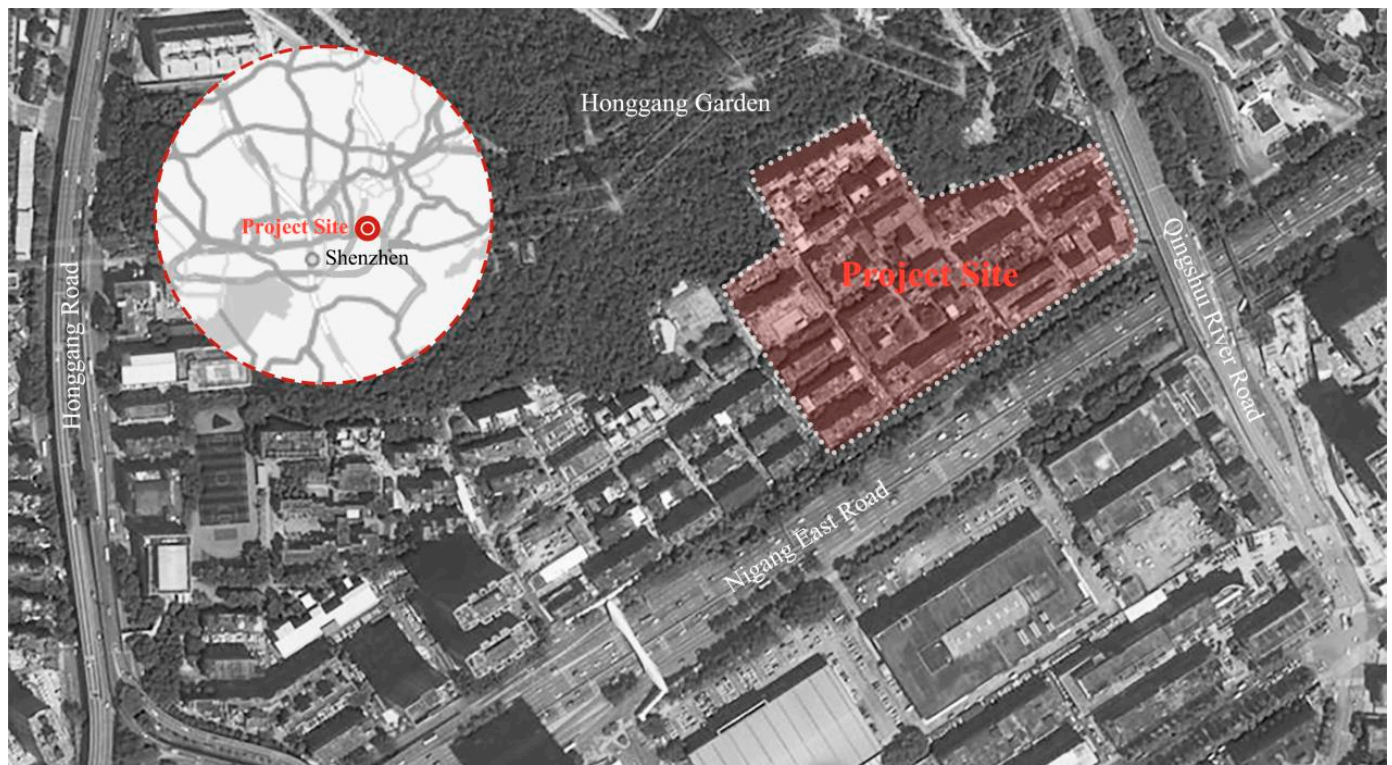


Figure 7. Location of the study area in Shenzhen. Source: the authors.



Figure 8. Honggang Garden Residence before regeneration. Source: National Business Daily, 2024, available at <https://www.nbd.com.cn/> (accessed on 11 November 2024).

