



The
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**Micro-regeneration: An Emerging Approach Towards Community
Resilience in Urban China**

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Abstract

The past few decades have seen significant transformation in urban China, from social, legal, political and ideological perspectives. These processes have led to significant changes to the planning system, shifting from an incremental approach to urban planning, to a so-called 'stock-based' one. Stock-based planning views urban regeneration as the primary focus of urban development and gives much attention to questions of urban governance, resource utilisation, and improving the quality of the built environment. In this context, many local practices have been experimenting with urban regeneration as a means to pursue resilient and sustainable development. Historic residential communities and old urban communities, in particular, have become the focus of 'micro-regeneration' processes. These processes involve many different actors, including residents, Residents' Committee, local authorities, planners, and NGOs. Following an increased focus on co-production by the Chinese central government, community micro-regeneration has become a space for experimenting with multi-stakeholder collaboration at the community level, and a window into collaborative sustainable development in China.

This research aims to investigate micro-regeneration as it relates to the notion of community resilience. Two main questions guide the study. First, how can the community resilience discourse be resituated in the context of heritage community micro-regeneration in China? Second, to what extent can the micro-regeneration of heritage communities enhance community resilience? The thesis explores these questions by drawing from both international and Chinese literature, and using qualitative case study research supported by an existing framework for evaluating Resilience Thinking in Planning. The framework informs a comparative study between practices in Beijing and Shanghai, which uses a combination of qualitative research methods, including policy analysis, interviews, and participant observation.

The study indicates that micro-regeneration in urban China enhances community resilience by influencing social capital building, adaptive capacity, collaboration, resourcefulness, connectivity and transformation. Examining these attributes of resilience, the thesis develops a context-specific glossary (containing terms such as '*guanxi*' and 'people-oriented') that can be useful for understanding community resilience in the Chinese context. The thesis also argues that the pursuit of micro-regeneration as a means of enhancing community resilience requires the transformation of people's awareness and capacity, as well as the transformation of planning policies and mechanisms. Therefore, this study views resilience as transformation, while seeing other attributes are interconnected. In sum, it opens up a new discussion on how to understand community resilience in the urban transformation period in China. It also contributes to the knowledge of transformations in Chinese local governance and co-production practice among multiple stakeholders, especially the interactions between government and grassroots.

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Glossary

| English | Chinese | Meaning |
|--|---|--|
| The Ministry of Housing and Urban Rural Development (MOHURD) | 住房和城乡建设部 (zhufang he chengxiang jianshe bu) | It was established in 2008 as a ministry under the State Council responsible for the administration of construction projects in China. The main responsibilities of the ministry are: To guide the planning and construction of rural and urban areas in China; To establish national standards of construction; To guide construction activity and regulating the construction market in China; To manage the housing and real estate industry. |
| The Ministry of Natural Resources (MONR) | 自然资源部 (ziran ziyuan bu) | It is committed to implementing the policies and decisions of the Party Central Committee regarding natural resource management. Throughout its responsibilities, it steadfastly upholds and strengthens the centralized and unified leadership of the Party in the field of natural resource management. |
| Urban Master Planning | 城市总体规划 (chengshi zongti guihua) | The urban master plan is a comprehensive scheme and set of implementation measures for the urban character, development objectives, scale, land utilization, spatial arrangement, and various construction initiatives within a specified period. |
| Community Planning | 社区规划 (shequ guihua) | It is a comprehensive arrangement and specific scheduling for community development within a designated timeframe. It is also a planning and operational process that promotes community development based on community self-organization and social interaction. |
| Community | 社区 (shequ) | A community refers to a social collective comprising individuals, households, and societal groups residing within a specific geographical area, characterized by shared consciousness, common interests, and close social interactions among its residents. Urban communities, more specifically, pertain to communities formed within urban areas by a certain scale of urban residents. Simultaneously, they function as organizational units and entities for urban social management. |
| Sub-district (street) office | 街道办事处 (jiedao banshichu) | It refers to an administrative body and office established by the people's government of a city with districts or by the administrative committee of a functional zone in cities without districts. These entities are delegated authority by the district and city people's government or the administrative committee of the functional zone to carry out specific functions. The area under the jurisdiction of a subdistrict administration is referred to as a "jiedao" or subdistrict. |
| Residents' Committee | 居委会 (juweihui) | It is considered a self-governing organisation at the neighbourhood level based on law, in reality, it takes on assignments given by the sub-district office. |
| Community revitalisation/ Community building | 社区营造 (shequ yingzao) | The process of community organisation, governance, and development that starts from community life, harnesses societal forces and resources, and involves mobilizing community members' participation. |
| Municipality Directly Under the | 直辖市 (zhixiashi) | These are cities in China that are under the direct administration of the central government, and they hold an administrative status equivalent to a province. Beijing and Shanghai are the representatives. |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Central Government | | |
| City disease | 城市病 (chengshi bing) | Issues arising during the urban development process include environmental pollution, housing shortages, traffic congestion, and social isolation. |
| Community planner/ Responsible planner | 社区规划师、 责任规划师 (Shequ guihuashi/Zeren guihuashi) | Community planners work towards the long-term benefits and sustainable development of their respective communities. They engage in activities such as community planning, management, revitalization, and renewal. These planning professionals typically originate from three main sources: volunteer planners, government-appointed planners, and planners employed by the community itself. |
| Hutong | 胡同 | Traditional-style streets and alleyways in Beijing and northern Chinese cities are often characterized by courtyard residences, such as the "四合院" (siheyuan), forming the primary architectural layout of these streets and lanes. |
| Lilong | 里弄 | Commonly known as "石库门" (shikumen), this architectural style emerged in the modern era following the opening of cities like Shanghai, Tianjin, and Hankou. It represents the fundamental unit of settlement in these cities, characterized by compact lane layouts featuring main lanes, secondary lanes, and subsidiary lanes. |
| Historic and Cultural Area | 历史文化街区 (Lishi wenhua jiekou) | Historical areas designated for priority protection, as officially approved and announced by the provincial, autonomous region, and directly administered municipal people's governments. |
| Upper-level Plan | 上位规划 (Shangwei guihua) | According to the hierarchical structure of urban and rural planning systems, these are the relevant plans that operate above a specific planning level and provide guidance and constraints to the planning at that level. |

Abbreviations

People's Republic of China: P.R.C

Communist Party of China: CPC

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Rural Development: MOHURD

The Ministry of Natural Resources: MONR

Residents' Committee: RC

Historical and Cultural Protection Area of Dongsinan: HCPAD

Beijing Municipal Planning and Design Institution: BMPDI

Shijia Hutong Heritage Preservation Society: SHHPS

Beijing Forestry University: BJFU

Dongsinan: DSN

Chaoyangmen: CYM

Declaration

I, Tongfei Jin, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

There is a publication generated from the thesis. The work is mainly existing within Chapter Two and Seven, and other small parts in the thesis. The content within this thesis has appeared in publication as follows:

Jin, T. F. (2022) 'Shaping Healthier and Resilient Communities: Lessons from Participatory Community Micro-regeneration in Beijing, China', in: Peric, A., Alraouf, A. A., and Cilliers, J. (ed.), *REVIEW OF WORLD PLANNING PRACTICE VOLUME 18, TOWARDS HEALTHY CITIES: URBAN GOVERNANCE, PLANNING AND DESIGN FOR HUMAN WELL-BEING*, (pp. 119-134). ISOCARP, from https://isocarp.org/app/uploads/2022/10/E-BOOK_Review18-.pdf

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the research problems

1.1.1 Problems confronted by China's cities

Over the last forty years, the rapid urbanisation and social transformation of Chinese cities has been broadly discussed and researched. The speed of the process and its objective of transforming China into a modern, future-oriented, urban nation has put the historical parts of Chinese cities at risk of being neglected and unwanted. As examples of these cities, Beijing and Shanghai have removed long-time *hutong*(胡同 in Chinese character) and *lilong*(里弄 in Chinese character) residents from historical districts and replaced many historical houses with new skyscrapers. As American scholar Sharon Zukin (2010) pointed out:

Today, all big cities are erasing their gritty, bricks-and-mortar history to build a shiny vision of the future. Beijing, Shanghai, and other Chinese cities are cleaning out the narrow, rundown alleys in their centre, removing longtime residents to the distant edges of town, and replacing small, old houses with expensive apartments and new skyscrapers of spectacular design (p. 1).

However, the focus of rapid urbanisation on the creation of the contemporary urban fabric has elicited questions and controversies. The progress of urbanisation has resulted in the loss of soul in cities (Zhang, 2017), and has been criticised for leading to inequality, social injustice, and the marginalisation of poorer and older members of Chinese society. In historical residential areas especially, due to their low economic value, the houses have been recognised as the least desirable economic spaces and lack the opportunity to be regenerated. This can lead to tensions between their denizens' increasing requirements for a high-quality living environment and the environment's poor physical condition.

Historical residential housing is mainly of two types. One is traditional historical residential housing, mostly located in historical districts, such as *hutong* in Beijing and *lilong* in Shanghai, in which the buildings are usually more than one hundred years old. The other type is described

in Chinese literature as ‘old urban communities’ with historical character. ‘Historical district’ (*li-shi jie-qu* 历史街区 in Chinese) is a planning term for districts with rich historical and cultural relics, which can fully and truly reflect the traditional features or local characteristics of a certain historical period, and which have preserved certain cultural relics and historical buildings or buildings with traditional features. Here, ‘residential historical districts’ refer to districts focusing on a residential function.

‘Old urban residential community’ (*lao-jiu xiao-qu* 老旧小区 in Chinese) is a planning term which has appeared in many official documents (such as guidelines from the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD)). It refers to clusters of residential buildings where the original buildings can no longer effectively meet the actual living needs of their users, as times change and people’s living standards gradually improve. Narrowly, old urban residential communities consist of the public houses of state-owned companies or public institutions, such as ‘*dan-wei* (单位 in Chinese character) housing’ or ‘working-class neighbourhoods’ which were built mainly in the 1950s and 1960s. These two types of housing exist across the country, and most of them suffer to different extents from issues like deterioration of the physical environment deterioration, or chaotic layouts. However, in the last decade, *dan-wei* housing and working-class neighbourhoods have been viewed as politically and ideologically synonymous with communist China (Wang et al., 2015; Zu et al., 2021), and their nationally distinctive characteristics and architectural value have been recognised. This is why some old urban residential communities are identified as historical conservation areas. The case studies in Beijing and Shanghai will explore and discuss the practices in both two types of historical residential housing in later chapters.

1.1.2 A stage of stock-based planning

Taking a broader view, urban planning in China, especially in metropolitan cities, has stepped into an era of stock-based planning. With the further development of contemporary urban culture in China, although cities are still engines of national and regional development, their influence on social production have undergone significant changes. Nowadays, urban development is expected to generate new driving forces for sustainable development while controlling resource consumption as much as possible, through the adjustment of internal systems, reducing the transaction costs of various resources and promoting more frequent human interaction and processes of ideological collision (Qian, 2017). The change in the social background means that the focus of urban planning practice is shifting from ‘incremental

planning’ to ‘stock-based planning’, two terms that will be explained in detail later in this thesis. In brief, incremental planning is a planning stage that promotes urban development by expanding the scale of the land and space involved, while stock-based planning is used to realise urban development mainly through revitalising, optimising, tapping into potential and improving stock land while the total scale of the land under construction remains unchanged (Zou, 2013).

Another important element of stock-based planning is the focus on social issues, such as social governance. It has been recognised that one difficulty with the planning system lies in the fact that if social cooperation cannot be stimulated, the ‘top-down’ transformation promotion may not be effective (Kuang, 2017; Guo et al., 2018). Moreover, stock-based planning has been viewed as a process of ‘digging potential’ within cities (Chen et al., 2016). During this process, there are many existing conditions that need to be recognised and dealt with, such as property rights, the preservation of relics, and the co-ordination of multiple stakeholders. In other words, dynamic regeneration is an important characteristic of stock-based planning, such that continuous adjustment and adaptation are needed.

Confronted with the change in planning stage, urban regeneration has been recognised as a vital task in this period. More importantly, the methods and approaches taken in this stage consider ordinary people’s needs and implement public participation more deeply than before. Urban regeneration means renewing areas that are suffering from deterioration or downturn, in a sustainable way. Focusing on the research domain of historical areas, the literature has recently devoted significant attention to promoting the adaptive capacity of historical neighbourhoods and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage during the progress of urban regeneration (Chen, 2014). In terms of approaches to the renewal processes, the importance of public participation has been emphasised in both literature and practice, because a place’s inhabitants play an important role in protecting both its tangible and intangible heritage (Yu, 2013). Legal rules around public participation were first incorporated in the Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People’s Republic of China, which was enacted in 2008. For example, it requires that the organisation and formulation authority shall consider the opinions of experts and the public, and include in the materials submitted for examination and approval the circumstances and reasons for the adoption of the opinions (Articles 26 & 46). In terms of the supervision and inspection of urban planning projects, the Law stipulates the procedure for disclosing information to the public (Article 54).

However, the articles in the Law focus more on publicising the planning rather than on tools for implementation. Therefore, more recently, practitioners from all over the country have explored ways to conduct and promote public engagement during the processes of urban regeneration projects. Here, micro-regeneration (*wei-geng-xin* 微更新 in Chinese) has been a productive experimental method at the community level. Micro-regeneration is a term that has been used widely in both academia and industry, emphasising small-scale urban regeneration practices from both physical and social perspectives. It is an approach which has been generated from practice and research, and then accepted as a guideline and strategy in the central government's policies. Micro-regeneration is also the focus of this research, and will be illustrated in detail in the following chapters.

In a broader context, a common perception of China in the West is shaped by the influence of the Communist Party, censorship, and societal issues of inequality, poverty, and injustice. Since the 1980s, much has changed in China, financially, socially, and politically. The earlier impression is now outdated, as a result of drastic reforms in the political and social spheres, followed by economic and social growth (Cheng, 2015). In the realm of urban planning, for instance, public participation pursues a more even-handed procedure where more stakeholders can be involved in the processes of design, construction, and governance. This research introduces the theory of co-production to explore the collaborative process. Nevertheless, most urban development projects in China are still under the control of the state. The extent to which people at the grassroots level can engage in the processes of decision making and community renewal needs to be reviewed and interrogated.

In the context of all the above, sustainable development in historical residential neighbourhoods has been a significant task in urban China. Sustainability deserves to be considered from both physical and social perspectives. In the physical sense, sustainability implies the flexible and innovative utilisation of small or residual and shabby spaces in communities. Meanwhile, in the social sense, sustainability involves the shifts in the planning process which take more elements from ordinary people into consideration, and results in better governance outcomes over time. Therefore, resilience theory provides a valuable theoretical foundation to this research, since it focuses on not only the system's current ability to respond to external changes but also on its long-lasting influence on, and improvement of, a system. (This will be discussed in Chapter 2.)

1.1.3 Response to the international agenda

The transformation of urban planning in China is a response to the New Urban Agenda (referred as NUA) issued in Habitat III in 2016, the core idea of which is viewing urbanisation as an approach to meet the challenges worldwide, such as climate change and social diversion. The strategy of this approach emphasises systemic features, that is, to drive healthy urbanisation and foster sustainable development within cities. Urban planning needs to approach from the fundamental dimensions of sustainable development, namely social, economic, and environmental aspects. NUA advocates for collaborative efforts and interactions among government, businesses and society. Leveraging legislative, institutional, and financial tools, it seeks to promote innovation and synergy throughout the entire process, spanning from national policies to planning, design, and implementation. Specifically, it is proposed to understand the correspondence of urban planning and development in China towards NUA from following aspects.

First, urban planning transformation resonates with ‘urban paradigm shift’ mentioned in NUA. The 15th Article in NUA claims that urban paradigm shift requires to recognise ‘sustainable urban and territorial development as essential to the achievement of sustainable development and prosperity for all’ (p.8), and proposes the essence to ‘adopt sustainable, people-centred, age- and gender-responsive and integrated approaches to urban and territorial development’ (p.8). Similarly, urban planning transformation from incremental planning to stock-based planning emphasises the sustainable utilisation of resources, and pays attention to people’s needs and living environments improvement at the same time. Urban regeneration at this stage focuses not only on the renewal of physical environments but also on social and cultural aspects such as community governance innovation and heritage preservation.

Second, the focus on social governance in current urban regeneration resonates with the advocates of NUA. NUA puts much emphasis on social aspects and highlights that the cities should revert to the intrinsic characteristics of social entities (Shi, 2017). Deviating from the convention of emphasising cities solely as political and economic hubs, this perspective, examining cities from a societal dimension, holds significant importance. Cities cease to be exclusively political, economic, or cultural epicentres, fundamentally constitute aggregations of humanity, and epitomize social formations comprised foremost of individuals. In this vein, in the stock-based planning stage, urban development focuses not only on economic development but also social issues. Meanwhile, the interhuman social relationships assume a pivotal role in

urban development, with the participatory involvement of residents in urban affairs, their sense of belonging and ownership constituting the quintessential essence of urban value. This transformation fully responds to the ideas of 'city for all' and 'leaving no one behind' in NUA, reflecting the efficiency of urban planning and urban governance in enhancing social inclusion and cohesion.

Third, urban regeneration, especially at the community level, highlights the importance of planners' capacity building. This requirement is in perfect alignment with the 102nd Article in NUA, that is, "we will strive to improve capacity for urban planning and design and the provision of training for urban planners at national, subnational and local levels." (p.27). Meanwhile, NUA conveys the concerns about planners' knowledge and skills in the urban transformative and sustainable development period. Confronted with the planning transformation in urban China, planners are required to acquire skills such as communicating with and promoting collaboration among diverse stakeholders, which are possibly skills that they might not have in the technology-oriented planning stage. The requirement on planners is an echo of the 'urban paradigm shift' discussed previously.

1.2 Research rationale

During the last four decades of 'opening up', China has undergone economic and social reforms that have infused liberal and democratic thinking into its governance (Howell, 2004). In order to legitimise its leadership and optimise its decision making, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has collaborated with private entrepreneurs, professionals, and technocrats (Niu, 2019). The remarkable result of this context in the urban planning domain is the improvement and implementation of public engagement and co-production. Here, the central government has decentralised power to the local authorities and allowed them to have some autonomy to manage issues relating to district and community development. As a result of this change, the roles of residents, local-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Residents' Committees, and professionals are becoming increasingly critical to the progress of local development.

More importantly, community development is pursuing positive long-lasting influence and sustainability on both social and physical levels confronted with both external and internal challenges. For several decades, both the intangible heritage and built structures in heritage communities have deteriorated under the country's hegemonic political and economic framework. However, recent Chinese literature and policy have emphasised public participation

and the improvement of community resilience in the preservation of community heritage (Zhong and Leung, 2019), paying attention to both social and physical changes to help withstand challenges. In this context, over the past ten years Chinese scholars have adopted resilience discourse in the urban study domain, including in the field of urban regeneration in historical districts. The concept of 'resilience' first migrated from physics to ecology with the work of ecological scientist Crawford Holling (1973), and then was translated into social science with further interpretations such as that of evolutionary resilience (Wilkinson, 2011; Davoudi, 2012). Influenced by the thinking of evolutionary resilience, urban resilience put its focus on the capacity for learning, social justice, and the necessity of adaptation, indicating 'a growing awareness of the evolutionary understanding of resilience' (Shao and Xu, 2017). Since this research focuses on the performance of resilience at the community level, community resilience theory will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

Combining the research problems' context and their origins in theory, there are clear gaps in resilience research in China. For example, one gap is in understanding community resilience discourse or practice in terms of community heritage preservation. While there is an emerging field looking at resilience in the Chinese context, it is mainly focused on technological and environmental perspectives, such as cities' resilience in resisting disasters (Liu, 2015), or Sponge City design (Shen, 2019), with little debate on issues related to community resilience. In current research on community resilience in China, little attention is being paid to heritage and the cultural dimensions of community resilience. Although community resilience may not be explicitly expressed in community regeneration planning documents/policies or municipal planning guidelines, the signs of resilience are still evident to some extent. Therefore, there is a need to connect community heritage preservation practices and Chinese-based community resilience discourse to explain community resilience in the Chinese context.

Another notable research gap is how to understand the meaning of the term 'community resilience' in relation to the particular characteristics of the Chinese political framework. The concept of resilience was born in a Western context. It was generated in capitalist societies (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013), and its partial success indicates its potential theoretical fit with neoliberalism (Walker and Cooper, 2011). The definition of community resilience in this context includes internal endurance and adaptive capacity as well as the building of social capacity to cope with hazards. This may indicate that the paradigm of resilience relies on communities' self-reliance, and is at odds with the power of the state (Xu and Shao, 2019). In

China, the state has a strong presence and plays an important role in society, which means that the plans and policies enacted by government at different levels can exert a powerful influence on guidance and regulation for different kinds of urban regeneration. Therefore, the extent to which community resilience can work in the Chinese political context needs to be rethought.

This thesis will use the micro-regeneration programme and resilience theory as lenses through which to explore the planning changes in urban China. There are three rationales for this selection. Firstly, community regeneration in the context of stock-based planning is an arena that reflects the interactions between the state and society at a micro level. In the last decade, community regeneration, especially in historical neighbourhoods, has become a social incentive for community development that has drawn the attention of local authorities, and might have the potential to create conflict between the general public and the government. Within this context, it is especially valuable to examine how co-productive micro-regeneration with public engagement tools could offer an answer to these tensions. Therefore, this research intends to explore how co-productive physical regeneration projects may be used as a tool to cope with the conflicts between various stakeholders, and meet the requirements of stock-based planning.

Secondly, micro-regeneration provides a lens through which to investigate urban governance changes at three levels: specific episodes, governance processes, and governance cultures (Coaffee et al., 2003). Micro-regeneration starts as experimental cases, then influences the guidance of community regeneration and becomes a repeatable practical approach, and finally evolves into a widely accepted strategy and policy. It has been believed in previous research that changes and transformations usually commence with the exploration of specific cases and ultimately turn into the process or culture of the whole society (Coaffee et al., 2003; Healey, 2006; Zhao et al., 2019). Therefore, this research proposes to investigate how micro-regeneration plays the role of pioneer or catalyst to respond to and promote changes in planning.

Thirdly, resilience has been a significant goal of urban development in China, as it faces environmental, economic, and social changes. In this sense, resilience does not have a fundamentally different meaning in the West. However, resilience is also closely linked to Chinese culture and political character, especially in terms of the relationship and interactions between people and the hierarchical system. For example, in a Western context, resilience seems to put the onus on ordinary people to deal with shocks (an idea which will be elaborated

upon in Chapter 2). Nevertheless, in a Chinese context, the government takes great responsibility in promoting resilience. There are plans and policies provided from the central government to local authorities to guide or lead the withstanding strategy and process (Shan and Xu, 2017). This thesis aims to contribute to understanding resilience theory, especially in an Eastern, Chinese context.

1.3 Research aims and questions

This research embraces a systematic structure to investigate the co-productive micro-regeneration processes that aim to achieve sustainable and resilient community development in the face of changes in the planning stage. By introducing resilience theory, this study also endeavours to investigate the interpretation of community resilience in the context of urban China, especially considering the development and regeneration in historical areas. This study has been carried out in response to the transformation of China's urban development from incremental planning to stock-based planning, and to the political urban development strategy of sustainable development. The aims of the research are to interrogate the demonstration of community resilience theory in the context of urban China, as well as, in turn, how micro-regeneration projects enhance the resilient revitalisation of communities. This research considers the following two main questions, each with several sub-questions.

- 1. How can the community resilience discourse be resituated in the context of heritage community micro-regeneration in China?**
 - What are the attributes and indicators in interpreting community resilience on the ground of community micro-regeneration?
 - What are the existing strategies/policies making steps towards the objective of resilient community regeneration?
 - What are the specific words/concepts used in China to frame the terminology of 'community resilience'?
- 2. To what extent can the micro-regeneration of heritage communities help to enhance community resilience?**
 - How do initiators enable and constrain community resilience through planning regimes and practices?

- How can the social value of heritage community micro-regeneration be demonstrated and guided by community resilience discourse?
- What are the roles of planners in the process of community micro-regeneration?

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis begins with a discussion of the social, political, and planning contexts. The first chapter also provides a synopsis of the research, which briefly describes the research aims and questions. **Chapter 2** discusses the theoretical context of resilience theory, and especially community resilience. It focuses on the discussion of resilience thinking in the urban planning domain as well as the interpretations of widely used attributes of urban/community resilience. Moreover, the literature review in the second chapter helps to direct the steps of the subsequent analysis. The main objective of Chapter 2 is to offer an analytical framework of community resilience, guiding the case studies in later chapters. Based on a systematic approach, this analytical scheme is used to evaluate the performance of resilience factors during and after the implementation of micro-regeneration projects.

Chapter 3 introduces the intricacy of China's administrative and local governance systems, and the hierarchical structure of China's urban planning system. By doing so, it aims to figure out the institutional context that allows or promotes public engagement, and to investigate the roles of local communities as well as Residents' Committees within the governance and planning system. Although the character of the power structure hierarchy in China is still obvious and dominant, authority has become gradually and increasingly devolved to the 'bottom' levels of government, and the hierarchical structure is evolving into something 'fragmented' and 'disjointed' (Keane, 2017, p.2). This chapter also discusses state-led co-production in the Chinese context, which has been viewed as the approach to facilitate the constructive interaction between authorities and the grassroots.

Chapter 4 discusses the urban planning context and the strategy shifts which underpin the rationale of this research. It attempts to answer the question: What is the context, and what are the existing strategies/policies making steps towards the objective of resilient community regeneration?? The transformation of the stages of urban planning in China makes necessary sustainable development and governance enhancement at the grassroots level. The interrogation of community planning and micro-regeneration strategy further illustrates why the research focuses on the small-scale level and why it adopts community resilience theory.

The research methodology is introduced in **Chapter 5**, along with a deeper examination of the aims, objectives, and questions of the study. This chapter discusses the study methods, design, and processes for data collection and analysis, while also justifying the selection of cases and samples.

The empirical studies of this research are developed in **Chapters 6 and 7**. These chapters investigate the micro-regeneration projects in Beijing and Shanghai respectively. Each chapter begins by describing the political context in the city in considerable detail. This is because the policy context of cases varies from city to city in China under the holistic guidance of central government: that is, there are specific documents and guidelines for the implementation of urban regeneration in different cities. Therefore, the political and policy context of the two cities must be specified. After this, the chapters will introduce the project processes. Through in-depth investigation of three cases, the chapters focus on the interaction between various stakeholders in typical historical residential neighbourhoods and old urban communities. Then, the discussion turns to the elaboration of resilience factors. Based on the framework generated in Chapter 2, the two chapters select specific attributes to analyse how micro-regeneration promotes resilient community building. Further, the case studies summarise specific words and phrases in Chinese which can help to understand community resilience in urban China.

The objective of **Chapter 8** is to explore the interconnections between different factors of resilience, bringing all cases together. The chapter first discusses how to understand transformation – an important attribute of resilience – through the investigation of micro-regeneration projects. Then, this chapter discusses the changes in the resilience framework mentioned in Chapter 2. The shift of this framework is building upon in-depth fieldwork and data analysis, and it benefits the understanding of the factors of resilience in a qualitative way.

Chapter 2. Resilience theories and an analytical framework

2.1 Introduction

This research adopts the concept of resilience as its analytical tool, focusing on resilience thinking in urban planning at the community level. Therefore, a brief introduction to resilience theory will be presented at the outset of this chapter. Then, a detailed review of resilience thinking for urban planning, with an attribute's summary developed. To narrow down the research to the community level in the Chinese context, a review of community resilience and resilience research in China will be illustrated. Based on the literature review, I will propose and illustrate a conceptual framework comprising six key attributes of community resilience: adaptive capacity, transformation, collaboration, connectivity, social capital building and resourcefulness. This conceptual framework aims to provide an analytical tool to answer the thesis's second research question: To what extent can micro-regeneration of heritage communities help to enhance community resilience? These attributes will be introduced later in the thesis to analyse three cases in Beijing and Shanghai. The analysis will be based on indicators that were recognised during the fieldwork, which will not be explained in the literature review. On the other hand, the theoretical framework generated from the literature review will be revised in order to answer the first research question: How can the community resilience discourse be resituated in the context of heritage community micro-regeneration in China? This could contribute to the explanation of 'community resilience' in the thought of the Chinese characteristics of the political framework within China.

2.2 Resilience and resilience thinking in urban planning

2.2.1 What is resilience?

The concept of resilience, which has its origins in physics and mathematics, refers to the ability of systems or materials to recover their shape after being displaced or disturbed (Norris et al., 2008). This definition has also been clarified as engineering resilience, which focused mainly on materials (Davoudi et al., 2012). In the ecological realm, unlike in engineering, the term is

concerned with the transformation of a complex interlinked system through the emergence of new frameworks and behaviours when facing external disturbances and changes, highlighting “absorb change and disruption while maintaining the same linkages between populations or state variables” (Holling, 1973, p. 14). This comprehension of resilience makes it suitable for studying social phenomena characterised by dynamic learning and adaptation (Pickett et al., 2004).

With environmental scientist Folke’s (2006) work, resilience discourse was further developed and focused mainly on ‘socio-ecological systems’. In recent years, the ecologically rooted concept of resilience has a range of expansive utilisations in various disciplines (Haxeltine and Seyfang, 2009) and has rapidly crept into public policy in areas encompassing national security, public health, and urban planning, and has been adopted by policy-makers and expert consultants across and beyond these fields (Walker and Cooper, 2011). Furthermore, in the built environment domain, resilience has become a ubiquitous term in response to an enduring problem of how to improve the environment and society (Trogal et al., 2018).

2.2.2 The evolution of resilience in social science research

Urban planning is a multidisciplinary realm, and researchers and practitioners in this domain continuously learn from engineering, ecological, and social science to advance their work. Resilience is one of the most recent conceptual imports into the field of planning (Xu and Shao, 2019). Engineering resilience, mentioned above, resonates with the managerial and technical planning tradition (ibid). It emphasises spatial balance and structural resistance with the goal of maintaining the status quo (Davoudi, 2012; Zhang et al., 2015; Xu and Shao, 2019). Conversely, ecological resilience, which is the favoured conceptualisation of resilience in critical planning studies, focuses on creating a vision to enable a better future (Eraydin, 2013). However, challenges also occur during translation from one discipline to another, some of which are discussed below.

Problems with the definition of resilience during importation

Resilience theory, which was initially derived from physics and ecological theory, was imported into the realm of urban studies several years ago. However, many critics have pointed out that the term’s application in urban studies is conservative, and thus problematic. First, it is argued that resilience glosses over the existence of social divisions and inequalities in society (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013). This is because the engineering-rooted resilience approach

primarily focuses on maintaining a system's original functions when resisting external disturbance, potentially ignoring existing inequities, such as resource distribution, reinforcement of vulnerabilities, and socio-economic impoverishment in cities and neighbourhoods (Trogal et al., 2018).

Second, critics argue that some definitions of resilience are situated within a survival discourse, which reflects the response to threats in traditional ways and the predominance of administrative or technical approaches based on risk- or disaster-reduction tactics in solving issues (Shaw, 2012). Critics argue that in these instances, the meaning of resilience is reduced to the measurement of [a system's] capacity to respond to emergencies, rather than a means to assess and build *long-term adaptive capacities* (Davoudi, 2012). For instance, many governmental statements emphasise the ability of a region or community to bounce back after a natural disaster, such as a flood or earthquake, rather than pay attention to their ability to adapt in the face of such external hazards (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013).

Third, ecologically rooted resilience has been termed as fundamentally anti-political, which empowers its adaptation by decentralised actors and systems. Therefore, when it comes to the urban realm, resilience management has been criticised for placing the responsibility to 'be resilient' on individuals, communities, and their existing social networks (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013; Petrescu et al., 2016). Accordingly, resilience has become highly charged with ideological overtones because it relies on social networks to adapt to changes, while ignoring responsive and accountable governance (Davoudi, 2012). This seems a misguided translation as the state does not need to provide support for vulnerable communities in the name of resilience (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013).

Development of the term resilience to fit social sciences

Resilience as an opportunity to transform

In response to the problems mentioned above, scholars have reframed and developed this term so that it can be better used in society. For instance, Maguire and Cartwright (2008) discuss that resilience is transformative rather than restorative, not "seeing change as a 'stressor' from which a community needs to recover to its original state" (p.5) but viewing resilience as a means of identifying unavoidable shifts. Confronted with changes, disturbances can increase the opportunity for innovation and development so that a higher state of functioning can be achieved (Folke, 2006). The socio-ecological approach views the communities as a dynamic

system, in which disturbances could be opportunities for reorganisation and development (Folke, 2006; Maguire and Cartwright, 2008), shifting the focus from resources to responses as key to resilience (Arana and Wittek, 2016; Cote and Nightingale, 2012).

Furthermore, recent attempts to 'reframe resilience' also view it as an all-encompassing concept that goes beyond just survival and emphasises the possibilities for a better quality of life, (Shaw, 2012). Hence, in planning theory and practice resilience is considered a dynamic process of 'bouncing forward' that has the potential to develop into a more radical and transformative agenda. Unlike the 'bounce back' discourse, from this viewpoint, resilience has the potential to support more radical and transformational plans, which can lead to greater opportunities for a political voice, resistance, and the challenging of established power structures and conventional ways of thinking (Davoudi, 2012).

Evolutionary resilience

Similarly, evolutionary resilience is viewed as an essential aspect that recognises the potential for sudden environmental change, both in nature and society, that can change and shift suddenly into a radically new scenario (Davoudi, 2012). From this perspective, resilience is conceived as not just about returning to original circumstances but rather as the ability of complex socio-ecological systems to change, adapt, and crucially, transform in response to stresses and strains (Walker et al., 2004). The concept of evolutionary resilience looks at three aspects of the social ecosystem: resilience as persistence, as adaptability, and as transformability (Folke et al., 2010). Evolutionary resilience promotes the understanding of places as complex, interconnected socio-spatial systems that can provide considerable and unpredictable reaction processes in the long term (Davoudi, 2012). This view is consistent with recent planning studies that confirm the omnipresence and transformative potential of change (Xu and Shao, 2019). For instance, in the context of population ageing, resilience can explain how well communities' function in response to the significant demographic changes they experience as resident's age (Scharlach, 2012).

Resilience from the perspective of governance and human resource

Hudson (2010) has critiqued the lack of analysis of power relations regarding the resilience concept. Subsequently, some scholars have highlighted the need to insert politics into research on resilience, emphasising the governance challenges of enhancing a community's or a social system's capacity to manage resilience (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013). Urban studies

scholars such as Swanstrom et al. (2009) have offered evidence of the particular role of the state in resilience. Although resilience-style governance places the responsibility of adaptation on individuals and communities, the effects of horizontal collaboration between public, private, and non-profit actors may be limited without policy support from the government (Swanstrom et al., 2009). Both of my case studies can be situated as horizontal collaboration to enhance resilience in the context of planning change in urban China.

The resilience framework has been widely applied to institutional and strategic implications. However, as urban planning scholar Shaw (2012) mentioned, the power of human resources is perhaps the ultimate approach to emergencies and change. Additionally, the power of collaboration has been emphasised. While resilience could offer a paradigm shift, it is undeniable that there is no substitute for “great leadership and a culture of teamwork and trust which can respond effectively to the unexpected” (Seville, 2009 cited in Shaw, 2012, p. 311). In an age-friendly, resilient community, “self-organising groups that work together to design, develop, and manage a project need to nurture skills of mutual understanding and shared responsibility” to support participants (Jarvis, 2018, p. 68). This collaborative process is recognised as increasing community ‘resilience’.

2.2.3 Resilience thinking for urban planning

It has been argued that a new perspective on urban planning is needed to address the disturbances and vulnerabilities reinforced by neoliberalisation and market-friendly policies, and resilience thinking offers a possible solution (Eraydin, 2013). Although this argument is contextualised in Western context, China has undergone similar situation to some extent, especially after the adoption of market-oriented reforms since the 1980s.

Since the late 1970s, the expansion of neoliberalisation has accelerated the development of consumerism and entrepreneurialism, turning the property market into a key actor in urban development, and shifting planning practices towards a more market-oriented approach (Eraydin, 2013). There is a consensus that neoliberal economic restructuring benefits capitalists rather than citizens, resulting in increased social and environmental vulnerabilities and reduced social cohesion. This phenomenon can be viewed in urban China, where mass demolition renewal has taken place over the last few several decades, benefiting developers while harming local citizens, especially in heritage communities. Moreover, spatial interventions, especially project- and property-led growth, as a new mode of governance under the neoliberal tradition,

have significantly altered the city's political, economic, and social power structures (Albrechts, 2006; Tasan-Kok, 2008). This entrepreneurial logic reduces the opportunity for public concerns and sustainable resources utilisation, for instance, prioritizing making money, thereby weakening the resilience of cities (Eraydin, 2013).

Additionally, shortcomings in democracy exacerbate the vulnerability of governance (Eraydin, 2013). In Western context, in the neoliberal era, the privatisation of the state has led to an increase in the number of organisations participating in the decision-making process. Participatory practices have been cited as a key element in boosting the level of democracy. However, this mechanism has created the illusion of equality of opportunity in decision-making processes, and the actual achievements of practices have fallen well below expectations, and more evidence shows the unequal power relations (Albrechts, 2010). China faces similar issues during social transition. Historically, local authorities and administrators have played dual roles in public engagement. On the one hand, guided by democratic principles and requirements from higher-level government, they mobilised public engagement and promoted creating the prerequisites for citizen empowerment by offering information and materials. On the other hand, they were able to affect the results of public participation through working with residents. The truth is that the government possesses a greater say and influences decision-making. Given the intrinsic gap between participant expectations and bureaucratic reality, citizens as well as administrators may become impatient during the development process, anticipating different results, and in the worst-case scenario, eroding trust (Zhong and Leung, 2019).

Furthermore, urban development and sprawl damage urban ecosystems and the sustainability of urban land. Thus, protecting the ecological balance has become a key consideration on the environmental agenda (Wheeler, 2007; Eraydin, 2013). In recent decades, regeneration, recycling and reuse of urban land (especially brownfield and vacant space) have become the leading means of sustainable urban land use, aiming to address the issues of urban sprawl and the increasing demand for construction and green space (Dixon et al., 2008; Németh and Langhorst, 2014; Smith et al., 2017). Considering the high energy consumption and high costs of infrastructure and public service provision, some planning paradigm, for instance, the Compact City Form, become possible solutions and international goals (European Charter II, 2008). The vulnerability and predictable impact on ecosystems indicate the gravity of environmental issues and the urgency for solutions (Eraydin, 2013). Facing the similar situation

in China recent years, stock-based planning (discussed detailly in Chapter 4) has become a concept/paradigm widely discussed and accepted.

Despite the challenges mentioned above, some argue that the two dominant planning paradigms, rational planning and communicative planning, are insufficient for handling unexpected problems. Rational planning drawing on Keynesian economic and political models which were supported by the strong state and modernist notions. However, it has been criticised since the 1960s for having “produced a city that no one wanted” (Fainstein, 2005, p. 124). Following this, communicative action has been viewed as an alternative to instrumental rationality (Purcell, 2009; Eraydin, 2013). Concepts such as participatory planning and collaborative planning play an important role in planning theory (Purcell, 2009). Nevertheless, communicative planning also receives criticism for reinforcing current power relations and neglecting the power problem. Moreover, its emphasis on processes rather than outcomes, as well as a lack of technical expertise (Hillier, 2003), both restrict communicative planning’s effectiveness.

On the basis of the issues mentioned above, resilience thinking was introduced to support a paradigm shift in planning practice (Eraydin, 2013). Resilience thinking in urban planning resonates with earlier research before it was proposed as a distinct research topic (Shao and Xu, 2015). For example, Jacobs (1961) investigated the importance of diversity, mixed functions and small blocks, challenging the dominant assumptions of what allows a city to thrive. Her arguments coincide with many of the basic features of Urban Resilience and has been essential in addressing questions of inclusion, identification, voice, admission and opportunity, against the background of dynamic urban growth and globalisation (ARUP, 2014; Shao and Xu, 2015). Furthermore, as mentioned previously, citizen power is an important form of social infrastructure in realising urban resilience (Arnstein, 1969), who analysed the structure of social power and the approach of public participation in social matters. Arnstein divided public participation into three levels: nonparticipation, tokenism and citizen power. In terms of the uncertainty and fuzziness of urban issues, Rittel and Webber (1973) analysed the urban problems which are wicked problems that need to be tackled by introducing collaboration, negotiation, and ongoing learning within urban planning. These research examples mentioned above did not use the term resilience explicitly, however, they do reflect the characteristics of resilience to a certain degree.