3.4. Self-Renewal Projects in Guangzhou

In 2023, the national government introduced a series of policies targeting urban villages and inefficient land use, marking a new round of urban renewal and transformation in Guangzhou, with pilot programs focusing on inefficient land usage. Leveraging the “1 + N” policy framework, Guangzhou has diversified its urban renewal models, infusing vitality into the transformation efforts. In 2024, the Guangzhou Municipal Housing and Urban–Rural Development Bureau issued the “Implementation Measures for the Renovation of Dangerous and Old Houses in Urban Areas of Guangzhou (Trial)”, encouraging residents to carry out self-initiated renovation projects. These projects involve demolishing and rebuilding, with the potential for expanding the building area. The Jiqun Street

Building No. 2 in Huadu District is the first community in Guangzhou to adopt this self-renovation model.

The Jiqun Street Building No. 2 in Huadu District was constructed in the 1970s and is located in the old town area of Huadu District, within the scope of the micro-renovation project for old residential communities east of Guangzhou North Railway Station (Figure 9). The building contains 25 households, with a total floor area of 1750.20 m². The structure is aging and dilapidated and has been classified as hazardous, with only a few residents still living there (Figure 10). In 2023, the first batch of large-scale renovation projects for old residential communities in Guangzhou—the Guangzhou North Station East-Side Old Residential Area project—was officially launched. Building No. 2 on Cluster Street, located within the project’s renovation scope, was included in a pilot for the demolition and reconstruction of buildings with multiple property owners. In response, Huadu District of Guangzhou issued the “Pilot Plan for the Demolition and Reconstruction of Deteriorated Buildings in the Guangzhou North Station East-Side Old Residential Area Micro-renovation Project”, which allows property owners to undertake self-renovation through demolition and reconstruction, with government incentives provided. This approach effectively addresses the challenges of managing deteriorated properties with multiple co-owners. As the first pilot project in Guangzhou for multi-owner self-financed renovation, the Jiqun Street Building No. 2 initiated a “self-demolition and self-reconstruction” approach from the grassroots level. The Huadu District government organized multiple residents’ meetings, conducted home visits, and communicated with many property owners. The numerous property owners collectively bore the renovation costs, with each owner pre-paying funds based on a standard of 4600 RMB per square meter. A shared management account was established, and the community committee monitored the use of funds. In addition, financial incentives were provided by the government, which subsidized early-stage design and related costs for residents who had agreed to the renovation. Special allowances were given to low-income families, households receiving social assistance, unique hardship households, families of special workers, and military personnel with preferential treatment. The project construction was entrusted to a developer, who followed the “demolish and rebuild in the same place” principle. The newly added building area amounted to 1870.43 m², distributed among the multiple property owners of the building (Table 3).



Figure 9. Location of the study area in Guangzhou. Source: Guangdong Provincial Department of Housing and Urban–Rural Development, 2024, available at <https://zfcxjst.gd.gov.cn/> (accessed on 11 November 2024).