As discussed in Sect. 2.2.2, resilience can be seen as a system's ability to adapt and bounce forward rather than return to a steady state. This explanation is accepted as the core of the resilience planning paradigm, and adaptive capacity, self-organisation and transformability are dynamic assets of an urban system (Eraydin, 2013). Resilience planning provides an approach to enable urban systems to adapt to and even benefit from unanticipated disturbance, but is not an end in itself. Therefore, an integrated rationality framework, which combines instrumental rationality and communicative rationality, has been taken as the most appropriate approach for resilience planning (Xu and Shao, 2015; Eraydin, 2013). Within resilience planning, it is essential to engage with social groups, who are the learning agents of change, and to encourage their long-term commitments and horizons to prepare for changes. Furthermore, resilience planning should not only focus on problem-solving or concluding an agreement, but should aim to define a no-regret situation under changeable conditions; instrumental rationality here can provide constraints and inputs for decision-making and problem-defining. In this context, resilience planning entails a proactive approach to learning how to cope with shocks (Hudson, 2009), and the utilisation and allocation of resources (Albrechts, 2010). MacKinnon and Derickson (2013) later introduced the term 'resourcefulness' as an alternative to resilience. Resourcefulness addresses the need to make resources accessible and redistribute normal resources (such as material and time) to local actors and communities, highlighting the availability of skill sets and use of 'folk' knowledge (Stollmann, 2016). Resourcefulness has been identified as one of the seven qualities of resilient cities as defined by ARUP's (2014) International Development team. Eraydin (2012) also proposed that resource redistribution is not only a technical issue but also relates to the value system which sits at the core of planning paradigms, and is related to equality, justice and public interest. The value system must be confronted by stakeholders, especially planners, and planning practices must balance the rights and responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

2.2.4 Attributes of resilience in urban planning

There is a growing body of literature about resilient cities and the characteristics that define them. Urban and architecture researchers Allan and Bryant (2011) argue there is a lack of literature on the linkage between spatial design and resilience. They agree with Brian Walker and David Salt's description of attributes of urban resilience: diversity, modularity, tight feedback, innovation, overlap in governance, ecosystem services, social capital and variability (Walker and Salt, 2006). These eight attributes can inform the design of cities because several of them contain spatial association (Allan and Bryant, 2011). Landscape architect Jack Ahern

(2011) has also put forward five attributes for building resilient cities: multi-functionality, redundancy and modularisation, (bio and social) diversity, multi-scale networks and connectivity, and adaptive planning and design. Although attributes of resilience in urban planning are not always described in the same way, there are still inner connections between them. For example, within the elaboration about adaptive planning and design, Ahern (2011) mentions that under an adaptive mode, practitioners can learn from 'experimental' implemented urban planning policies, designs, and even modest failures, where innovation is pursued.

Godschalk's (2003) research on resilient cities has also had a significant influence (Meerow, 2015). In his work, Godschalk summarises eight responses of resilient systems where six of them are widely used in urban planning: redundancy, diversity, efficiency, interdependence, adaptability and collaboration (Xu and Shao, 2019). Similarly, the interdependence mentioned here is similar to connectivity brought up earlier. These two attributes both emphasize the importance of connections between system components. Furthermore, Taşan-Kok et al. (2013) highlighted both the physical dimension and social relationships between people and organisations when elaborating on connectivity. They propose that qualities of urban resilience include recovery, connectivity, capital building, adaptability, robustness, flexibility and transformability. These qualities have been illustrated and shown to increase the resilience of cities in the book *'Resilient Thinking in Urban Planning'* (Eraydin and Taşan-Kok, 2013). Biggs's research on social-ecological system resilience is widely accepted and cited in urban planning research (e.g., Wyborn, 2015; Petrescu et al., 2016; Faulkner et al., 2018; Bush and Doyon, 2019). The principles for enhancing social-ecological systems include diversity, redundancy, connectivity, continuous learning and experimentation, high levels of participation and polycentric governance (Biggs et al., 2012). Participation and governance receive high attention in urban planning as a result. In summary, Table 2.1 lists a number of widely used attributes in the urban studies realm with accompanying definitions and evidence.

Table 2.1. Attributes of Resilience by selected research (Source: Summarised by author)

| Urban Resilience Attributes | Definition | Nature | Evidence |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Diversity | Has a number of functionally different components in order to protect the system against various threats (Godschalk, 2003) | Degree of functionally different components | Social diversity (Ahern, 2011); mixed land use and functional diversity (Allan and Bryant, 2011; Ahern, 2011); mixed-use, short blocks, variety of building age and density (Jacobs, 1993) |
| Redundancy | Has a number of functionally similar components so that the entire system does not fail when one component fails (Godschalk, 2003) | Degree of functionally similar components | Overlap in governance, institutions that include redundancy in their governance structures (Walker and Salt, 2006); Polycentric urban form (Allan and Bryant, 2011) |
| Connectivity | The degree to which the nodes of a network are directly linked to each other, including the physical dimension as well as the relationships between people and organisations (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013) | Degree of physical linkage; degree of social linkage | Reconstructing social relations (Vale and Campanella, 2005); the dialogue between citizens, planners and external organisations (Berke and Campanella, 2006); linkage with wider regions (Eraydin, 2013) |
| Collaboration/ Co-production | Collaborative with multiple opportunities and incentives for broad stakeholder participation (Godschalk, 2003) | In-depth integration and broad participation between stakeholders | Collaboration between local and state governance (Acheson, 2003); broaden participation (Biggs et al., 2012); co-production through circular economy, ecological systems and civic governance (Petrescu et al., 2016) |
| Adaptive planning and design | Need to acknowledge the fact that planning and design will face imperfect knowledge when making decisions (Ahern, 2011), and view disturbance as a learning opportunity | Capacity for designers to learn | Continuous learning and experimentation (Biggs et al., 2012); open-source platforms (Baibaraca and Petrescu, 2017) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Adaptability | Is the ability of society in a social-ecological system to cope and respond to novel situations and change without losing options for the future (Folke et al., 2002) | The capacity of a system to respond to change | Rapidity to recovery (Dias et al., 2013); capacity building by equipping stakeholders (Archer and Dodman, 2015) |
| Self-organisation | Is a process of internal organisation within a system without being guidance or management by an outside source (Heylighen, 2002; Holling, 1992) | The capacity to generate constant innovation by self-organising behaviour | Continuous introduction of 'novelty' and innovation into the system (Spaans and Waterhout, 2017); creating new social and economic agencies for multi-stakeholders (Trogal et al., 2018) |
| Social capital / Social capital building | Quality and quantity of social interactions that are shaped by institutions, relationships and societal norms (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013) | Capacity to shape social cohesion and foster future development | Institutional infrastructure (Temkin and Rohe, 1998); diversity and setting for public engagement (Berke and Campanella, 2006); formal and informal processes of decision making (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013); high levels of participation (Biggs, 2012) |
| Innovation/ Flexibility | An emphasis on learning, experimentation, locally developed rules and embracing change (Walker and Salt, 2006, p. 147). | Capacity to create new mechanisms | Flexible solutions depending upon spatial heterogeneity, function and temporal change (Eraydin, 2013); emphasis on learning, experimentation, locally developed rules and embracing change (Hudson, 2009); human ingenuity and intentionality (Davoudi et al., 2013) |
| Robustness | Ability to withstand a given level of stress without suffering degradation or loss of function (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013) | Degree of strength | Adequate consideration of development pattern in high-hazard areas (Berke and Campanella, 2006; open space and buildings that withstand disaster (Eraydin, 2013) |
| Polycentric governance | Institutions that include redundancy in their governance structures. (Walker and Salt, 2006) | Redundancy of governance | Overlap in governance (Allan and Bryant, 2011); creating diversity (Healey, 1997); community and urban development (Moudon, 1989) |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Resourcefulness | The degree of disadvantaged groups in society to access the levers of social change (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013) | Accessibility of resources especially for ordinary groups | Power exogenous to the community (Derkzen et al. 2008); different ways to achieve goals under stresses (ARUP, 2014) |
| Transformation /Transformability | Capacity to learn and create a new and different socio-ecological system (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013) | Bounce forward | Human ingenuity and intentionality (Davoudi et al., 2013) |

2.3 Resilience at the community level and resilience research in China

Resilience is a significant issue in urban development, and the focus on resilience theory globally is part of a broader movement to overcome the notion of 'sustainability' (Davoudi, 2012). In resilience research, community resilience receives significant attention in the context of urban, inner-city spaces, as it is at this level that resilience pathways are implemented 'on the ground' (Wilson, 2015). Accordingly, resilience should be considered not only in relation to large-scale shocks but also to everyday life and the challenges people encounter (Trogal et al., 2015). There are various perspectives to review community resilience. For example, Khew et al. (2015) elaborate community resilience through the two aspects of 'soft resilience' and 'hard resilience'. Checkland further claims that resilience could be classified as soft, hard and hybrid resilience (Checkland, 2000). Hard resilience mainly emphasises constructing infrastructure and defence equipment. It is descriptive and tangible, showing physical resilience (Wiek et al., 2012). Conversely, soft resilience is vague, narrative and intangible. It cannot protect the community directly by resisting destructive events like hard resilience, but it focuses on personal potential and the combination of many social factors (Neil, 2015; Meng et al., 2018). Other researchers such as Berkes and Ross (2013), explore community resilience from the perspective of social-ecological systems, physiology and mental health and the integration of the former two. This section reviews community resilience from the analysis of social-ecological systems (referred as SES thereafter), community development and an integrative perspective.

2.3.1 Community resilience in the analysis of social-ecological systems

From a SES analysis perspective, community resilience is rooted in ecological resilience, which is focused on systems' continuous change and renewal cycles (Berkes and Ross, 2013). In this context, the transformability of a social-ecological system is vital insofar as disasters may provide opportunities to transform the system at its roots (Goldstein, 2008). The social-ecological resilience system incorporates humans into the ecosystem (Meng et al., 2018). Some scholars have emphasised the role of social learning in social ecosystem transformation as a means to transform the existing system's characteristics, rather than perpetuate them (Wilson, 2012). In this sense, transformability is a capacity in resilience theory which aims to evolve a new way of living (Walker et al., 2004).

Besides emergencies, disturbances that occur slowly over a long period, such as climate change or uncontrolled urbanisation, directly and indirectly, affect a city and become important influencing factors of the uncertainty of urban development (Xu and Shao, 2015). Reflecting on

these circumstances, environmental research scientist Armitage (2011) stated that a community's adaptability and ability to deal with change depends not only on its existing adaptive abilities but also on its capacity to compile knowledge from different sources and co-produce knowledge (Armitage et al., 2011, Berkes and Ross, 2012).

Community resilience has also been explored as an ongoing process where communities work with local resources to help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. In social-ecological systemic terms, a resilient process considers how human communities interact with the environment and pays particular attention to governance (Biggs et al., 2012). Therefore, from the perspective of social-ecological systems, dynamic processes (including adaptive responses and social learning) can be seen as vital factors of resilience that increase scheme options and flexibility in the face of persistent change (Marschke and Berkes, 2006).

2.3.2 Community resilience in community development

Another understanding of community resilience comes from community development, which originates in the fields of mental health and developmental psychology (Berkes and Ross, 2012). In mental health and psychology, resilience emphasises the internal factors and strengths that help an individual cope with adversity (Buikstra et al., 2011). In this sense, building resilience is understood as a means of identifying and developing the strengths of individuals or communities, rather than focusing primarily on identifying and overcoming weaknesses (Luthar, 2006). Architects Hassler and Kohler (2014a, p. 123) pointed out that resilience depends upon sentience and capabilities that must be embodied within people, rather than automated systems.

Humans are the creators of communities, but they can also have a negative influence on community development. Therefore, it is critical to establish community resilience with humans as the primary focus. When researching community resilience, it is important to define a community's strengths and how they contribute to the collective response to challenges and the development of resilience (Kulig, 2000; Kulig et al., 2008). Several scholars have examined community strengths, such as social networks, social support, social inclusion, and leadership. Some studies have also recognised the roles of infrastructure and the natural and built environment in building the resilience of a community (Berkes and Ross, 2013). Co-production of neighbourhood resilience is also emphasised in research, as it offers a means to challenge and change the power relationships inherent in the contemporary built environment (Markus,

1993). Urban design scholar De Carli (2016) argues that co-production is a way to create resilient communities. Moreover, grassroots experience of self-organisation and cooperation could help vulnerable communities to deal with issues such as the uneven distribution of resources and opportunities that cause vulnerability in the first place. The production, governance, and maintenance of co-production enable more sustainable and resilient communities (Stevenson and Petrescu, 2016).

2.3.3 Community resilience from the overlap of social-ecological systems and community development

There are also integrated concepts of community resilience that arise from the overlap of social-ecological systems and community development. According to Berkes and Ross (2013), community resilience is a function of certain strengths or characteristics, such as knowledge, social networks, and engaged governance, that lead to agency and self-organisation. This concept “is concerned with how these community characteristics combine to produce the process of resilience” (Berkes and Ross, 2013, p. 16) (Figure 2.1).

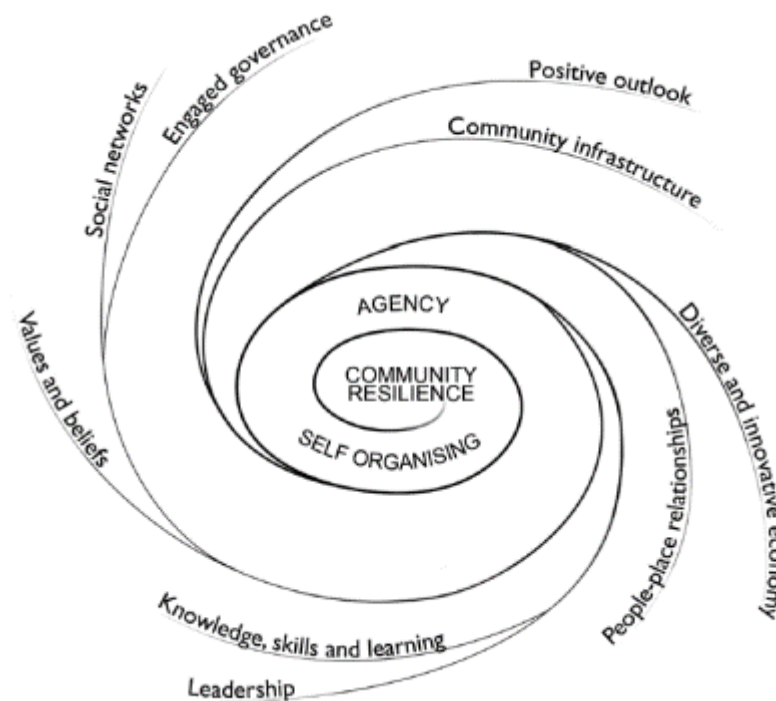


Figure 2.1. Community resilience as a function of the strengths or characteristics that have been identified as important, leading to agency and self-organisation (Berkes and Ross, 2013)

Human geography scholars Mackinnon and Derickson (2013) coined the term 'resourcefulness' to describe a concept that promotes community resilience. Here, community resilience is situated in the notion of resourcefulness, which recognises and redistribute local resources and communities' strengths (e.g., space and knowledge) (Stollmann, 2016), while empowering communities (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013). Additionally, resourcefulness can be understood as a process rather than something a community possesses (ibid). This view highlights the need for scale-specific elements of both capacity building at the community level and broader links across geographic layers (Cumbers et al., 2008; Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013).

Research on resilience has also focused on specific aspects, such as redundancy (Stevenson and Petrescu, 2016). According to Biggs et al. (2012), redundancy is the replication of specific components or pathways within a system that enables some components to make up for the loss or failure of others. Here, the concept of redundancy in a built environment is broadened to include related social and physical dimensions like governance, communication, and learning. A society or community should have redundancy in order to be adaptable enough to put its adaptive capacity into practise (Maguire and Cartwright, 2008). This encompasses the collective ability of people to adapt, learn from their experiences, and actively apply what they have learned to their daily life.

In summary, building resilient communities should be more comprehensive by considering the community's ability to adapt to uncertain circumstances. This ability should not only be reflected in the post-disaster response, but should also be combined with the situation of different communities in a comprehensive and concrete way. The concept of resilience should be applied to all aspects of the city's daily operations. For example, social mutual trust can be strengthened by involving organisations in improving people's living conditions, motivating the initiative of the whole community, and ensuring the seamless flow of information (Mayunga, 2007; Peng et al., 2017).

2.3.4 Characteristics of community resilience

In general, community resilience is understood as a community's ability to cope with crises or disturbances. According to Magis (2010, p. 401), it involves "the existence, development and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterised by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise". Since community

resilience is a multi-dimensional concept (Meng et al., 2018), the scope of research is various (Peng et al., 2017), with each evaluation model including different attributes. For example, by focusing on natural disasters and hazards, researchers such as Burton (2015) and Cutter et al. (2008) propose a set of metrics that cover social, economic, institutional, infrastructural, ecological and environmental dimensions of resilience and community competence. On the other hand, Cohen et al. (2013) emphasise emergency response and identify four components that impact community resilience, including community characteristics (collective efficacy, social capital, social trust and social support), leadership, emergency preparedness and attachment to place. Additionally, many studies concentrate on the social aspect of community resilience. For instance, Maclean et al. (2013) summarise six attributes of community resilience through case studies, which are knowledge, skill and learning; community networks; people-place connection; community infrastructure; diverse and innovative economy and engaged governance. A more comprehensive view on community resilience is put forward by Meng et al. (2018), which covers human capital, management, economy, physical and social resources.

Pfefferbaum et al. (2005) argue that the concept of 'community resilience' is more complex than 'resilience' itself, which is already diverse and controversial. By introducing the notion of 'community', this complexity is further increased. Exploring community resilience requires researchers to define 'community' firstly (Meng et al., 2018). For the purpose of this research, a community is defined as the basic component unit of a city and the lowest level of administrative unit in China, encompassing both geographical and social features. A detailed explanation of community will be developed in Chapter 3.

2.3.5 Resilience research in China

Most Chinese scholars are conducting resilience research at the city level, using case studies based on the resilience framework, but little work has been focused on theoretical aspects (Wang et al., 2016). Xu and Shao (2015) summarise western research on resilience and propose that resilience thinking is an innovative approach to achieve sustainability. They also highlight that although China has made great achievements in the field of urban disaster reduction, the current mode can still be classified as simple and passive engineering thinking to some extent, and the power of social governance and public participation has not been mobilised. From this perspective, resilience thinking could benefit urban development and research. Most research papers concentrate on post-disaster resilience or how to evaluate urban resilience facing natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods (Liao, 2012; Xu and Shao, 2020). This

phenomenon reflects what Wilson (2012) observed before, namely the idea of resilience has been applied more to isolated incidents and natural disasters rather than ‘slow-onset hazards’ (i.e., human-induced climate change). The destruction of many more communities, nevertheless, has been caused by anthropogenic factors than by natural disasters.

Chinese government and departments, researchers, and designers in the field of urban studies are beginning to understand the localism of resilient cities to strengthen the understanding of urban development, maintain urban vitality, and improve urban resistance to disasters (Xu et al., 2014). Existing work has applied the subdivision grid method to design resilient cities (Xu, 2011) and has considered the importance of urban agriculture to food security in resilient cities (Guo and Ren, 2012). Scholars have also discussed what kind of cities can be considered resilient cities in China. As a result of this discussion, during an annual forum on architecture and landscape architecture held at Peking University in 2012, scholars reached a consensus that resilient cities ought to have a comprehensive transportation system, balanced land-use mechanism, sustainable energy use, healthy urban ecological system, liveable urban living environment, and diverse urban culture (Peking University, 2012).

In recent years, research has begun to expand their exploration of resilience beyond just disaster resilience. For example, models for revitalizing villages have been explored from the perspective of resilience by Yan and Lu (2017). They argue that the grassroots mode is more resilient than the gentrification mode in terms of village revitalization, as it offer greater potential for sustainable development. Specifically, they identify four key insights for building resilience: first, that resilient community building is not about self-dependence; second, that it is important to focus on the resilience of small, accumulated efforts rather than just preparing for large-scale events; third, that developing learning and creativity is a central aspect of resilience building; and finally, that building resilience at the community level requires attention to both individual and social network resilience. Additionally, Chen and Huang (2021) explore the urban resilience evaluation model from the perspective of collaborative governance, with the aim of providing guidance for governments regarding urban governance.

The research outcomes mentioned above are about creating or defining resilient cities. The scholars involved in the forum at Peking University have conducted extensive research on resilience topics and theory at the city level. In the past five years, there has been significant research on community resilience in China. Using keywords such as ‘resilient community’ (*ren-*

xing (韧性) or *tan-xing* (弹性) *she-qu* (社区) in Chinese) and ‘community resilience’ (*she-qu ren-xing*, or *tan-xing*) to search the China Academic Journals website (CNKI), returned 67 papers and dissertations related to community resilience. Most of these papers focus on disaster resilience and discuss how to adapt to or resist natural hazards at the community level. However, there are also papers that go beyond natural disasters. For example, Shen and Wang (2018) elaborate three dimensions of resilient urban neighbourhood planning by emphasising the adaptability feature of resilience. They proposed that environmental support is the basis of adaptability, spatial diversity is the way of adaptive implementation, and people-oriented practice is the performance of social ecosystem adaptability. Meng et al. (2018) also suggest that future research should emphasise the public dimension of community resilience since most research on public resilience is still limited in the field of psychology. It is critical to have a proper method to integrate the resilience of the public and people into the community. They further recommend that study of infrastructure construction should be embedded within the framework of society since previous works have isolated infrastructure and environment construction from society. However, the connection between the two sections is important to the improvement of the contribution of the building environment to community resilience (Meng et al., 2018).