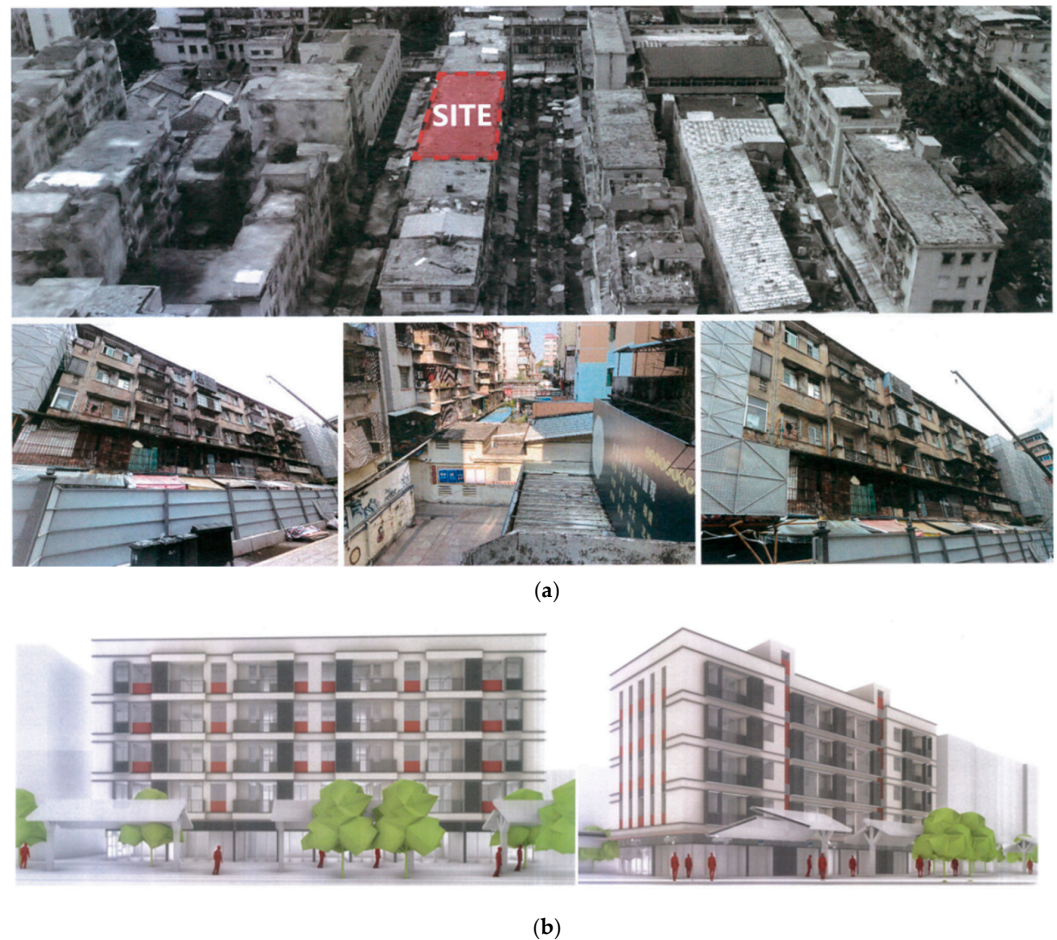


Figure 10. Renovation design rendering and completion of construction. (a) The Jiqun Street Building No. 2 project in Huadu District before regeneration. (b) Aerial view of the visualization. Source: Guangdong Provincial Department of Housing and Urban–Rural Development, 2024, available at <https://zfcxjst.gd.gov.cn/> (accessed on 11 November 2024).

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of factual state before and after reconstruction.

Criteria	Before Reconstruction	After Reconstruction
Construction Site Area	342.4 m ²	342.4 m ²
Gross Floor Area	1726.64 m ²	3597.07 m ²
Total Number of Households	25	-

Source: the authors.

The self-renovation model requires the deep collaboration and support of professionals from various fields. Project progress can be slow and hindered without effective coordination, as seen in the example of the residential building at No. 4 Huju North Road, Gulou District, Nanjing, where the self-demolition and reconstruction process took seven to eight years. Multi-property owner self-renovation requires support from relevant planning and approval departments regarding policies, along with a clear path and guiding methodologies. Only with these measures in place can community participatory planning be effectively promoted. Urban renewal has become a “dual engine” for developing Guangzhou’s urban landscape. The strategic objectives are more precise, the institutional framework is more complete, decision-making processes are more cautious, and governance foundations are more mature.

4. Discussion and Implication

4.1. Self-Organization of Resources

The funding mechanisms for self-organized regeneration projects in China reflect a complex interplay between state intervention and community-driven initiatives. In line with the principle of “who invests, who benefits”, policies have been developed to enhance the multi-party funding model, thereby establishing a shared cost-bearing mechanism involving government subsidies and property owners’ contributions. The renovation costs are collectively borne by the property owners, with contributions determined based on the size of the existing housing area. In contrast, the expanded area’s contributions are based on market appraisal values. The government is critical by providing policy-driven subsidies and financial support mechanisms, such as tax reductions and infrastructure construction assistance. Additionally, incentives like floor area ratio (FAR) bonuses are offered to stimulate project development. The potential increase in the built-up area further strengthens the economic viability of these projects. This added development can generate financial returns in two keyways: first, through the sale of a portion of the new commercial housing as market units, and second, by utilizing the development of underground spaces, new commercial facilities, or alternative land uses to generate ongoing revenue streams. This mixed funding and economic return model creates a sustainable approach to urban regeneration, benefiting both property owners and local governments. Future policy adjustments should consider alternative financial instruments, such as community land trusts and low-interest renovation loans, to enable broader participation among lower-income residents. Additionally, public–private partnerships (PPPs) could be expanded to integrate commercial investments into the funding structure while ensuring affordability and inclusivity in urban regeneration projects.

4.2. Self-Organization of Communities

The self-organized renewal of old residential communities involves a collaborative project team composed of government representatives, residents, and cross-disciplinary professionals. During the initial phase, the government and relevant officials are critical in mobilizing resources, while residents and property owners take the lead in formulating the design plans and funding strategies. Cross-disciplinary professionals serve as facilitators, providing technical expertise and ensuring that design and implementation meet community needs. Planning and approval departments support the project by offering policy guidance and facilitating streamlined procedural pathways, creating a framework that all parties can follow. While the government facilitates community engagement through mobilization efforts and regulatory support, the actual decision-making power of residents remains limited, as many projects are ultimately executed by state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The authoritarian communitarianism model prevalent in China raises concerns regarding whether self-organization genuinely empowers communities or merely reinforces state control. Power asymmetries between residents and government agencies are evident in cases where planning and funding decisions are predetermined by municipal authorities, restricting grassroots influence over urban transformation. In China, many such projects have faced delays or setbacks due to a lack of cohesive government policies, inadequate financial support, and insufficient cooperation from professional entities. These challenges have underscored the importance of multi-party collaboration. To address this issue, community-led regeneration should incorporate deliberative democracy mechanisms, such as participatory budgeting and public hearings, to enhance residents’ autonomy in decision-making. Furthermore, ensuring legal protection for community organizations and advocating for transparent grievance redress mechanisms would enable more equitable participation in urban renewal efforts.

4.3. Self-Organization of Planning

The transformation of community-driven renewal projects involves several key aspects, including integrating public service facilities, enhancing infrastructure, and expanding per capita living space for residents. A critical challenge in many older residential communities is the deterioration of essential infrastructure, such as outdated water supply and drainage systems and faulty heating systems. These systems need to be upgraded according to the specific demands of the community. In addition to infrastructure, providing public service facilities is also crucial for improving the quality of life. The need for additional parking spaces is a common issue, alongside the installation of elevators and the creation of green spaces and parks to improve the overall livability of these aging neighborhoods. Furthermore, in cases where residents' per capita living space falls below the standard, the shortfall can be addressed by offering additional living areas at prices lower than current market rates. These improvements not only meet the immediate needs of residents but also contribute to the long-term sustainability of the community by making it more adaptable to modern urban living conditions. A critical gap in current practice is the absence of co-plan\design approaches, where urban planners, residents, and cross-disciplinary experts collaboratively develop context-specific solutions. Planning self-organization in community-led regeneration is needed to restructure the planning system, reshape the operation at a detailed planning level, and integrate co-creation into the community planning process.

4.4. Self-Organization of Governance

Following the autonomous renewal process, communities often shift toward self-governance or engage professional property management companies for ongoing governance and management. One potential avenue for governance is the formation of an owners' committee or residents' council, which can collaboratively address internal issues, resolve conflicts, and ensure that the community's interests are represented. This model encourages active participation from residents in the decision-making process and fosters a sense of shared responsibility. In addition, property owners can use the collective revenue generated from newly developed commercial spaces to fund the engagement of a professional property management company. With their specialized expertise and resources, such companies can oversee the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the community, ensuring that residents receive high-quality services. While owners' committees and resident councils offer pathways for self-governance, their effectiveness is often undermined by a lack of institutional support and financial sustainability. A key challenge is the limited revenue streams for ongoing community management, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods. To mitigate this, revenue-sharing agreements should be formalized, where profits from newly developed commercial spaces are reinvested into community maintenance. Additionally, governance structures should prioritize professionalized property management services supported by community-endowed funds to ensure operational sustainability. Policymakers should also explore hybrid governance models, blending resident-led oversight with third-party professional management, to balance grassroots empowerment and service efficiency. Meanwhile, the choice of governance model should be guided by factors such as the community's ownership structure, demographic composition, and geographic location, ensuring that the model is well-suited to the unique needs and preferences of the residents.