2.4 Community resilience approach as a theoretical framework

2.4.1 Overview

Based on the literature review regarding resilience research in both western countries and China, this section aims to develop an analytical framework that can aid in the understanding of community resilience in the context of neighbourhood regeneration processes in China. The framework serves two purposes: to guide fieldwork and data collection, and to support the analysis.

The main research question seeks to reposition the discourse on community resilience and provide practical guidance in the context of heritage community micro-regeneration in China. To answer this main research question, this thesis aims to answer several sub-questions related to participatory community regeneration practice, existing strategies, social value, stakeholder engagement over time, and recommendations for different actors’ regimes, mobilisation and research in achieving resilient communities. To clarify, the following sub-questions are reintroduced:

- What are the attributes and indicators that interpret community resilience in the context of community micro-regeneration?
- What are the existing strategies/policies making steps towards the objective of resilient community regeneration?
- What are the specific words/concepts used in China to frame the terminology 'community resilience'?
- How do initiators enable and constrain community resilience through planning regimes and practices?
- How can the social value of heritage community micro-regeneration be demonstrated using the community resilience discourse?
- What are the roles of planners in the process of community micro-regeneration?

This research builds upon the research questions and literature review by integrating different perspectives on community resilience. The following will be incorporated into this research: Magis (2010) and Berkes and Ross's (2013) definition of community resilience, and Stevenson and Petrescu's (2016) views on co-producing resilience, as well as Petrescu's (2016) position on investigating the relationship between community resilience and the commons. In addition, Pinho et al. (2013) provide a foundation of the model for *evaluating resilience in planning* in the book *Resilience Thinking in Urban Planning*. This model is used as a guideline for exploring resilience theory in this research. However, most research adopting this model focuses on the city or region level, which is not consistent with the scale of this research. Therefore, a new analytical framework that contains all noticed facets will be developed, since the existing frameworks only contain one or two aspects mentioned before. Moreover, this research is conducted in the Chinese context, and Chinese governance issues are taken into consideration. Furthermore, different interpretations of 'co-production' in Chinese discourse compared to Western discourse necessitates the development of a new analysis framework for this research.

2.4.2 Defining disturbance – resilience to what?

Before delving into the aspects or attributes of resilience at the community level, it is essential to define what constitutes a disturbance or disruption that a system needs to withstand (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013). As Hassler and Kohler (2014) claim, a comprehensive and exhaustive explanation of threats would be necessary in order to address 'resilience to what?'. In terms of socio-ecological systems, Carpenter et al. (2001) propose that the identification of system

configuration and disturbances should form the basis for assessing system resilience. Tracing back the introduction of resilience into planning, it can be found that the growing awareness of risks and disasters have helped to pay attention to fragilities and the necessity to create resilience (Hassler and Kohler, 2014). According to Pelling (2003), a calamity is a condition in which systemic operations are disrupted. This definition encompasses economic and political crises, as well as risks to cultural heritage, which can also be considered as disasters (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013; Hassler and Kohler, 2014). For urban systems, disturbances mentioned above can be the main source of vulnerabilities. Considering the time factor, potential threats can appear as both short time disturbances and slowly moving diffuse threats that extend over longer time spans. As a result, an effective response may require a combination of anticipatory (precautionary) and heuristic resilience measures (Hassler and Kohler, 2014).

Coaffee et al. (2009) describe disturbance factors as a 'push for resilience', existing as a reaction to change and vulnerability. To provide clarity on what resilience means, how it relates to the community-scale built environment, and what is the distinction between the prevalent disaster resilience concepts in academia in China, it is imperative to define what is the risk and its context. Detailed illustrations of the changes that China is facing will be developed in Chapter 4.

2.4.3 Evaluating resilience thinking in planning

Since resilience has been defined and utilised in various contexts, its evaluation is also varied. For example, the evaluation of resilience in social-ecological systems put forward by the Resilience Alliance (2007) has received a lot of attention. Tanner et al. (2009) suggest an analytical framework that considers governance and identify ten key characteristics, including 1) decentralisation and autonomy, 2) accountability and transparency, 3) responsiveness and flexibility, 4) participation and inclusion, and, finally, 5) experience and support. Subsequently, based on the Resilience Alliance's framework, Alexander and Faludi's (1989) planning evaluation method, and Oliveira and Pinho's (2009) planning evaluation model, Pinho et al. (2013) developed a methodology for evaluating resilience thinking from a narrow planning perspective. The methodology for evaluating resilience thinking in planning (RTP) follows seven basic steps:

Stage 1: Identification of key territorial issues

Stage 2: Selection of relevant planning documents

Stage 3: Identification of resilience-related policies and measures

Stage 4: Selection of appropriate resilience attributes

Stage 5: Formulation of the evaluation questions

Stage 6: Selection of the dimensions of resilience and corresponding indicators

Stage 7: Synthesis and critical appraisal of the evaluation results

(Pinho et al., 2013)

Here, the attributes for selection are based on the definitions provided by Taşan-Kok et al. (2013): recovery, connectivity, capital building, adaptability, robustness, flexibility, and transformability; the qualities of resilient systems are derived from the Rockefeller Foundation (2014), containing: reflective, robust, redundant, flexible, resourceful, inclusive and integrated; and the attributes summarised in Table 2.1.

2.4.4 A framework for the analysis of community resilience

As mentioned before, this thesis adopts Berkes and Ross's (2013) and Magis's (2010) definition of community resilience, which is an integrated concept situated in the overlap of social-ecological system resilience and community development, highlighting the utilisation of resources. Social-ecological system resilience is interested in the system and dynamics, emphasising adaptive capacity and transformability building during the process of resilience building. At the same time, from the perspective of community development, SES resilience emphasises identifying a set of strengths to build resilience and viewing resilience building as a process rather than the outcome. Additionally, the action of self-organising and a sense of agency are also emphasised in resilience elaboration (Berkes and Ross, 2013). Community resilience is based on an understanding of adaptive system influenced by a set of important characteristics which are activated by agency and self-organising. As for evaluation, this research embraces the assessment procedure of RTP offered by Pinho et al. (2013). Therefore, there is a need to identify the attributes pool for this specific research since the selection range used by Pinho et al. (2013) has been further developed in recent years, so this research identifies the following attributes for later analysis: adaptive capacity, transformation, collaboration, connectivity, social capital building, and resourcefulness (Figure 2.2).

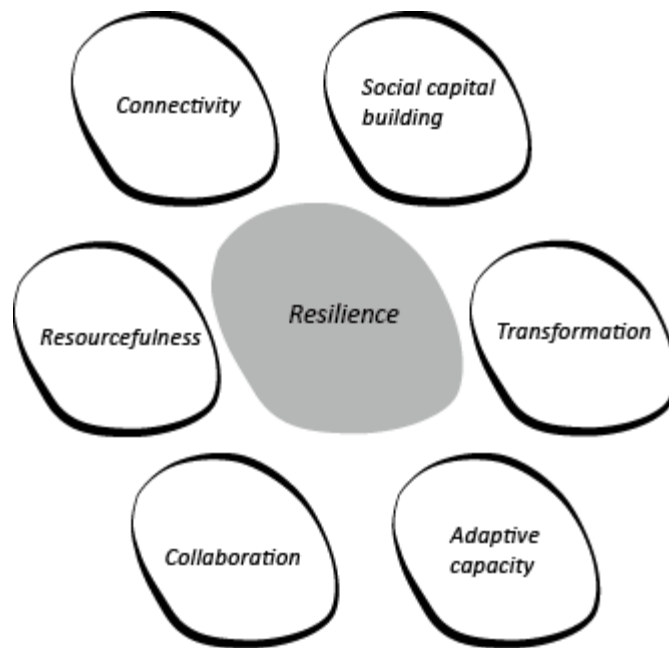


Figure 2.2. The attributes of community resilience in this research (Author, 2023)

Adaptive capacity and agency are both extremely important in producing resilience since the former refers to the ability to influence resilience, while agency is the capacity of an individual or group to act independently, and adaptive capacity is a latent property that can be reached when people exercise their agency (Berkes and Ross, 2013). However, from the social-ecological system analysis view, adaptive capacity is used in much the same sense as the term agency (ibid). Brown and Westaway (2011) also claim that adaptive capacity is not only an attribute at the community level but also at the lower level of an individual and higher level of organisation. Therefore, adaptive capacity could be more inclusive than agency to be used as a single attribute. The comparison between adaptive capacity and adaptation cannot be ignored since they are closely related to each other. Smit and Wandel (2006) state that adaptation involves actions taken to lessen vulnerabilities and promote resilience, while adaptive capacity is the ability to take those actions (Maguire and Cartwright, 2008). To elaborate, it can be difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of adaptation before the change has been made, and adaptation can only be measured as a community's actual action to disturbance. In contrast, a community's adaptive capacity can be measured by using indicators, such as the presence of local leadership, communication channels, and the community's ability to organise (ibid). In the context of urban regeneration in China, the change occurs not only at the individual level (i.e., Resident), but also at the strategy and even institutional level (which will be elaborated on in later chapters), highlighting the ability of individuals, communities, and mechanism to cope with social changes. From this perspective, adaptive capacity can be a more appropriate aspect of the analysis framework in this research.

Transformation refers to a system shifting to a new state when the current system is no longer desirable. Unlike adaptive capacity, transformation emphasises renewal, regeneration and re-organisation in which people could create a fundamentally new social-ecological system (Folke, 2006). It implies a positive attitude that views resilience as an opportunity for change; the goal of community resilience is not simply to ‘bounce back’ after disruptions, but to ‘bounce forward’ towards a more sustainable and inclusive system. To achieve this, a system’s focus might be put on, for example, collective actions, sharing and autonomy. Reviewing resilience from the perspective of transformation also draws attention to the scaling up of a community regeneration, allowing for evolution in response to changes (Maguire and Cartwright, 2008). In urban planning, transformation highlights the contribution of policies, programmes, plans and projects to the area’s ability to innovate and create new systems (Pinho et al., 2013). Coherently, scaling up, in planning and development debates, refers to the impact on laws and policies. It highlights that “the route to greater impact lay in changing institutions, policy and law” (Riddell and Moore, 2015, p.3). Additionally, Lefebvre’s (1996) concept of the right to the city has been believed to have a connection with resilience thinking in urban planning (Meijer and Bolívar, 2015; De Carli, 2018). Right to the city, based on Lefebvre (1996), is grounded in the idea of social justice and the need for citizens to have a say in shaping the urban environment. It is not just about access to urban resources or services, but also about the right to participate in the decision-making process that shapes urban development (Chen and Qu, 2020). He saw the right to the city as a demand for a radical transformation of the urban system, which he believed was necessary to create a more just and equitable society. Both resilience thinking and the right to the city theory share a common concern with building more sustainable and equitable urban communities, especially highlighting the importance of system/mechanism transformation. Therefore, given the objectives of Chinese micro-regeneration regarding social governance and community-level shifts and innovation, transformation could be introduced as an appropriate attribute to guide the analysis.

This research has chosen *collaboration* as another facet instead of self-organising. This is because spontaneous self-organisation in China is not as pervasive as in the western context. Although there are some spontaneous activities regarding environment or infrastructure improvement as well as cultural events happening, state-led movements still dominate the mainstream in China, although the government is encouraging participatory projects within urban planning. While this research agrees that co-production as collective action plays a vital role in resilience building (Markus, 1993; Stevenson and Petrescu, 2016), the interpretation and

approaches in terms of co-production can be different in the Chinese context. Some Chinese scholars view 'co-production' as a concept borrowed from Western discourse and prefer to refer to it as 'state-led co-production' instead when applying to the Chinese situation (which will be discussed in Chapter 3). 'State-led co-production' implies "the government plays an active role in initiating, financing, and facilitating community-based co-production", while other stakeholders or actors become planners and providers of other services (Li et al., 2019, p. 252). Additionally, co-governance is another important feature regarding the collective process. Petrescu et al.'s (2016) research demonstrates that collective governance is necessary to achieve community resilience. Ostrom also argues that collective governance is essential for the resilience of commons since it implies an 'agreement' and a 'shared concern' not to devastate dependable resources for all members (Ostrom, 1990). Therefore, in China, collective governance (or networked governance in some papers and policies) has also been underlined in policies especially when it comes to community-level renewal plans. Hence, from the specific and unique Chinese context, collaboration can be a more pertinent aspect when talking about community resilience.

Connectivity is another vital factor in resilience building, which has been extensively studied and emphasised. It refers to the degree to which the nodes of a network are directly connected with each other, and the relationships between people and organisations (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013). In Godschalk's (2003) impactful research on interdependence, he highlights the connection between system components so that they can support each other. In ARUP's (2014) work on the qualities of resilient systems, integrated and inclusive could be viewed as different interpretations of connectivity (Shao and Xu, 2017). Here, integration means consistency in decision-making and ensuring that all investments are mutually supportive towards a common outcome. While inclusive addresses the requirement for extensive community engagement and consultation, particularly among the most vulnerable groups. In short, connectivity highlights the connection between actors within one system, which could be helpful to each other confronted with changes. When it comes to micro-regeneration in China, the practitioners are gradually realising the importance of building stable and rich local connections to promote more initiations. As such, connectivity is chosen as the attribute for following analysis.

Social capital describes "a society's social interactions that are shaped by institutions, relationships, and societal norms" (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013, p. 46). As explained by Putnam (1993), when networks, trust and norms are formed, collaborative action can be fostered, bringing not

only about improved economic performance, but also about the building of civic infrastructure (Warner, 2001). In China, ‘social capital’, with Chinese characteristics, is referred as *guanxi* (关系 in Chinese character), which is a deep-seated idiosyncratic Chinese notion (Hitt et al., 2002). Traditionally, shaped by Confucianism, China is a well-connected *guanxi* society, viewing “individuals not as isolated entities but independent parts of a hierarchical social system” (Zhang et al., 2021, p. 2). Hierarchical relationships include, for example, “filial duty of sons to fathers and workplace subordinate-superordinate *guanxi*” (Wei et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2019, p. 13). It has been argued that building relationships with government officials may yield greater benefits in China because high levels of state ownership implies that Chinese officials have greater access to resources than their counterparts elsewhere (Zhang et al., 2019). Moreover, Chinese use informal *guanxi* to maintain conventional arm’s length ties. As discussed by Horak and Taube (2016), reciprocal interaction promotes trust and trustworthiness, which could benefit *guanxi*, and the level of trust is a good indicator of *guanxi* quality (Chen et al. 2013). In fact, Wei et al. (2010) suggest ‘*Guanxi Capital*’ and assert that it is essential for the stable operation of most of Chinese society. *Guanxi* is further persuasive in knowledge sharing, reciprocal appraisal, and productive controversy among individuals (Chen and Tjosvold, 2007; Ho, 2014; Zhang et al., 2019). Furthermore, the *guanxi* of individuals can also affect behaviours, such as communication style, etiquette or even innovation (Luo et al., 2016). There is a contention that in China, close relationships have a greater significance compared to Western societies. The Chinese tend to depend more on strong and intimate connections and place a greater emphasis on reciprocation and enduring trust in their relationships (Wu and Leung, 2005). And China is linked with a distinct form of social capital that is rooted in networks – comprising close-knit, dense connections alongside loose, less substantial ones (Lin and Si, 2010). Based on the aforementioned arguments, the process of *social capital building* might help to withstand social and environmental change. More importantly, capital building could facilitate “formal and informal progresses of decision making and public involvement” (Taşan-Kok et al., 2013, p. 47), strengthening the ability for social interplay and enhancing society’s capacity to cope with hardships by information sharing and establishing a more unbiased society.

Resourcefulness, as introduced by MacKinnon and Derickson, “cannot be understood as something communities possess to varying degrees. It is the act of fostering resourcefulness, not measuring it or achieving it, that should motivate policy and activism” (2013, p. 12). This highlights the necessity of the availability and redistribution of resources (i.e., space, knowledge

and power) to local communities, allowing opportunities for underprivileged communities to access the tools for making social changes. Empowering the local community to take charge of their own development and promoting social justice through their political participation unleashes their resources, skills, and local knowledge, as well as recognising their cultural heritage and traditional wisdom (Robinson and Carson, 2016). In short, resourcefulness refers to the ability of individuals and organisations to quickly adapt and find alternative solutions to accomplish their objectives or fulfil their requirements when faced with unexpected or challenging circumstances. This may involve developing the capability to anticipate future scenarios, establish priorities, and take action, such as by pooling and organising diverse human, financial, and material resources. In this vein, resourcefulness is important in enhancing sustainable development of communities and can be an appropriate factor in the analysis framework of micro-regeneration.

2.5 Analytical Scheme

The analytical scheme of this thesis adopts the evaluation of RTP (see section 2.4.3) suggested by Pinho et al. (2013). The first stage requires the researcher to identify the main territorial issues and changes that have occurred in the study area, which shall be the crucial issue to be focused on in the analysis exercise. The second stage involves the selection of planning documents related to the issues identified in the first stage. The third stage recognises resilience-related policies and measures, identifying how the objectives mentioned in policies might contribute to a more resilient community. The fourth stage involves the selection of suitable resilience attributes pursuant to the specific case under analysis. Each attribute should match an evaluation question that explains how this particular attribute will be taken into account. For instance, the question for adaptability is “are the policies, programmes, plans and projects enhancing the adaptability of the territory and its capacity to adjust to change in a reactive way?” (Pinho et al., 2013, p.140) The fifth stage involves selecting relevant dimensions of resilience (such as economic, social, environmental and governance) and the measurement of the corresponding indicators in both the formulation and implementation phases of the planning documents. Indicators will come from the characteristics of community resilience, such as social learning, engaged governance and social networks and so on. Indicators would be illustrated qualitatively and should be easily available. With the help of previous stages, the final stage should conclude if the resilience concept is applicable in the case study and how to interpret community resilience in the urban China context.

2.6 Summary

This chapter provides a theoretical framework of resilience by reviewing resilience theory in both the West and China. The research regarding urban regeneration (which will be discussed later) is located within academic research concerning factors of community resilience. Firstly, the trajectory of literature in respect of resilience within social sciences as well as urban planning is outlined. The research is positioned as an example of transformational thinking in this field. The attributes of resilience regarding urban planning are also reviewed to guide the generation of indicators for the following case studies. Secondly, literature of community resilience from the perspectives of social-ecological system and community development is referred to. Characteristics of resilience research focusing on community level is discussed, such as paying attention to social features like social capital, leadership, skill and learning. In this section, the resilience research gaps in China are highlighted, particularly in relation to community revitalisation and social aspects. In the following section, the research is positioned within the community resilience theoretical framework, by defining disturbances and selecting resilience attributes for the latter case studies. These attributes are *adaptive capacity, collaboration, social capital building, resourcefulness, connectivity and transformation*. I also illustrate that this research will follow Pinho et al.'s (2013) analysis steps, commencing with territorial issues identification, planning documents analysis, followed by attributes selection and ended with outcomes appraisal. The diagram (Figure 2.3) below demonstrates the dimensions and processes included in understanding the concept of resilience, by following the similar footsteps of previous resilience research investigations which answer questions of the resilience of what, against what, and how to assess resilience.

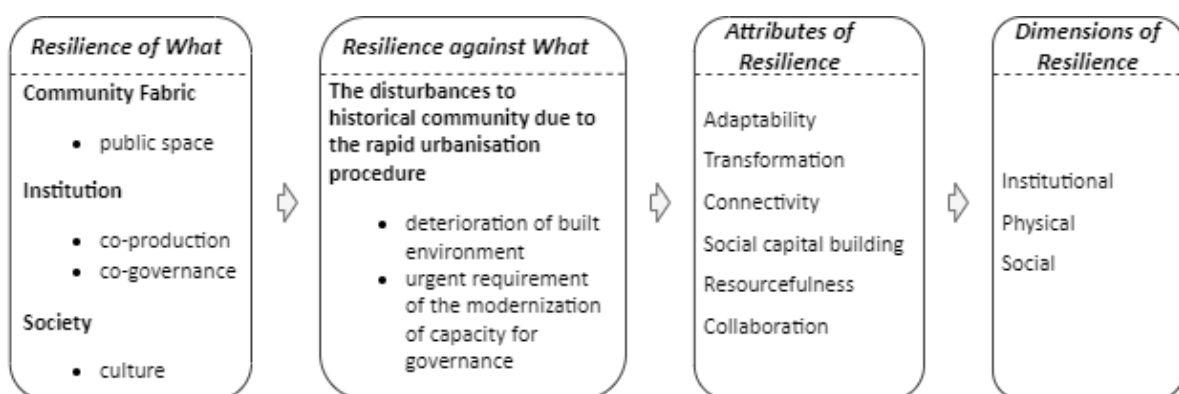


Figure 2.3 Conceptual framework of this research (Author, 2023)

In the following chapter, China's administrative system and special co-production are examined to provide a fundamental recognition of urban regeneration project implementation, aiming to help understand the cases discussed later.