5. Conclusions

This study provides a comparative analysis of self-organization in community-led urban regeneration, focusing on four Chinese cases: Guangminglou Building No. 17,

Kangjian Road 341 Buildings No. 7–8, Honggang Garden Residence, and Jiqun Street Building No. 2. Through detailed examination, it reveals how grassroots initiatives, supported by hybrid governance frameworks, contribute to urban renewal by integrating public participation, local knowledge, and cultural practices. The findings underscore the significance of self-organization as a critical mechanism for addressing urban challenges in China's rapidly transforming urban environments. In Guangminglou Building No. 17, residents successfully organized micro-regeneration projects, focusing on upgrading shared spaces and fostering stronger neighborhood ties. In contrast, the initiative at Kangjian Road 341 Buildings No. 7–8 highlighted the importance of government support, as local authorities provided critical resources and technical guidance while allowing residents to lead the decision-making process. Honggang Garden Residence demonstrated the potential of participatory mechanisms to resolve stakeholder conflicts, particularly in balancing redevelopment goals with preserving the community's identity. Meanwhile, the regeneration at Jiqun Street Building No. 2 illustrated how self-organization can address urban density challenges through creative, community-driven solutions, such as repurposing underutilized spaces for public use.

The concept of self-organization in urban regeneration aligns with theories of participatory governance and networked urbanism. This study's findings validate arguments by Edelenbos et al. (2018) and Hui et al. (2021) that self-organization is not merely a grassroots phenomenon but often operates within a hybrid framework where community initiatives interact with institutional support. In the cases examined, the interplay between local governments and community actors was pivotal, reflecting the "authoritarian communitarianism" model described by Heberer (2009). Guangminglou Building No. 17 and Kangjian Road Buildings No. 7–8, in particular, demonstrate how local governments can facilitate self-organization by providing resources and technical guidance while allowing residents to retain agency in decision-making. The study also builds on the literature exploring the role of cultural and social practices in participatory urban regeneration. As Lang et al. (2016) and Yan et al. (2023) highlight, Chinese urban regeneration often incorporates traditional values and localized practices to foster community cohesion. For instance, the Honggang Garden Residence case illustrates how participatory mechanisms can balance redevelopment goals with preserving community identity. In contrast, the Jiqun Street Building No. 2 case demonstrates creative, community-driven solutions to urban density challenges. These findings contribute to the growing discourse on how self-organization can address both physical and social dimensions of urban regeneration.

The comparative analysis offers several practical suggestions for urban planners, policymakers, and community leaders aiming to enhance self-organization in urban regeneration. First, it underscores the importance of creating institutional frameworks that support and empower grassroots initiatives. The Kangjian Road Buildings No. 7–8 case exemplifies how local governments can act as facilitators, providing financial and technical resources while enabling residents to lead in regeneration projects. Policymakers should consider institutionalizing similar models that balance top-down support with bottom-up agency, ensuring that communities have the autonomy to address their unique challenges. Second, the study highlights the role of participatory mechanisms, such as collaborative workshops and stakeholder dialogues, in fostering inclusivity and resolving conflicts. The Honggang Garden Residence case demonstrates how participatory planning can bridge the gap between diverse stakeholders, creating a shared vision for regeneration. Urban planners should prioritize designing participatory frameworks that are accessible to all community members, particularly marginalized groups, to ensure equitable outcomes. Additionally, integrating digital tools like social media platforms can enhance community engagement and facilitate real-time feedback. Finally, the analysis emphasizes the need

for context-sensitive approaches to regeneration. Each of the four cases examined reflects unique socio-economic and spatial conditions, underscoring the importance of tailoring strategies to local contexts. For instance, the creative repurposing of underutilized spaces in Jiqun Street Building No. 2 highlights how localized solutions can address urban density challenges. Urban regeneration efforts should prioritize flexibility and adaptability, allowing communities to co-create solutions that align with their specific needs and aspirations.