Chapter 3. China's administrative system and co-production of urban regeneration

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the evolution of resilience theory and the development and utilisation in China. It attempted to illustrate the current attributes that help us to understand resilience within the urban planning realm. Before discussing urban regeneration and micro-regeneration at the community level in local China, it is important to understand the role of local government in the context of China's political system. In light of the resilience evaluation discussed before, it is important to identify relevant planning documents. Therefore, understanding the administrative system of planning helps to clarify the application scope and authority enhancement level of different planning documents.

This chapter aims to address two questions which can benefit the understanding of context of main and sub-research questions: What is the institutional context that provides room for public engagement? What is the role of local communities that are framed through policies in the planning system in China? To explain these questions, the chapter starts with an overview of the administrative system in China, which illustrates that social control has been gradually weakened by the Communist Party. Next, local governance is discussed from the sub-district office level and Residents' Committee (RC) level. These two authorities and organisations are responsible for providing public services and expanding grassroots democracy. While at the same time, the RC is a self-governance organisation, that acts as an intermediary between the state power and the society. The following section demonstrates the planning system in China where public engagement is emphasised in national laws, city regulations and the compilation process of specific plans. The final part of the chapter discusses state-led co-production in the Chinese context, which has been viewed as an approach to boost trust in the government and improve civil initiatives within urban development and governance practices.

3.2 Administrative system and local governance in China

3.2.1 Administrative system in China

Centralised planning and hierarchical government organisation are characteristics of the People's Republic of China. Specifically, the connection between the State and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) should be explained while investigating the managerial framework in China. The State and CCP are intimately connected in every state element, including legislative branches and offices, as well as in every administration foundation (council). According to Kenane (2017), the CCP has facilitated the rapid economic growth of China by empowering officials at all levels, including provincial, municipal, county and village officials. Backer (2009) introduced the term 'Party-State' to describe the special political-administrative framework that can be recognised and to distinguish between the state and the Party:

Administrative power rests with the state and its institutions—all to be limited by and exercised through law. Political power and the protection of the values inherent in the constitutional framework and the values on which the nation is organised rests with the CCP. The Party may not directly exercise administrative authority—that is now a function of the NPC (National People's Congress) and exercised according to law.

(Backer, 2009, p. 131-132)

The hierarchy of the CCP is similar to that of the state government, with congresses at all levels, from the national (central committee) to the local (township) level. This Party-state structure, from the national level down to the township, is made up of five levels of congresses and councils (Figure 3.1). The same structures of congress and Party enable its vertical control of the authority at different levels. The vertical command structure allows the higher-level government to intervene directly in lower-level government affairs. Steering is one way in which the Party can mediate in society and the state, and it is a crucial function of the Party. To ensure its vertical control, the Party established semi-committees within all mass organisations and grassroots-level bureaucracies (Niu, 2019).

Contrary to the typical perception of an authoritarian regime, Western researchers have identified many democratic practices in modern China. For instance, Landry (2008) describes China as a system of ‘fragmented authoritarianism’ while Roy (1994) uses ‘soft authoritarianism’ instead. According to social and political scholar Chen (2015), local resisters can advance their agendas through the tiny fissures of poorly coordinated but astonishingly adaptable government institutions seen under ‘contentious authoritarianism’. Urban researcher Niu (2019) also argues that although the Chinese Party-state exhibited some ‘top-down’ hierarchical characteristics, the Chinese economy is shifting from command-oriented to regulated.

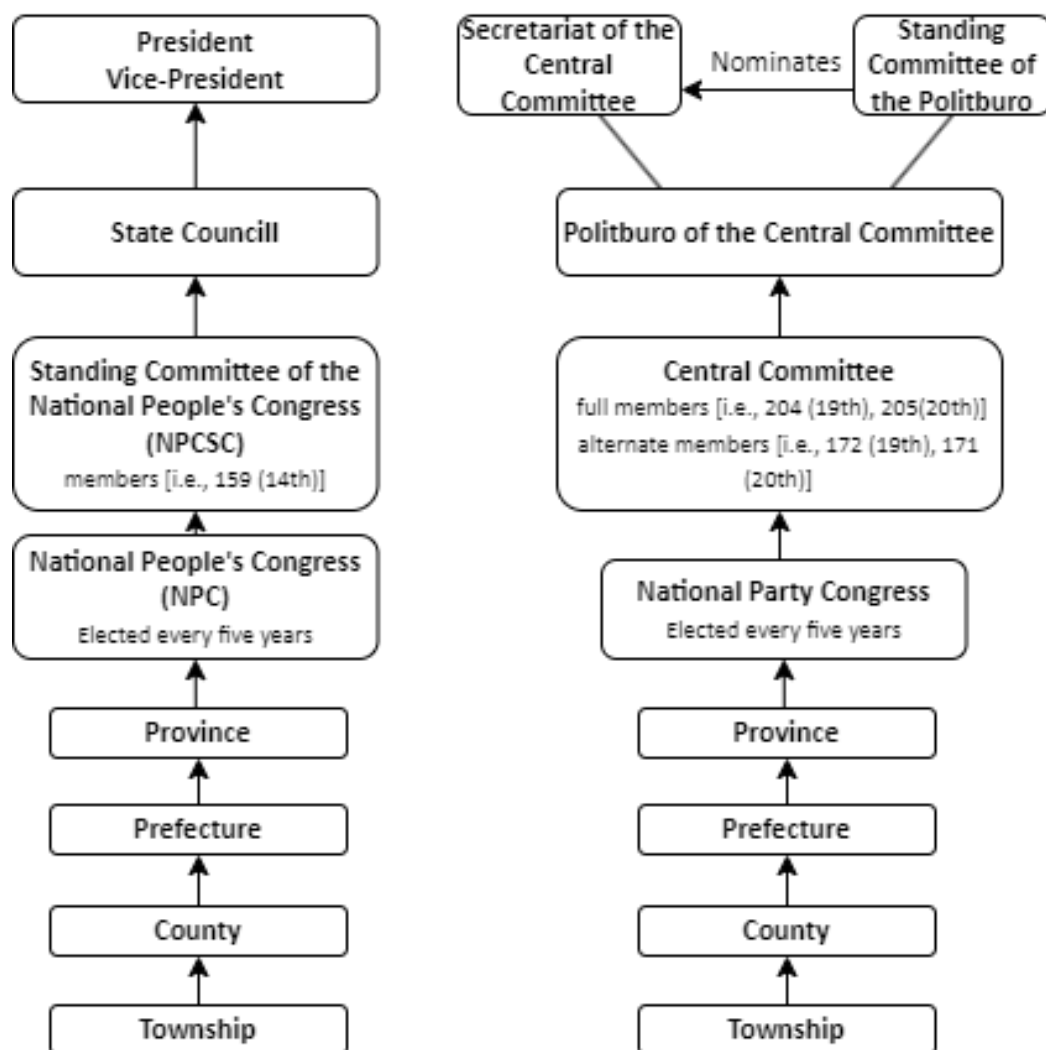


Figure.3.1 Chinese state structure and the party structure (adapted based on Schram, 1987)

Following the 1978 economic reforms, social control by the CCP weakened. This was due to the fact that economic marketisation significantly challenged centrally-planned economies. One of the most fundamental improvements in the 1978 reform was that the Party placed a strong focus on obtaining the truth from facts and empowering professionals in public administration. This change improved both urban and rural living conditions while easing governmental sway over the populace. From that point on, the state government structure developed into a strong organisation that could handle ordinary administration and socio-economic growth. Moreover, since the 1978 reform, the central government has granted significant authority to lower-level administrations, creating a complex and disjointed structure of governance in China.

As already indicated, the Party now plays a considerably more important role in economic growth. The party is decentralising social power at all levels, and charismatic individual leaders are no longer promoted (Cheng, 2015). The concept of self-governance has been underlying China's post-reform period. Nevertheless, in the context of developmental authoritarianism in China, it is important to consider what self-governance means and how it is used in various contexts (Cheng, 2015). As will be discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7 and demonstrated in case studies, the differences in the implementation of projects lead to different degrees of co-production and self-governance.

The Chinese party has a less effective grip on individual morality in modern times, as individuals enjoy more freedom (Cheng, 2015). Additionally, since China has seen considerable economic change over the past few decades, the population has increasingly realised the value of participation in policy-making, and some may argue that participation is increasing (Jeffreys, 2009). For example, participatory procedures in the policy process were promoted by the emergence of NGOs in the 1980s and the community construction movement at the beginning of the 1990s.

Notwithstanding inequalities in the level of government engagement in policy and decision-making, the concept of community offers an institutional framework for comprehending self-governance in China. The concept of community and its activities possesses several distinct characteristics, with the most prominent being the institutionalization of the community concept itself. This is evident despite certain similarities to community-cantered systems of governance found in certain Western nations, such as Britain (Bray, 2005, p. 112). The next

section will introduce the details of the local administration system to provide a better understanding of the relationship between the state and society.

3.2.2 Local governance

The Chinese state's governance structure is described in the introduction above as a whole, it might be challenging to comprehend China's local governments in light of the overall structure of the national government. Since the 1990s, Chinese cities have increasingly embraced a four-tier urban governance structure. Under this system, there is a straightforward administrative hierarchy of City - District - Sub-district (or Street) - Community (Cheng, 2015). Here, the 'City' means different levels of cities in China. Generally, it includes direct-administered municipality (i.e., Beijing and Shanghai) which belongs to the province administrative level shown in figure 3.1 and other large and medium-sized cities (i.e., Shenzhen and Chengdu) which belongs to the prefecture administrative level in figure 3.1. Districts are subdivisions of cities, each with its own local authority made up of extended administrative bureaus. A subdistrict office (街道办事处 in Chinese, some researchers translate it into 'street office') is then responsible for dispatching several branches to manage the smaller urban communities. Local governments are empowered with more discretionary power in how they utilise property and financial independence and actively support economic growth under the jurisdictions in practices (Zhou, 2007; Oi, 1999). The empowerment of local governments influences relationships between themselves and state bureaucracy, and some researchers define this phenomenon as a fragmented authority (Zhou, 2007).

At the lower levels of the bureaucracy in China, local governments are viewed as the mediator between the state and society (Zhou, 2007; Wan, 2013). The decentralisation of power from central to local governments has not only altered the relationship between the two levels of government, but also the action of local governments (He and Wu, 2007; Huang et al., 2018). Urban governance and growth have become progressively dependent on local government, and this is now deeply ingrained in China's institutional structure. Fiscal decentralisation, on the one hand, has permitted local governments to cultivate land and revitalise neighbourhoods. Meanwhile, political decentralisation has given them independence and autonomy in policy-making. On the other hand, the top-down hierarchical structure and centralised power need consistency in policymaking and flexibility in its execution (Zhou, 2007). Hence, formal and informal collaboration between municipal governments and their agencies is necessary. Before discussing the cooperation between local governments to perform urban regeneration with

guidelines coming from higher-level authorities in later chapters, it is necessary to explain the unique grassroots-level governance system: the sub-district office and urban community. Aimed at augmenting the urban governance system and eventually replacing the old work units system (*Dan-wei* 单位 in Chinese), the CCP created a new grassroots-level administrative system after the 1978 reform. In this local governance structure, the sub-district office and RC are crucial players, details of which are as follows.

3.2.2.1 The sub-district office: the lowest level of urban government

China's social and economic reforms in 1978 fundamentally altered the way local government was run. In accordance with Elaine Jeffreys and Gray Sigley (2009), since the CCP embarked on a programme of reform and openness in the late 1970s, Chinese society has undergone a series of dramatic transformations in almost all realms of social, cultural, economic and political life. With this change, economies started to become more market-based, and private businesses and industries were encouraged to conduct business in public spaces. As a result, the private sector temporarily dominated the market, leading to the collapse of most state-owned enterprises at the local level. Consequently, a large number of employees were let go and left without the support of their former working units. To address this situation, the Chinese government initiated a political movement called '*she-qu-jian-she*' (community construction) in the 1980s to create a new urban grassroots administration system. Then, the central government assigned municipal governments to take charge of implementing the 'community construction' practices during the latter part of the 1990s. Municipalities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, actively reformed their urban administration system by involving district level and sub-district level governments in urban governance. Sub-district level governments as the practitioners of 'community construction' received financial and policy support from higher-level government. The community construction movement necessitates the establishment of the *She-qu* System, which includes the Sub-district office and RC, to serve as the fundamental framework of China's urban administration system. (State Council of the PRC, 2000). This system has been perceived as a significant instrument for exerting state control over society (Wan, 2013).

In law, the sub-district office is the lowest level of government-delegated organisation. The executive branch of both municipal and district government is referred to as *pai-chu ji-gou* in Chinese, and it lacks any authority to create policies. According to the *Urban Sub-district Office Organisation Regulation* enacted in 1954, the functions of the sub-district office include: supervising the RCs with routine affairs; assisting district and municipal governments to

implement correspondent policies; and reflecting the opinions of the public to the higher-level government.

Despite having limited policy-making authority, the sub-district office has assumed a range of additional responsibilities. Following a 2000 reform, these offices were granted greater power and functions by higher-level governments. The Ministry of Civil Affairs expanded the duties of sub-district offices beyond 'delivering public services' to include maintaining social stability at the grassroots level, promoting grassroots democracy, developing self-governing organisations, resolving social conflicts, organising community-based events, attracting investment, coordinating with local Party branches, and completing other political assignments. Consequently, sub-district offices have become comprehensive government agencies at the lowest level, and are considered part of the Party-State from an analytical viewpoint (Read, 2003). This phenomenon creates an ambiguous identity for the RC, which functions as a self-governing organisation but is also subject to government control through the sub-district office's empowerment.

3.2.2.2 Residents' Committee as a power agency of local state

As previously discussed, the community (*she-qu*) serves as the essential component of China's urban grassroots administration system. In the 1980s, this system emerged as an extension of the local state, providing social welfare and public services to urban residents. The term 'community' was first introduced to China as a sociological concept by scholars during the Min-guo Period (1912-1949). The word '*she*' (社) means 'society', while '*qu*' (区) means 'area', resulting in '*She-qu*' being both a sociological and geographical concept. The definition of community was first explained by Fei (1939) in his book '*Peasant Life in China*', referring to a group of people who are related to each other by genetic or social connections and reside in the same geographic area. In 2000, the National Ministry of Civil Affairs officially defined 'community' as a group of individuals who live in a specific urban area with clear boundaries and are considered a social entity with the territory of the community being delineated as the territory within the jurisdiction of the expanded Residents' Committee. David Bray (2006) summarised three characteristics of a community: 1) it is government-determined in nature and function; 2) it serves mostly an administrative role; and 3) a *She-qu* has a clearly defined space. In conclusion, the community represents a tangible neighbourhood-level administrative entity in urban areas.

Nevertheless, the identity of the RC is ambiguous. While it is considered a self-governing organisation at the neighbourhood level based on law, in reality, it takes on assignments given by the sub-district office. According to the '*Residents' Committee Organisation Law of the PRC*', the RC is a mass organisation created by residents, and its members and leaders are expected to act democratically, transparently, and in coordination with the sub-district office to implement policies and accomplish relevant targets. Thereby, the RC is not responsible to any government department, and the sub-district office and the RC are expected to cooperate equally. However, in reality, after the urban grassroots administration reform in 2000, the RC lost its independence (Wan, 2013), and apart from basic community services and social welfare, the RC now handles more complex public services like elderly care and assistance to disadvantaged groups. As a result, the RC has become the primary channel to deliver public services, and it is closely tied to local government. Moreover, RC members can be appointed, selected indirectly, or elected directly (Derleth and Hall, 2002), with some cities, like Beijing, having more politically charged elections. Only a few members are chosen as representatives by the residents, while the majority of critical positions are assigned by the government and are labelled as 'cadres' (Wan, 2013). All members and cadres in RC are paid by the sub-district office, and the director of the RC (who must be a CCP member) being paid by the district government (Zhu, 1999; Zhang, 2009).

The main work of RC members is to deliver and publicise policies from governments at higher levels and mobilise residents to participate in government programmes. Gui (2007) described the role of RC members as an 'adhesive' between the state and society which avoid direct conflicts between government and residents. By employing informal ways, such as private relationship (*ren-qing* 人情), honour and dignity (*mian-zi* 面子) and social tie (*guan-xi* 关系), state power was privatised and localised by RC members in personal ways (Sun and Gu, 2000; Wan, 2013). Wan (2013) further argues that the lack of financial independence is the main cause of the RC's bureaucratic nature. In most cities, the sub-district offices take charge of the funding of RCs. Some research (Zhang, 2009; Kang, 2007; Wan, 2013) prefers to categorise the RC as a statutory branch of the local government, instead of treating it as a self-governing organisation.

3.3 The planning system in China

In China, urban planning systems are typically influenced by the broader economic environment and physical construction of spatial development. These systems guide the overall direction of

spatial planning and land-use policy. In this institutional framework, urban planning is structured in a hierarchy based on the scale and scope of planning objects, both in terms of administration and geography.

3.3.1 Authorities related to urban planning

3.3.1.1 The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD)

The MOHURD is tasked with creating regulations, strategies, and growth blueprints that pertain to the construction and organisation of cities, towns, and villages, as well as overseeing the building industry and municipal projects. Its functions include implementing fresh examination protocols, releasing guidelines on construction materials and regulations for building structures, initiating nationwide initiatives to educate project practitioners, creating benchmarks for construction projects across the country, and supervising market entry, project tendering, and safety quality control. This involves formulating strategies for scientific and technological advancements and economic policies for related industries. In addition to providing overall direction for urban development, particular emphasis is placed on promoting sustainability in public infrastructure such as environmental sanitation and historical cities (Lawrence and Martin, 2013). Regarding urban planning, its role is to establish the guidelines for developing urban plans, as well as town and village planning. Additionally, it monitors and approves plans for urban regeneration (Han and Nishimura, 2006).

3.3.1.2 The Ministry of Natural Resources (MONR)

The MONR is responsible for fulfilling the responsibilities of the owner of natural resource assets such as land, minerals, forests, grasslands, wetlands, water and oceans owned by the whole people, and controlling the use of all territorial space. Its roles also include formulating draft laws and regulations on natural resources and territorial space planning and mapping, polar regions and the deep sea, formulating departmental regulations, and supervising and inspecting their implementation. In terms of urban planning, it fulfils the obligation of urban and rural planning management. For example, the MONR issued the '*Spatial Planning Guidance: Community Life Unit*' in 2021. The guidance defines community, community life circle and other terms, clarify configuration level and service elements, and puts forward principles and methods to determine the content and index of the service elements of the local community life circle.

The main difference between these two ministries lies in the scope of their official duties. The MOHURD is mainly responsible for formulating housing and urban-rural construction policies, guiding the national housing construction, and implementing housing system reform. While the MONR is primarily in charge of supervising the development, utilisation, and protection of natural resources, as well as establishing and overseeing the implementation of a spatial planning system. The policies enacted by both ministries significantly impact urban planning affairs, such as planning documents compilation, and planning implementation and supervision.

3.3.2 Legal system of planning

China's legal framework comprises three tiers: the Chinese Constitution and all laws derived from it, the administrative regulations enforced by the State Council, and local regulations passed by local government and local ordinances passed by local congresses, and sectional regulations enforced by State Council ministries and committees (The Chinese Legislation Law, 2000). This structure grants government agencies the authority to create laws, while the State Council has the power to supervise local laws (Figure 3.2) (Han and Nishimura, 2006).

Terms are employed to define the extent of applicability and the level at which authority is enforced. (Table 3.1) (Chinese Legislation Law, 2000; Management Method for the Documents of State Government, 2001). Terms include law (Fa 法), regulations or provisions (Tiaoli 条例), rules (Guize 规则), detailed rules (Xize 细则), methods (Banfa 办法), decisions (Jueding 决定), resolutions (Jueyi 决议), Guiding (指导/导则) and orders (Zhishi 指示, Tongzhi 通知).

The *Urban and Rural Planning Act* outlines the legal framework for urban planning, which includes both longitudinal and horizontal components. The longitudinal system consists of four levels, namely planning, laws, ordinances, and regulations issued by various authority levels (Table 3.2). Conversely, the horizontal system involves principal acts, subsidiary legislation, and other relevant laws, as shown in Table 3.3.

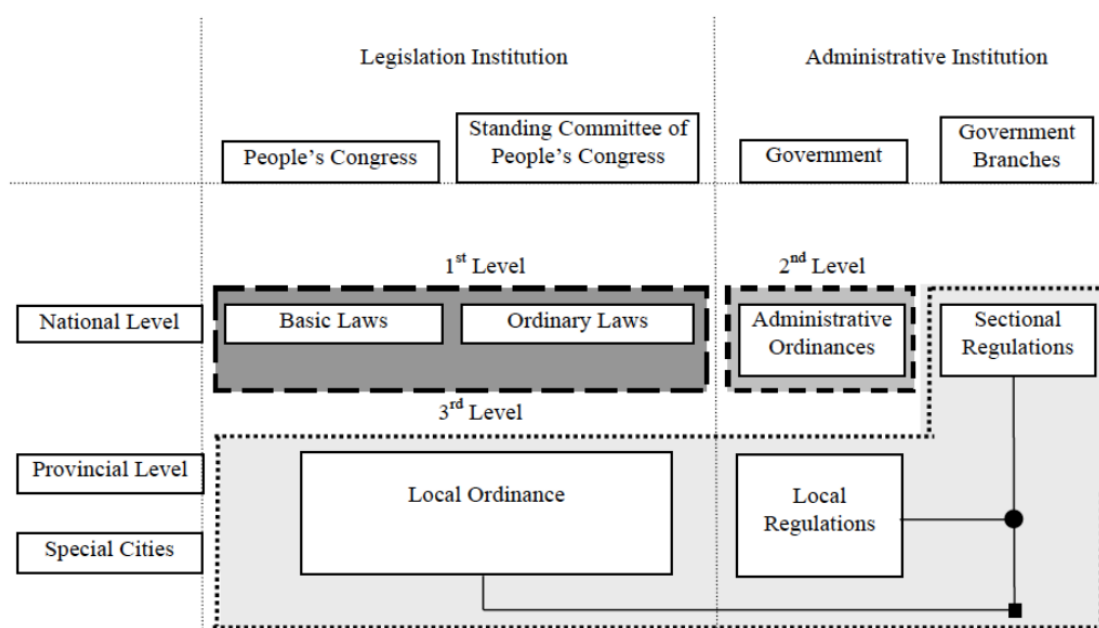


Figure 3.2 Legal System of China (Han and Nishimura, 2006, p. 7)

Table 3.1. Instruments of Legislation (Han and Nishimura, 2006, p. 7)

| Classification | Item | Legislation Institution | Promulgator |
|---------------------------|---------|---|---|
| Law | Fa | National People's Congress | President |
| Administrative Ordinances | Tiaoli | State Council | Prime Minister |
| | Guiding | | |
| | Banfa | | |
| Sectional Regulations | Guiding | Ministries and Committees of the State Council | Minister |
| | Banfa | | |
| Local Ordinances | Tiaoli | Local People's Congress of Provincial Level and of Big Municipalities | Local People's Congress of Provincial Level and of Big Municipalities |
| | Guiding | | |
| | Banfa | | |
| Local Regulation | Guiding | Local People's Government of Provincial Level and of | Provincial or Municipal Governor |
| | Banfa | | |

Table 3.2. Longitudinal system of the legal system of urban planning (Feng, 2016, p. 17)

| Planning laws and regulations | Issued by |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| National Laws | National People's Congress |
| National Administrative Ordinances | State Council |
| Local Ordinances and Regulations | Provincial governments |
| Local Regulations and Directives | Municipal governments |

Table 3.3. Horizontal system of the legal system of urban planning (Wang, 2015, p. 251)

| Planning Act | Urban and Rural Planning Law |
|------------------------|---|
| Subsidiary Legislation | Guidelines for making City Plans |
| | Regulations on Assignment and Transfer of Land |
| | Use Right on State-owned Land in the Urban Areas |
| | Various Technical Standards and Norms |
| Other related Laws | Land Administration Law, Environmental Protection Law, Water Law, Construction Law etc. |

Importantly, the obligation for implementing public participation has been clearly defined in law (Feng, 2016), therefore, it is crucial for planners to convey effectively urban planning information and handle public feedback. According to the *Urban and Rural Planning Act 2007*, planners are accountable for “enhancing the quality of people’s living conditions and advancing the integrated, harmonious, and sustainable progress of urban and rural society and economy” (Article 1). Moreover, it is mandatory to thoroughly take into account the viewpoints of both experts and the general public and provide a justification for the acceptance or rejection of these opinions and the documents submitted must be included for review and approval purposes (Article 26). Currently, the planning system in China is dealing with a nation undergoing a phase of change. Chinese cities have experienced significant transformations due to decentralisation, economic reform, and globalisation. As urbanisation continues to accelerate, cities are witnessing rapid growth in terms of economy, population, and urban spatial scales, accompanied by a multitude of social issues that planners must address.

In the context of historical districts, many practitioners argue that public engagement in the planning of historical district preservation is very important (Feng, 2014; Yu, 2013; Wu, 2019). The high social value of historical blocks, whose planning and construction are related to the protection of historical and cultural heritage shared by the whole of society, on reason for this. Therefore, many sectors of society have higher social supervision and enthusiasm for participation (Feng, 2014). Furthermore, it is more difficult to coordinate the interests of multiple parties in the process of carrying out various planning projects because of many problems left over from the history of the block and complicated stakeholders. Hereby, it is necessary to explore effective means of public participation to provide a mechanism that guarantees the compilation and implementation of planning (Zhao, 2018).

At the same time, along with the development of urbanisation, the central government has recognised the importance of urban history and has put forward higher requirements to strengthen social management and retain the urban context. The ‘*Central Working Conference of Urbanisation*’ has emphasised the need to allow nostalgia remain and carry forward the urban historical context and memory (2013). Thereby, in order to improve people’s lives, coordinate social relations and solve social problems while continuing the urban context, public participation is necessary as a means to promote participation in the protection of heritage in

historical districts, and realising the harmonious development and orderly governance of historical districts (Zhao, 2018).

As mentioned above, although regulations require public participation in the process of urban regeneration, there are no explicit guidelines for the form of participatory events and activities. In China, municipal and district planning laws are almost a copy of state law. Following the *Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China*, all regeneration projects in Beijing and Shanghai involve public participation. Initiators of projects invite the local government, the committee, non-government organisations (NGOs) or universities to develop public engagement on the ground. The specific formats of activity may vary in forums, questionnaires to exhibitions, or others based on the context.

3.3.3 Urban planning system

In the 1990s, the state introduced the *Urban and Rural Planning Act* to regulate and direct urban development. The planning system operates in a clear top-down hierarchy, starting from the national level down to the state province, city district, county, and village levels. While national planning guidelines and standards are established, there is also a supervisory framework in place to oversee planning activities at lower levels. Nevertheless, the majority of local planning systems still have significant leeway in developing their plans, as the national rules provide broad guidance. The most robust planning systems are typically found at the local city level, which is the primary focus of urban development (Tian and Shen, 2011; Wang, 2016). Although non-statutory plans, such as general or partial urban designs and special plans have become more prevalent, the standard planning process in most Chinese cities still follows the statutory series (Figure 3.3). This involves a two-tier system of macro-level strategic plans and micro-level detailed plans (Tian and Shen, 2011).

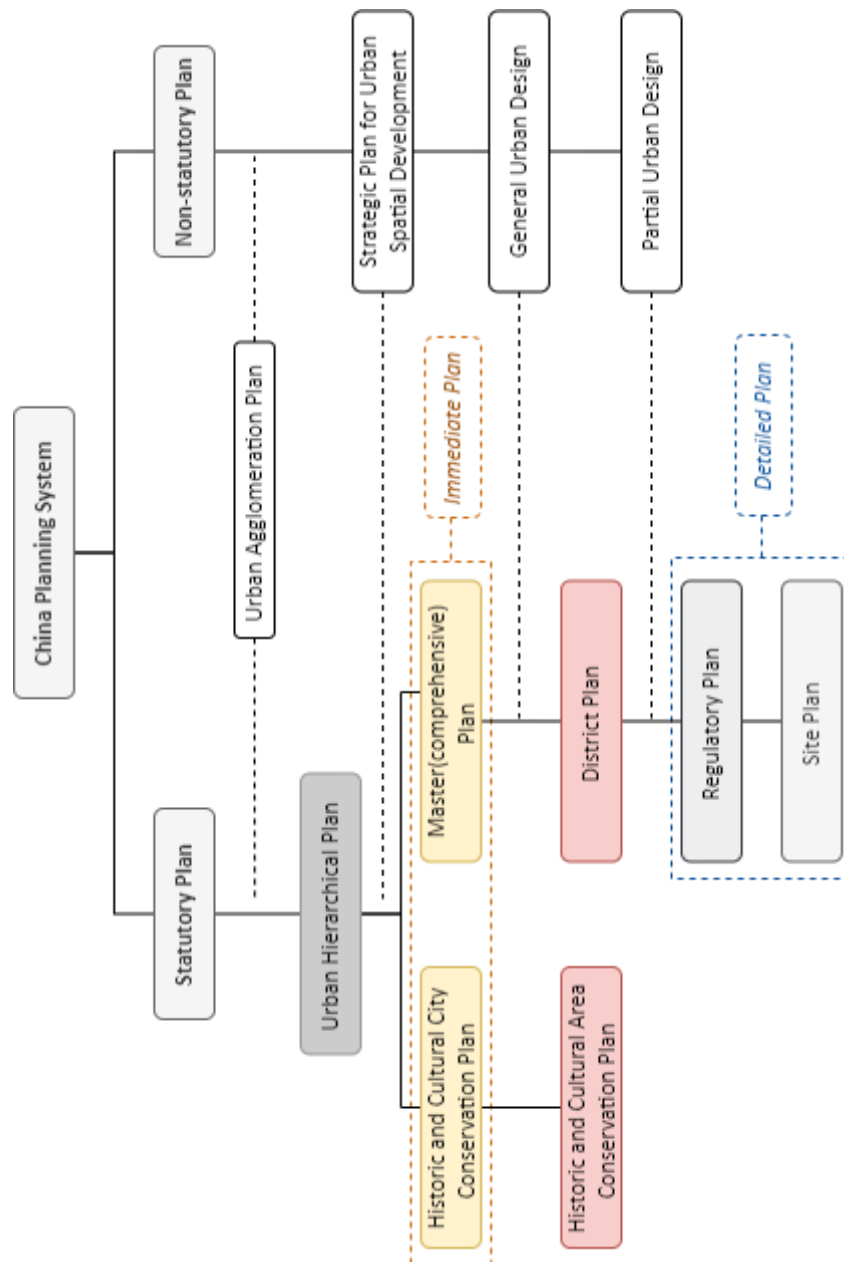


Figure 3.3 China's planning system (Author, 2023)

3.3.3.1 Macro-level strategic plans: master plans, district plans and land-use plans

In China, a master plan, also known as a comprehensive plan, aims to comprehensively organise urban development at the city scale for a designated time period. This all-inclusive task involves determining the city's size, devising spatial and environmental strategies, efficiently utilising urban land, and coordinating all kinds of urban resources (Li, 2000). In practice, medium and large-sized cities are also required to prepare district plans (Tian and Shen, 2011). The district plan acts as a bridge between the master plan and other detailed regulatory plans, responsible for organising land, population, public facilities, and utilities at the district level. While in China, the district plan is often misinterpreted as a 'zoning plan', it is more extensive than merely determining urban land use zoning. In reality, it covers nearly all aspects generated in a master plan. Notably, these plans are present in megacities like Beijing and Shanghai, where a district could have a larger population and urban area than a medium-sized Western city. For instance, the Haidian and Changping districts, two vast districts of Beijing, have a population of over two million people and a massive urban area of more than 400 km² (Beijing Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Thus, the district plans in metropolitan cities essentially expand the master plan to their subordinated administrative regions.

With historical area regeneration and conservation planning, there is a separate planning system but it is also informed by the city comprehensive plan. At the macro level, if a single city was defined as a historical and cultural city, the local government needs to organise conservation planning for the city. The planning mainly consists of three parts: the first part is the principles and guidelines for the preservation of historical and cultural cities at the overall city level, including the conservation framework, the boundary designation of the preservation area and structural layout of the city. The second part mainly focuses on the regulatory for boundary designation of cultural relics protection units, development control areas, and conservation core zones. The third part is about the conservation measures, including various construction contents. In summary, the conservation planning of historical and cultural cities is mainly based on the requirements of the master planning stage, covering the contents of the master planning and regulatory detailed planning (Ruan and Sun, 2001).

3.3.3.2 Micro-level controlling plans: detailed regulatory plans, detailed construction plans and residential plans

In China, a detailed regulatory plan is a technical blueprint that uses precise spatial controls to shape the layout of urban blocks and areas in the future. This stage also involves determining the land use purpose of urban blocks and planning the design of internal and external road networks. Local planning bureaus provide controlling indexes, including site boundaries, built-up area, and greening ratio, as essential guidelines (Cao and Wong, 2006). The detailed regulatory plan regulates the capacity and intensity of urban development by considering the interplay between population and building densities. Although many of these indexes are mandatory and inflexible, they can be modified in certain circumstances with a special application. Additional guidelines, such as partial urban design, may be needed for specific locations, particularly those requiring historical or landscape features conservation (Chen and Romice, 2009). If there are historical districts within one historical city, the making of detailed regulatory planning also needs to follow the guidelines of macro-level historical city conservation planning.

Regarding historical area planning at the micro-level, it also includes principles and guidelines for the preservation of historical townscape of the areas, detailed regulatory requirements, and boundary designation. In addition, it provides a detailed scenario for the environmental layout and scheme of node landscape design. Usually, a historical area plan is asked to follow the compiling requirements of the detailed regulatory plan.

A detailed construction plan is created to demonstrate and comprehend the entire construction, whether it is existing or proposed. This plan is a legal requirement within the system when neighbourhood design proposals are presented by designers and endorsed by local planning bureaus. It incorporates specific road coordinates, building layouts and detailed designs for public and green spaces. In China, physical planning activities generally terminate at this point. The planned details and information are usually made public or accessible to citizens (Wang, 2015).

Finally, In the 1990s, the residential planning system in China followed the 'Soviet Union' model and divided neighbourhood development into three scales which are residential area, residential quarter, and residential cluster. However, the current planning system places more

emphasis on integrated control, and the terms related to neighbourhoods are infrequently used (He et al., 2011). Instead, the focus is on urban blocks and plots, with regulations for neighbourhood development mostly synchronised with the controls of these areas (Wang, 2015).

3.4 State-led co-production in China

According to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the main contradiction in Chinese society has shifted towards the growing needs of the people for a better life in the face of unbalanced and inadequate development. To address this issue, cities in China should be built by co-production, co-governance and benefits sharing (*Gong-jian, gong-zhi, gong-xiang* 共建共治共享 in Chinese), with the people at the centre and their greatest concerns as the guide. This approach aims to solve the problem of unbalanced and inadequate development, and promote the transformation of urban development from extension and expansion to quality promotion. These principles have become the mission and task of urban regeneration in the new era. 'The Opinions on Strengthening the Work of Sub-district in the New Era (2019)' also highlights the necessity of co-production, co-governance and benefits sharing. It further emphasises the importance of stimulating the vitality of community governance, improving the level of community governance, expanding the participation of non-governmental organisations, and enhancing the capabilities of social mobilisation.

Urban regeneration in Chinese cities relies heavily on comprehensive planning and planning law, which provide the guidelines and basis for state-led co-production. For example, Article 95 of the *Beijing City Master Planning (2016-2035)* states that any urban/rural planning projects will continue to build and manage cities for the people and rely on and mobilise the people to participate in urban governance. To achieve this, practical subjects need to open channels for the public to join urban governance, cultivate social organisations, strengthen the ranks of social workers, motivate enterprises to fulfil their social responsibilities, and form a governance pattern featuring multiple governance and benign interaction. Moreover, at the community level especially, the initiators of projects are expected to improve the community governance mechanism, establish an access system for community public affairs, promote participatory community collaboration, and enhance residents' sense of belonging in the community (Article 95).

In the current developmental phase, urban regeneration in China has garnered extensive attention and active involvement from various sectors of society. Following the overarching strategy proposed by the central government, comprehensive and multi-dimensional sustainable development objectives encompassing societal, economic, cultural, and ecological dimensions have been set forth for urban regeneration. Local governments, guided by national policies, have embarked on comprehensive efforts to revitalize and transform areas such as old city centres, residential quarters, aging industrial zones, urban villages, and historical districts. Throughout this regeneration process, a broader range of societal forces is incentivized to engage by offering formal institutional pathways and favourable policy support to participants, facilitating the smooth progress of urban regeneration. Against the backdrop of central government guidance and local government response, an increasing number of private sectors and societal groups are involved in urban renewal, contributing a broader perspective and more enduring impetus to what was previously dominated by governmental and market-led material revitalization. A collaborative urban renewal mechanism encompassing governmental, market, and societal forces has thus emerged (Figure 4).

Specifically, social forces in urban regeneration in China encompass societal, cultural, and community-driven factors that shape and influence the regeneration of urban areas. These forces involve social funds support, community engagement, preservation of cultural heritage, and considerations of sustainability and liveability. By voicing their concerns about displacement, advocating for the preservation of historical landmarks, and demanding environmentally friendly and inclusive urban planning, local communities play an active role. Meanwhile, these social forces ensure that regeneration projects align with the values, needs, and aspirations of the communities they impact, fostering a sense of identity, cohesion, and long-term well-being.

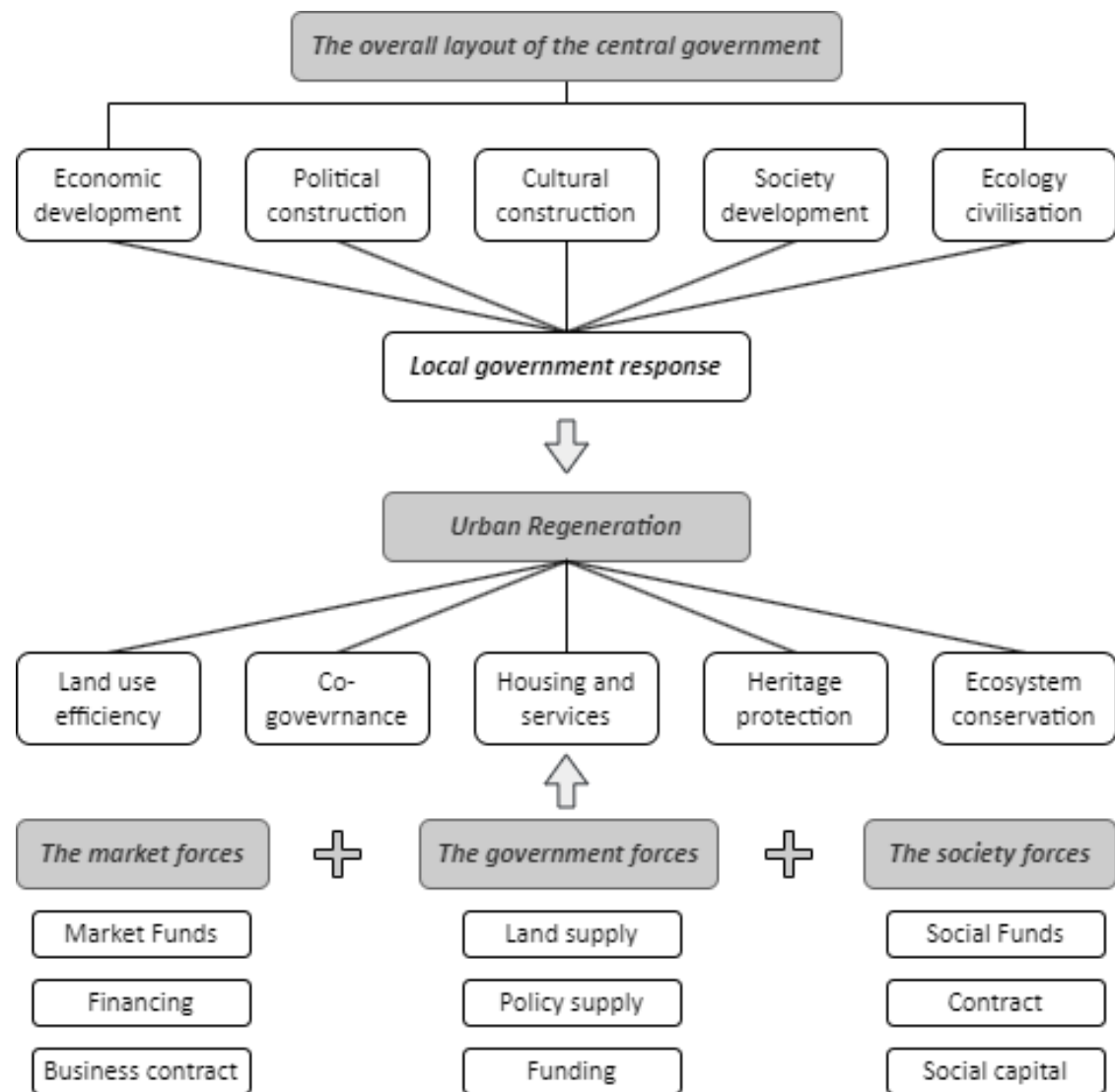


Figure 3.4 State-led co-production among multiple participants (Author, 2023, based on Yang and Chen, 2020)

As mentioned above, co-production is a mode introduced by the government, and some researchers name it 'state-led co-production' in China. In the Western context, co-production is a multi-stakeholder approach in which public goods and services are provided not only by professionals but also by citizens, consumers, volunteers and/or community organisations and other users as members of communities (Bason, 2010). It has been seen as a response to the inefficiency and limited responsibility of local governments. In the global South, co-production refers to the collaboration between the state and citizens and is viewed as "a grassroots strategy to secure political influence and access resources and services" (Mitlin, 2008, p. 339). The value of co-production in that context is not only the strengthening of local organisations but also in equipping low-income groups with understanding shifts and campaign capacity. They can contribute to make rules, norms and institutional frameworks (Bovaird, 2007) and progressive social change (Mitlin, 2008). In the Chinese context, 'co-production' has been adopted from foreign sources and has now become a commonly used term among local governments. In 'state-led co-production' in China, the government takes a proactive approach in initiating, funding, and assisting community-based co-production, where users, non-governmental organisations, and private enterprises act as planners and suppliers of social services and infrastructure. This has made the provision process more participatory and often leads to a collaborative outcome (Li et al., 2019).