While self-organization in community-led regeneration presents a promising avenue for sustainable urban regeneration, its effectiveness is profoundly shaped by the distinct socio-economic and governance landscapes of local contexts. Thus, in addition to generalized approaches, we also need to consider city-specific challenges and resources. For example, historic preservation and intense regulatory regeneration dominate in Beijing. Its policies focus on integrating traditional community with contemporary participatory planning while ensuring sustained financial incentives to improve the living environment. According to the “Beijing Master Plan (2016–2035)”, community regeneration in Beijing mainly occurs within the core area of the capital’s functions, with community regeneration centered on the protection of historical and cultural cities, especially achieving remarkable results in the regeneration of historical districts and hutongs. Through strengthening conservation subsidies for historical buildings and implementing zonal protection policies, the function of the community has been enhanced while preserving traditional culture and historical values. The planning strategy prioritizes preservation, balancing the relationship between cultural protection and modernization and creating a livable living environment for residents in historical streets. Community self-renewal in Shanghai emphasizes a multi-stakeholder cooperation mechanism, with the government, enterprises, residents, and social organizations working together in the regeneration process. Through public–private partnerships and encouraging enterprises to participate in community renovation, Shanghai has a strong advantage in fundraising and project implementation. Shanghai has launched a series of policies to encourage community participation in planning decisions, establishing a multi-stakeholder cooperation framework, providing a platform for residents to express their demands, and focusing on balancing the needs of stakeholders, thereby enhancing the execution and efficiency of community regeneration.

The community self-renewal in Shenzhen benefits from its flexible governance model and innovation orientation. Shenzhen has provided more policy flexibility in land use policies and self-renewal pilot projects. The micro-regeneration communities and small-scale, gradual renovation models reduce residents’ relocation costs and stimulate the community’s self-organization ability. Granting more autonomy and flexibility to communities can promote the enthusiasm of residents to participate. It focuses on the principles of “small but exquisite” and “gradual” while encouraging community innovation in governance mechanisms. The community self-renewal in Guangzhou is characterized by the collaboration between the government and social organizations, especially in regenerating communities and areas where disadvantaged groups live. The Guangzhou municipal government has guided through policies, supported the deep participation of social and community organizations in the regeneration process, carried out co-creation workshops, and provided technical support services, fully leveraging the role of social organizations to make up for the insufficiency of government resources. This model has promoted internal cohesion within the community, focused on improving the community’s collaborative governance mechanism, and encouraged active participation of residents. To ensure long-term self-organized community-led regeneration, the planning policies should prioritize long-term maintenance funds, rental revenue-sharing, and community endowments to prevent financial stagnation; legal frameworks to formalize community-led planning and safeguard community decision-making for self-organized initiatives, such as community

planners programs and community-building activities; collaborative workshops for participatory governance to maintain engagement across stakeholders and its flexibility to regulate the integrity of self-organized projects. By tailoring strategies to each city's unique socio-economic and governance contexts, self-organized regeneration can serve as a sustainable blueprint for long-term urban renewal, ensuring community-driven initiatives remain viable for decades while fostering resilience, adaptability, and inclusive urban growth across China.

Several emerging trends will likely shape the landscape of community-led urban regeneration in China. There is a trend toward sustainability and resilience in urban regeneration. Future studies should investigate the role of self-organized projects in fostering environmental sustainability and resilience, examining how communities can integrate green infrastructure, renewable energy, and climate adaptation measures into regeneration efforts. Moreover, a growing need exists to address power dynamics within participatory planning frameworks. While self-organization is inherently grassroots, this study highlights how institutional support often shapes the outcomes of regeneration projects. Future research will need to delve deeper into the power asymmetries between communities and local governments, exploring how participatory frameworks can be designed to mitigate these imbalances. Comparative studies between Chinese cities and international cases could provide valuable insights into best practices for fostering equitable and inclusive urban regeneration. Longitudinal research is essential for understanding the long-term impacts of self-organization in community-led regeneration. While this study provides a snapshot of the successes and challenges of self-organized initiatives, our future studies should track these projects over time to assess their sustainability, adaptability, and broader social and economic impacts. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how community-led regeneration contributes to urban resilience and transformation in the Chinese context.

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