The emergence of 'state-led co-production' is underpinned by two main factors. First, the issue of a reluctant government is not present in China (Li et al., 2019). How to cope with the functional deficiency of public service in the context of rapid social change in China is an important task. Thereby, co-production has been seen as a means to boost trust in the government. Second, China has a long history of monopolising social service provision, which was delivered by a paternalistic state. This circumstance was broken in 2010, when the state extended a formal invitation to social organisations to take part in the provision of social services (Howell, 2012). The absence of drive at the community level to take charge of self-service provision and self-governance can be attributed to several factors. The government's efforts to elicit public involvement are constrained by a history of strict control over citizen-led initiatives, which has resulted in a lack of civic engagement. Therefore, 'state-led co-production' has been proposed as a resolution. While this method does not follow a pure bottom-up co-production approach, its aim is to encourage and stimulate such co-production gradually (Li et al., 2019).

3.5 Summary

This chapter reviewed China's complex political-administrative system, grassroots administration system, and planning system aiming to establish the institutional context of public participation and the role of local communities as well as authorities in the planning system. Party and State are inextricably linked, with senior Party personnel nominated as decision-makers of the state, which helps the Party to realise the domination over the State (Goodman, 2000). Local autonomy has been stimulated due to the fast economic and social changes. Additionally, there has been a significant shift in the relationship between central and local governments, favouring the latter and resulting in a decrease in central planning. This is evidenced in the local governments being awarded larger autonomy in community construction. The establishment of the *She-qu* system helps to exercise community development more comprehensively and effectively, with the sub-district office supervising policy implementation enacted by the central government, and the RC serving as a bridge between ordinary people and governments via daily work and helping to localise state power in personal ways.

The review of the planning system has provided an in-depth understanding of the enhancement of public participation in China. Public participation has been emphasised both in the national planning act and local regulations. With regard to the characteristics of historical districts, public engagement plays an important role in the preservation of social value and the balance of interests among multiple parties. Within this process, the RC is the mediator between local residents and other actors. More importantly, the hierarchical planning system presents ways for local communities to implement higher-level policies and planning. However, the hierarchical planning system is a close system, making it difficult for local residents to actually influence policy-making. To address this, 'co-production, co-governance and benefit-sharing' strategy has been proposed to allow local residents into the practices especially at the community level. Although the co-production is still state-led, it opens up opportunities for local communities to voice their opinions in the community planning process.

The literature suggests a potential connection between community development and resilience, with state-led co-production enhancing community sustainability, but further research is necessary to confirm this. The next chapter will move on to look at the background and evolution of stock-based planning and urban regeneration over the last decade, examining how community regeneration fits into the bigger picture of resilient development.

Chapter 4. Context of stock-based planning and urban regeneration

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to answer the question: what are the context and existing strategies implying resilient urban/community regeneration orientation? This chapter elaborates on the contemporary transition of the Chinese planning concept, a process of urbanisation that has evolved from planning/design for growth to planning/design for quality. As mentioned in Chap.2, rational planning seems to be unable to solve the challenges faced by urban planning currently. Similarly, it has been argued that traditional ‘top-down’ rational planning methods in China, which are influenced by the Planned-Economic System (计划经济体制 in Chinese), cannot meet the requirements in the stock-based planning era. This chapter articulates a detailed review of stock-based planning in China. Following this, urban regeneration as one of the main contents in the stock-based planning era is introduced, and then narrows down to the community level. Micro-regeneration and community planning focus not only on the improvement of physical spaces but also on social aspects such as social network building and self-governance enhancement. Throughout this chapter, I contextualise the resilience imperative within the context of the Chinese community micro-regeneration embedded in the stock-based planning transition.

4.2 Change from incremental planning to stock-based planning

4.2.1 The definition of incremental planning and stock-based planning

In the past several decades, incremental planning (*zeng-liang gui-hua* 增量规划 in Chinese) has been the main mode of urban development in China. At this stage, urban planning focuses on incremental land (*zeng-liang yong-di* 增量用地 in Chinese), also named new increased construction land, being land that is monopolised and controlled by the government and acquired through underused or agricultural land expropriation. In that sense, incremental planning refers to urban planning and urban development made by adding new construction

land. This stage gives prominence to high-speed economic growth and fast urban expansion, where the urbanisation level is about 30% - 70% (Chen and Wang, 2013).

Stock-based planning (*cun-liang gu-ihua* 存量规划 in Chinese) emphasises stock-based land/space (also translated as inventory land). This (*cun-liang yong-di* 存量用地 in Chinese) refers to land that has already been occupied or used for urban and rural construction and it can be traded between existing land users and the transaction must be voluntary and negotiated on an equal footing. The precondition of stock-based planning is to keep the total scale of construction land of a city unchanged. The connotation of stock-based planning includes not only physical space improvement, but also non-physical content such as community restructuring, industrial transformation and upgrading, and culture revival. (Zou, 2013a).

The term 'stock-based planning' first appeared in the *Shenzhen City Master Plan (2010-2020)*¹ and has since been widely discussed by practitioners and researchers. It has also been adopted by the *Shanghai City Master Plan (2017-2035)* and the *Beijing City Master Plan (2016-2035)*. Stock-based planning is not a method or approach of urban development. It is a concept and policy orientation which is born out of the stage of urban development in China and also implies part of the government's working direction to some extent.

4.2.2 The transformation of urban planning

Since the reform and opening-up in 1978, China has made great strides in the areas of economy, society, urban and rural construction. China has embarked on a unique path of urbanisation, with some cities evolving towards a new urban growth track (Chen et al., 2016). The essence of incremental planning is to predict advancement and urban expansion arrangements for cities in the rapid growth phase (ibid). In China, the government owns the new construction land and can dispose of it by means of 'Bid invitation, Auction and Listing'. Therefore, the government typically leads the incremental planning process due to the single property right. The reasons why incremental planning was the mainstream of urban plan compilation in China are as follows.

Firstly, China's urbanisation rate has risen rapidly from 20% in 1980 to 63.89% in 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021) and is predicted to reach 65% by 2025 (14th Five-Year Plan (2021-

¹ Official urban planning document for Shenzhen city

2025)).² This rapid urban growth inevitably leads to the expansion of urban space and an increase in the numbers of cities. Secondly, land finance is a vital source of funds for local governments. The government guarantees fast economy progress in urban areas through a 'land to capital' exchange, since it owns the largest part of urban land (Zheng and Qin, 2009). Meanwhile, because of China's specific administrative system makes GDP an important indicator for evaluating the performance of officials, which further promotes the 'land to capital' exchange. This exchange mode is quick and effective, and as long as there are opportunities to develop new areas, the government can seek economic growth by selling land. Finally, the investment-driven growth mode of China's cities determines that investment attraction and major project construction are the government's top priorities, which require the support of new construction land in cities (Ma, 2017).

As the rate of urbanisation continues to increase, urban development becomes characterised by 'stock.' Meanwhile, incremental planning often encounters bottlenecks that can hinder its effectiveness, such as the disorderly sprawl of cities, the inefficient use and waste of resources, the tension between construction land and prime farmland preservation, the pollution of the ecological environment and the imbalance of the relationship between man and nature. As result, this has caused deep reflection on urban development from people from all walks of life. Furthermore, it has long been argued that planners lack 'initiative' in the planning compilation process and are unable to perform the function of social coordinators in the current planning compilation paradigm. This has hampered imaginative exploration along the route of urban growth, resulting in urban planning being overly technical rather than paying enough attention to the social development of urban areas (Zhang, 2000; Zheng and Qin, 2009; Chen et al., 2016).

Urban planning, as a *practical* tool for addressing development challenges encountered during the urban construction process, and thus it is imperative to make changes to respond to the issues mentioned above (Tang and Wang, 2013; Zhang et al., 2013). In China, although incremental planning is still the norm for many cities, three huge city clusters (the Pearl River Delta Region, the Yangtze River Delta Region, and the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region) with higher

² Proposals for Formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035.

urbanisation level and noteworthy cases of ‘city disease’³ are facing an urgent need to transform their incremental planning practices (Chen et al., 2016). To ensure sustainable and healthy development, measures are being taken to promote the optimal use of urban environments and industry patterns. For example, the *Central Work Conference on Urbanisation*⁴ in 2015 emphasised the need to scientifically delimiting the boundaries of urban development. The conference report put forward the concept of “transforming the urban development pattern, improving the urban governance system, and enhancing the urban governance capacity... adhering to intensive development, framing the total amount, limiting the capacity, revitalising the stock, optimising the increment and improving the quality”. This requirement from the central government promotes the transformation of urban development from an extensional expansion to a connotation promotion. Specific to a city, for example, the most recent *Beijing City Master Plan (2016-2035)* announces “encouraging stock regeneration, transformation and upgrading.” The transformation of the policies on urban planning has brought stock-based planning into the public view. Apart from city disease, the decline in economic growth which centred on land finance also stimulates changes of planning thinking, and the focus of urban planning has begun to shift from incremental land use to inventory land improvement and activation within the city.

4.3 Characteristics and challenges of stock-based planning

In contrast to incremental planning, stock-based planning is still a relatively new concept within the urban planning realm. Typically, stock-based planning consists of creating plans for urban areas that are already developed and built (Ma, 2017). During this phase, planning process focuses on transforming the structure of functions in built-up urban areas, turning currently under-utilised land into more reasonable land. To better understand this new concept, the following sections provide some of the characteristics and challenges of stock-based planning.

4.3.1 Characteristics of stock-based planning

First, the role of urban design has shifted from the designer of the space structure to the coordinator of space interests (Pang, 2017). The share of inventory lands that need to be optimised in the process of urban development is growing, since large-scale development is no

³ The problem of urbanisation in developing countries, also known as city disease. City disease refers to problems such as traffic congestion, housing shortage, insufficient water supply, energy shortage, environmental pollution, disorder, and imbalance between the input and output of material flow and energy flow, and the intensification of demand contradictions.

⁴ The CPC Central Committee’s report in terms of urban development.

longer the primary stream in metropolitan areas and cities are moving towards smart growth. The original method of making a one-time profit through land sales is transitioning to a method of providing repeated profits such as urban regeneration, social governance and public services. Therefore, the role of the government has changed from 'land development' to 'property management', and the role of developers changed from 'investment enterprise' to 'operating enterprise'. Within stock-based planning and social governance, urban planning no longer involves designing the spatial structure and the arrangement of future spatial benefits, but the redistribution of existing space benefits and value-added parts (Pang, 2017).

Second, the content of urban design includes not only the re-design of physical spaces, but also coordinating the balance of interests between multiple stakeholders through policy and mechanism design. Stock-based planning faces many of land users, and the constitution of stakeholders is quite complex. The government cannot dispose of stock-based lands at will, and it is necessary to balance the interests of all parties. Thereby, in the stage of stock-based planning, it has become the primary task to find ways of redistributing value-added benefits coming from inventory spaces regeneration and optimisation. Meanwhile, stock-based planning is faced with more preconditions to fully realise the internal potential of cities, such as property rights, heritage conservation, and so on, and needs to coordinate more stakeholders through 'multi-planning system integration' and 'dynamic updating plans' which are also important features of the planning (Zhou et al., 2013).

Lastly, stock-based planning requires the integration of multiple disciplines and attention to quality of life and social demands. Within the stock-based planning era, the economic driver is no longer a simple and extensive accumulation of urban infrastructure elements, but relies on innovation and upgrading, which is also the way out for urban design and planning. For this reason, with the exception of the unification of new technologies, the efficient integration of resources and the innovation of design mechanisms are important elements of urban planning circles.

4.3.2 Challenges of stock-based planning

In the new period of stock-based planning, most urban issues are no longer related to construction growth, but mainly arise from the contradiction between the needs of the various social groups and the allocation of resources, caused by the diversity of society. In urban China, main challenges of stock-based planning are as follows:

- 1) Increased urban security risks: Due to the lack of incremental space, many facilities, which are necessary for urban life but disliked by residents (e.g., garbage collection stations), can only be located in the stock space, causing the 'not in my backyard' effect to further intensify. In addition, the protection of traditional villages, historical buildings and historical areas are also under threat. At the community level, for instance, management confusion, property rights complexity, space limitation result in public space appropriation and contradictions with neighbours, which pose a huge risk of affecting social stability (Zou, 2017).
- 2) Challenge of ecological restoration: With more than 30-years of extensive and low-efficiency development since the reform and opening-up in China, the ecological environment situation is severe. Therefore, stock-based planning shoulders the challenges of ecological remediation. On the one hand, the optimisation of inventory spaces should increase the public activity space in the built-up area, increase the green coverage rate, enrich the urban landscape, and improve the quality of living environment through rational planning and regeneration. On the other hand, at the macro level, stock-based planning needs to promote the restoration of ecological protection areas by clearing and retreating the low-efficiency buildable arable land. It is urgent to advance ecological functions, maintain the balance of urban ecosystems, and ensure the ecological security pattern of the city (Zou, 2013a).
- 3) Loss of the urban context: China has transitioned directly from an agrarian society into a modern industrial society over the past few decades. This rapid urban development has caused great damage to the continuity and legacy of the city's historical context. Moreover, many historical buildings have been replaced by modern structures that have no connection with the site (Xiao, 2018). Urban memory is symbolic of the city's history, culture and identity. the city's material symbols and cultural history, which influence its development and evolution, are deeply rooted in the city's memory, resulting in a unique style for each city. Urban memory is based on social practice and social identity, while urban residents share joint feelings and a common will based on their common historical experiences (Zhu and Wu, 2013). Therefore, preserving the urban context and improving the identity of urban residents are huge challenges in stock-based planning.

- 4) **Complex stakeholders:** Unlike incremental planning, stock-based planning is the secondary development of the land, making the planning process more complicated in terms of problems and stakeholders. Consequently, stock-based planning needs to be more rational, careful and patient, paying more attention to the micro level including micro-space, micro-regeneration, micro-circulation and micro-design (Ma, 2017; Zou, 2015). Furthermore, at this stage, planning redistributes the interests of existing stakeholders, which inevitably leads to the loss of interests, necessitating multi-party negotiation and collaboration.
- 5) **Lack of a well-developed mechanism:** At present, stock-based planning is still in the exploratory phase in China and a comprehensive set of planning and implementation systems has not been established. The current incremental planning method cannot adapt to stock-based planning, which usually needs a longer period to coordinate multi-stakeholders' requirements and interests. Thus, the current project management and approval process, as well as the project cycle supervision and audition, may impede the project implementation.

In summary, the arrival of stock-based planning implies that cities are transforming from a focus on 'amount expansion' to 'quality improvement'. Urban planning is no longer only a blueprint for the future space and earning expectations, but is inclined to be 'problem-oriented' and deal with real problems. This approach prioritises the transformation of land, transfer of property rights, and the renovation and regeneration of completed projects. With stock-based planning, the priority is placed on improving the underlying meaning of urban development. The essence of connotation development is to seek a more sustainable and premium motive force of development (Ma, 2017). During the process of stock-based planning, system design, public participation, negotiation mechanism and analysis of the economic society become the main planning approaches, replacing space design and engineering technology (Zhao, 2014).

4.4. Urban regeneration as one main content in stock-based planning

As mentioned above, stock-based planning gives priority to built-up spaces and aims to better both physical and social aspects of cities. In metropolitan cities, such as Shanghai and Shenzhen, the exploration of the urban regeneration system was primarily triggered by the pressure of both the shortage of land resources and industry upgrade (Tang and Yang, 2018). Here, many researchers point out that urban regeneration is the main content in the stock-based planning stage, which includes old city renewal, environment and traffic improvement, as well as land

remediation, among other things (Tang and Yang, 2018; Yang, 2020; Zhou et al., 2019). However, it is important to note that stock-based planning is not synonymous with urban regeneration, since stock-based planning includes additional tasks such as the management of idle land and illegal construction land, which are not directly related to urban regeneration (Zou, 2013b).

The urban regeneration mechanism, which takes transformation as the development idea, innovation as the driving force for development, and inventory resources as the carrier, can enhance a city's sustainable development, by using negotiation and participatory methods while taking into account the interests of multiple stakeholders (Luo, 2013). In addition to the improvement of physical space, the goals of urban regeneration also include intangible spatial content such as enhancing urban function, transforming and upgrading industries, community regeneration, and cultural revival (Zhu, 2016). This current research emphasises the significance of urban regeneration in the era of stock-based planning in China. Put differently, stock-based planning is the policy orientation of urban development, and urban regeneration is a means to achieve policy goals. This following section will articulate urban regeneration in China from the aspects of concept evolution, different phases, elements and motivation as well as the extension.

4.4.1 Evolution of the concept of urban regeneration in China

The concept of urban regeneration has evolved over time, with relevant concepts including urban renewal (Miller, 1959), urban redevelopment (Keith, 1954), urban renaissance (Borsay, 1990) and urban revitalisation (Wilson, 1987), being used in the past. The term 'urban regeneration' was popularised in Western literature by Lichfield in 1992 and refers to the revitalisation of the city by activating local economic vitality to transform an area in physical and social decline into a liveable and vibrant place (Lichfield, 1992). Nowadays, the term 'urban regeneration' is more popular than others, although urban renewal was a quick approach to solve city issues after World War Two (Ding and Wu, 2017).

The value orientation of urban regeneration has also developed alongside urban development. At the early stage, urban renewal focused much more on the pattern and functions, such as the Plan 'Voisin' de Paris made by Le Corbusier. However, this kind of bulldozer clearance and rapid, large-scale and full demolished urban renewal ruined urban spaces that were full of character and culture. In the face of increasingly intense social conflicts, researchers such as Jane Jacobs and Herbert Gans put forward arguments. They mention that large-scale urban redevelopment destroyed the local communities, and revealed that resolving slum issues is not only a matter

regarding economic investment and physical environment improvement, but also a profound social planning and social movement (Jacobs, 1961). Jacobs (1961) advocates uninterrupted small-scale regeneration and believes this kind of regeneration is vital, lifeful and indispensable. American urban researcher Lewis Mumford (1961) also points out that urban redevelopment only changes the form on the surface and still devastates the functionality of urban-organism, which needs treatment and rescue in the future.

Whereafter, alongside the 'neighbourhood revitalisation' movement, advocacy planning theory provided a new source to urban regeneration and multi-party participation became one of the most important strategies of urban regeneration (Yang, 2018). Paul Davidoff (1973), the pioneer of advocacy planning, emphasises the pluralism of communication subjects and the equality of game mechanisms. Together with collaborative planning and transactive planning, planning theories at this stage paid attention to 'bottom-up' community engagement (Wang et al., 2012). Later, theories such as the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991) and social justice and the city (Harvey, 1973) influenced the development of urban regeneration in China (Yang, 2018).

In China, alongside the sharp and persistent change in cities, urban regeneration has been a crucial topic in urban development. Representative research includes 'organic regeneration' (*you-ji-geng-xin* 有机更新 in Chinese) (Wu, 1991) and 'comprehensive and systemic old city renewal' (Wu, 1996). Organic regeneration emphasises preserving the fabric of the city, highlighting its organic characteristics and the regeneration process. In *Ju'er hutong* regeneration practice, ideas such as holistic conservation, step-by-step, careful renewal and small and smart growth have been adopted. Following this, the 'organic regeneration' thinking was scaled out to other historical cities in China, promoting the urban design concept transformation from 'demolition and construction' to 'gradual regeneration' (Wu, 1991). Comprehensive and systemic old city renewal thinking emphasises the relationships between macro and micro, holistic and part (Wu, 1996). It claims that urban regeneration shall respect the city's order, adopt the proper scale and take pains to deal with the relationship between present and future, following the contents and requirements of regeneration.

In summary, urban regeneration, which has been a significant issue for urban planning since China was reformed and opened up in 1978 (Huang, 2011), is a collection of holistic, integrated ideas and practices for improving the economic, natural, social, and environmental conditions

of a changing area (Erbey and Erbas, 2017). Urban regeneration tends to deal with a series of problems within cities through more sustainable methods and build long-lasting solutions.

4.4.2 Four stages of urban regeneration in China

The development of urban regeneration in China can be divided into four stages (Deng, 2021; Yang, 2020). Early urban planning and regeneration activities have prominent government-led characteristics. Since the reform and opening up, market forces and social forces have continued to increase, and China's urban renewal has begun to show a new trend of multi-participation and collaborative governance by the government, enterprises, and society.

In the first stage (1949-1977), urban construction adhered to the basic national policy of 'turning consumption cities into production cities' and concentrated on 'socialist industrialisation construction'. Due to financial constraints, urban development focused on the most basic issues of hygiene, safety and reasonable separation. The key focus of old city renovation is to pay off the historical debts of basic living facilities, and solve the outstanding housing problems of urban workers (Liang et al., 2005). At that time, most of the construction land was still being allocated in the new urban area, while the old city was primarily focused on infill development.

In the second stage (1978-1989), the third 'National Urban Work Conference' formulated the *Opinions on Strengthening Urban Construction Work*. The release of this document greatly increased the importance of urban construction work. In 1984, the first basic regulation on urban planning, construction and management - the *Urban Planning Act* - was promulgated. It proposed that the regeneration of old urban areas should follow the strategies of strengthening the maintenance, rational utilisation, appropriate adjustment, and gradual transformation (Zou, 2014b). Since then, with the gradual recovery of the national economy and the support of market financing, most cities began to undergo rapid and continuous changes, and urban regeneration progressively became a key issue in urban construction and a focus of attention at that time.

In the third stage (1990-2011), the urban development policy of controlling the scale of large cities and focusing on developing small towns changed. At the same time, the transfer of land use rights and the establishment of the fiscal and tax-sharing system released the 'potential energy' of land use rights from state-owned to private. During this stage, interest-oriented large-

scale urban transformation under the leadership of the real estate industry and macro-scale urban reconstruction promoted by governments were the mainstream of urban regeneration.

In the fourth stage (2012-present), China's urbanisation rate exceeded 50%. The rapid urbanisation process over the past few decades has led to crises in the ecological environment and food security. The transformation of the development mechanism has become necessary due to the shortage of space resources. In reality, urban regeneration has become an inevitable choice in the era of stock-based planning. The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further clarified that the people's growing need for a better life should be the focus of the country's work. During this period, the principles, objectives and internal mechanisms of urban renewal have undergone profound changes, and urban renewal has begun to pay more attention to major issues such as urban connotation development, urban quality improvement, industrial transformation and upgrading, and intensive land use (Yang and Chen, 2020). At present, there are many practices in various cities regarding improving the level of urban regeneration and strengthening urban governance. For instance, the *Qu-cheng* plan in Shenzhen has developed an open-source platform that involves multiple stakeholders and attracts the public to participate in urban design and regeneration.

By reviewing the transformation of urban regeneration in China, we can find that urban regeneration has set more comprehensive, multidimensional and sustainable objectives confronting society, economy, culture and ecological contexts. In the regeneration progress, extensive social engagement has been facilitated with system and policy support. The previous government-led physical regeneration is transforming into a co-productive urban regeneration system engaged by the government and society.

4.5. Focus on the micro-level: community planning and micro-regeneration

4.5.1 Why at the community level

As discussed and reviewed in the last two sections, cities and society in China are undergoing changes and transformations. The increasing demands from social groups for development rights, such as equality and justice have become increasingly prominent, and the public sphere and citizen awareness have become an important part of social governance (Liu and Shen, 2020).

Confronted with these transformations, challenges have been conspicuous especially at the community level. Firstly, the focus of urban social governance has shifted downward, and there is an urgent need to ensure the improvement of grass-roots institutions and capabilities. Although at the policy level local governments has been empowered and supported with more resources, the capacity of grass-roots planning, construction and governance, as well as skills equipment, remains a bottleneck for community development. For instance, there are no professionals and specific budget for community planning, and public engagement lacks effective methods of execution and skill underpinning, leading to the gap between grassroots practices and urban development goals.

Secondly, the realisation of people-oriented urban development concept needs the transformation of planning practices. How can top-down resource investment and service supply accurately respond to real community needs? How can the process be transformed from design for people to design with people? These are critical questions embedded in people-oriented urban development strategies. Thirdly, the interactions between community governance and spatial practices requires a deeper exploration in the urban China context. Urban planning especially at the community level, is shifting from elite-led blueprint mode to a collaborative planning mode. In practices on the ground, how to coordinate technology and politics, professional knowledge and indigenous knowledge has been the inevitable issue. Therefore, the focus of this research is on spatial practices at the community level, aiming to explore the sustainable and resilient responses on the ground to external and internal challenges and changes.

4.5.2 Community planning and community revitalization in China

Community planning in western countries is mostly presented as social planning that addresses community social problems, carry out social improvement and promote community development. Through public participation and interactive planning and design processes, diverse community members work together to promote a series of actions including formulating community goals and community planning programmes, exploring and introducing resources/funds, implementing planning programmes, and re-evaluating local planning policies (Hoch et al., 1979; Liu and Shen, 2020).

In China, community planning refers to the planning, research, formulation, and implementation conducted primarily from grassroots, which is a bottom-up approach aiming to enhance the

quality of life of residents (SUPLRAB, 2016). The undertaking of community planning assessment, formulation, and implementation can occur while adhering to the overarching development direction of the city. Based on the size of the community, its existing infrastructure, and the genuine needs of its residents, these processes determine the specific levels, content, and depth of community planning through consultative methods. From the problem-solving perspectives, this approach seeks to address tangible issues, while ensuring alignment with the broader trajectory of urban development. Besides, in the context of stock-based planning, community planning entails adopting a systematic and developmental perspective that centres on the interactive and symbiotic dynamics across various dimensions of a community, with its cultural, economic, environmental, service, and governance aspects involved. At the same time, this approach emphasizes the community as a collective living entity and a haven for shared spiritual destinies, and underscores collaborative efforts among diverse stakeholders to collaboratively conceive, construct, and partake in the journey towards achieving comprehensive and sustainable community development.

The above definition reveals the focus of current community planning on humans. The main approach to community planning is to collect opinions of ordinary residents and to understand community issues to inform resource allocation. During this process, public participation is used to empower the residents and other grassroots subjects, aiming to allow community planning to meet their real needs. The content of community planning is not unchanged since the establishment of P.R.C. Its evolution could be summarised into three stages, i.e., 'unit compound' stage, the commercial housing stage, and the current community planning stage. Detailed features of these stages are discussed in the following part.

Community planning in China can be divided into three stages. The first stage is the period of 'unit compound' or '*dan-wei* housing' (*dan-wei-da-yuan* 单位大院 in Chinese). During the first thirty years after the foundation of the Peoples Republic of China, the government adopted a social and economic management system subject to planned economy and '*Dan-wei*'⁵ system. Almost all the production, living, and space demands of individuals and groups are planned and arranged by the state. This was reflected in the form of living space, and is reflected in the planning of workers' residential quarters with the '*dan-wei* housing' as the main carrier. The assimilative social supply system at that time shaped a homogeneous community planning

⁵ The state owned most industrial resources and most enterprises were state-owned, known as '*Dan-wei*'.

model (Liu and Deng, 2016). This is because, under the *Dan-wei* system, resident groups were highly homogeneous and community planning configured apartments' scale, layout, and infrastructure based on household sizes and family structures.

In the 1980s, the real estate market began to develop vigorously, and the planning of commercial housing communities gradually became the main model for shaping urban living space. In the face of increasingly differentiated house buyers, attention to multi-dimensional socio-economic factors became a precondition for planning, including market research, customer demands and affordability assessment, and lifestyle research, which brought the diversification and refinement of community spaces and landscapes (Liang and Wang, 2017). Advertisements and renderings have become important tools for developers to describe future life scenarios and attract potential customers.

In the previous two stages, in the process of community planning from design to construction, the emphasis was placed on *space* as both the aim and outcome. Community planning aimed to 'produce space', by building apartments, landscapes and infrastructure. However, planners/designers, developers, management organisations, local governments and residents were all separated and there was no time slot for them to interact with each other (Liu and Deng, 2016). This led to the disconnect between space design and the actual needs of households. For example, when residents complained about residential issues, they might encounter mutual shirk from developers, property management companies or management departments.

Along with the transformation into stock-based planning, a huge number of built communities now face the urgent requirement of space regeneration and quality enhancement. Currently, the focus of community planning has been to compensate for the arrears that have been accumulated in social development and residential environment construction over time. The main approach for achieving this goal is collecting ordinary residents' opinions, understanding communities' issues and requirements, and then using the collected information to inform the resource distribution, public environment improvement and infrastructure development. Scholars claim that the focus of current community planning has shifted to achieve social goals such as justice, health and poor reduction through 'production of space' (Lefebvre, 1991; Liu and Deng, 2016; Zheng and Zhang, 2021). Here, physical space is not the only and final objective

of community planning, rather the 'production of space' is the end goal through physical space regeneration practices.

Given the prevailing emphasis on public participation in contemporary community planning, a diverse array of stakeholders engages in the process, encompassing residents, university researchers, NGOs, design institutions, and even developers. The composition of resident participants varies based on the community type. For instance, in commercial communities, committees of the households, acting as representatives chosen by the residents, frequently assume a central role in participatory community planning. In historical neighbourhoods devoid of households' committees, residents often engage voluntarily in planning or related events. Academic institutions, with students and researchers actively participating in numerous community planning initiatives, contribute considerably, as observed in the subsequent Beijing case studies. NGOs and design institutions adopt multifaceted roles as both designers and coordinators, usually collaborating with local governments, as exemplified in the ensuing cases. Developers also transition their roles from mere developers to operators. For instance, within Chengdu City's Lu Hu ecological community, the developer facilitates the establishment of a comprehensive community governance system comprising deliberative councils, community foundations, mediation centres, community federations, media associations, and analogous entities, which fosters self-management and community-driven progress.

In this context, community revitalisation (*she-qu-ying-zao* 社区营造 in Chinese) has been widely applied in practice. Defined by the researchers from Tsinghua University, community revitalisation means that a community could conduct self-organisation, self-governance and self-development with support (rather than lead and control) from governments and NGOs, as well as grassroots spontaneous actions (Tsinghua University, 2019).

The objective of community revitalization is to withstand the challenges of community governance generated in the context of transformation from the industrial age to the post-industrial age and even the information era. Specifically, during the process of industrialisation and under the pressure from the market and government, individual atomisation and the breakdown of mutual relationships between neighbours have been challenges for communities. Some residents became dependant on government welfare and lost the capacity to self-organise, self-govern, and deal with public affairs within communities. In response to these challenges,

some movements emerged attempting to change the circumstances, such as the movement for neighbourhood government in the United States, which revitalised community development and improved grassroots services efficiency by establishing various mass organisations. It was a kind of mode that connected government and citizens' self-governance, aiming to satisfy the multiple needs from the grassroots level.

In China, community revitalisation first developed in Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 1990s. In Taiwan, for instance, community revitalisation aims to build community consensus by activating residents to engage in local public affairs and build localised and featured culture by exercising agency and promoting self-governance ideas. In mainland China, as discussed in section 4.2, metropolitan cities have stepped into the stock-based planning era, and residents' requirements for a positive and better community environment have become urgent. Cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu are exploring ways to implement community revitalisation. The common characteristic of practices and research in various Chinese cities is to facilitate self-organisation, self-governance and negotiation and promoting residents' engagement in public affairs and take responsibility for projects implementation.

4.5.3 Micro-regeneration experiment

As urban construction has moved from incremental planning to stock-based planning, it has become increasingly important to explore ways to conduct urban regeneration that can meet various requirements of stakeholders. Due to rapid urbanisation, many residual, negative, or obsolete spaces in cities have accumulated, and there is a growing demand to improve and utilise them. Consequently, a gradual micro-regeneration strategy has become a significant work mode in response to this situation (Hou, 2019). The context of micro-regeneration emerged in response to two factors. First, the traditional approach of using demolition and construction as the primary means of urbanisation is labour-intensive and requires substantial material and financial resources. The concept of urban micro-regeneration, which aims to revitalise existing land space in stock and improve land use-value, is helping to address the above problems. Second, in the past, urban construction often meant the disappearance of culture and buildings to some extent. With the continuous modernisation of urban spaces, the city's unique charm and cultural soul gradually diminishes. Micro-regeneration, which aims to preserve the historical and cultural context, provides strategic and practical support to realise the continuation and development of urban traditions (Ji, 2020).

Micro-regeneration, which is based on public participation, with micro-community space and public space facilities as the object of renovation and context inheritance and existing resource usage as aims, has become mainstream in historical district regeneration (Sha et al., 2019). In 2018, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development introduced the concept of 'collaborative production' (*gong-tong di-zao* 共同缔造 in Chinese) in the community regeneration field, which suggests that the micro-regeneration model, involving the participation of multiple parties, is a new trend of community renewal governance, with community, market, and third-party organisations playing increasingly significant roles (Tan et al., 2019). Some researchers assert that the purpose and strategy of micro-regeneration to promote the quality of public space is closer to another concept commonly used in global urban development - urban acupuncture - which borrows from the principles of traditional Chinese medicine, advocating selecting key points in the urban texture (Hou, 2019; Hua and Zhuang, 2022). Both concepts highlight treatment to boost the already declining metabolic processes in the city, enhance the overall function of the city, or to further explore the space resources and their potential for development. The technologies involved in micro-regeneration that play a key role are not limited to spatial organisation and material construction, but also require keen insight into social systems, the logic of everyday life, flexible organisation, and effective use of various resources. In this research, micro-regeneration refers to the regeneration of small-scale public spaces that aims to meet the community's living needs without changing the property of land use and structure of buildings. The scope and quantity of this part of the work are huge, and the content is cumbersome and complicated. Due to the accumulation of historical issues and the contradictions of the situations in historical districts, it can only adopt a gradual and gentle updating mode, both in terms of economic investment and practical operation. Improving the function and quality of these small spaces directly affects the overall appearance and value of the city, as well as the happiness of millions of citizens. It should be noted that when we discuss the work mode of micro-regeneration and collaborative production in China, we cannot ignore the role of the state and the governments. It has been claimed by Hua and Zhang (2022) that the essence of micro-regeneration in China reflects the combination of top-down public governance and bottom-up public participation, which is embedded in the institutionalised and structured hierarchical governance system.

A landmark and foundation for the implementation of the micro-regeneration strategy is the *Patchwork Urbanism and Ecological Rehabilitation Policy*, which was announced by the central government at the *Central City Work Conference (2015)* and has provided support for the

development of micro-regeneration from the central policy aspect. Patchwork Urbanism asks regeneration projects to respect the context and history of a place and aims to improve the residents' sense of belonging and well-being. The foundations for *Patchwork Urbanism* in China draws on the works of American-British architectural historian Colin Rowe's (1978) '*Collage City*' and Spanish architect Manuel de Sola-Morales's (1982) theory of Urban Acupuncture (Zhang, 2017; Yang, 2018). Rowe (1978) argues that it is unnecessary to focus on achieving completeness and attractiveness in overall urban regeneration. Instead, more attention should be paid to small-scale interventions in the renovation of old buildings and more opposition should be made to demolition and construction. Morales (1982) points out that urban acupuncture is a kind of catalyst which can have a greater impact on surrounding areas provided that the intervention is well-controlled, can be realised in the short term, and has the potential to expand its influence. Building on the research regarding *Collage City* and Urban Acupuncture, Patchwork Urbanism in China emphasises a 'people-oriented philosophy' that considers the local conditions and different people's requirements and geographical contexts. Moreover, it demands reasonable resource management, aiming to satisfy the citizen's needs for a sense of belonging and well-being. Thus, the Patchwork Urbanism policy aligns with the micro-regeneration concept and demonstrates its applicability to China.

Based on the review of the micro-regeneration strategy, it is apparent that crucial concepts of the strategy align with the ideas of community resilience. At the same time, in the context of stock-based planning, the requirements and aims of micro-regeneration are also in line with the definition of community resilience. They both emphasise a community's capacities and actions to deal with external and internal disturbances, such as environmental degradation and the imbalance between rapid urbanisation and the needs of ordinary people. Therefore, communities as social-ecological systems need resilient governance to integrate top-down policies and bottom-up strategic initiatives to withstand long-term disturbance.

4.6. Summary

This chapter has discussed the transformation of urban planning and the importance of community regeneration in China. We can conclude that the focus of community development in metropolitan cities has shifted from basic and fundamental living needs to a high-quality environment and a better social atmosphere. This shift requires a great deal of work from higher-level government and diversified requirements from the grassroots, which implies that

local governments and departments cannot implement community regeneration alone. Moreover, the sustainable development goal of communities demands for capacities such as self-governance, self-organisation and collaboration. Together with the democracy scarcity discussed in Chapter. 3, micro-regeneration, which is conducted gradually on small scale and adopts public participation, appears to be a tool to deal with these challenges. It aligns with the resilient development orientation because it endeavours to generate influence over time, seeks to shift community regeneration work modes, and explores the development potential in both physical and social aspects.

Chapter 5. Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The research design and methodology chosen for this study have been developed to generate robust and reliable data sets that provide a rich and detailed understanding of community resilience and micro-regeneration in the study areas. Shaped by the research aims and objectives, this study utilises qualitative research with case study approach. Specifically, it explores three cases/sites within two cities in China: Beijing and Shanghai. Research methods include a policy review to identify relevant policies, requirements, and guidelines related to community resilience building, and case studies of micro-regeneration to examine the state-led co-production progress in order to identify the indicators to understand the resilience attributes. During fieldwork, the case studies employed in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation methods. The chapter begins with a reminder of the research aims and objectives, following sections then outline in detail the case selection, data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the methodology, addresses questions of validity and reliability, translation, ethical and safety issues, and the limitations of the methods used.

5.2 Research aims and questions

This research adopts a systematic approach to explore the influence of micro-regeneration at the community level in urban China, building upon the project initiation, implementation and governance. It aims to investigate how micro-regeneration in China enriches the articulation of community resilience theory. This study was carried out in response to China's urban development transformation from incremental planning to stock-based planning, and to the political urban development strategy of sustainable development. The aims of this research are to interrogate the demonstration of community resilience theory in the urban China context and to investigate how the micro-regeneration projects enhance resilient community revitalisation. To achieve these aims, the following two main research questions (numbered 1 and 2) and their associated sub-research questions (as bullet points) were developed:

1. How can the community resilience discourse be resituated in the context of heritage community micro-regeneration in China?

- What are the attributes and indicators that interpret community resilience in the context of community micro-regeneration?
- What are the existing strategies/policies making steps towards the objective of resilient community regeneration?
- What are the specific words/concepts used in China to frame the terminology ‘community resilience’?

This question focuses on understanding and explaining community resilience theory in the Chinese context. The aim is to build a framework to evaluate community resilience qualitatively. Specifically, the first sub-question aims to build a framework guiding evaluation of micro-regeneration practices in urban China. Assisted by the policy review (see Chapters 4, 6, and 7), the second sub-research question guides the study to understand the policies that promote resilient community development. The third sub-research question addresses the relationship between Chinese terms and Western-rooted resilience theory.

The second main research question interrogates the outcomes of community micro-regeneration, especially in historical areas, and guides the case study research:

2. To what extent can micro-regeneration of heritage communities help to enhance community resilience?

- How do initiators enable and constrain community resilience through planning regimes and practices?
- How can the social value of heritage community micro-regeneration be demonstrated using the community resilience discourse?
- What are the roles of planners in the process of community micro-regeneration?

The first sub-research question addresses how the resilience indicators identified through literature and policy review can promote the community’s resilient development. The second sub-research question focuses on how to map out and illustrate the social impact of micro-regeneration on multiple stakeholders over time. The third sub-research question examines the roles of planners in response to the increasingly widespread responsible planner system across China.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the research questions and intends to explain how they relate to the chosen research methods.

Table 5.1 Summary of the methods (Author, 2023)

| Main Research questions | Sub-questions | Methods | | Outputs |
|--|--|--------------------|---|--|
| How can the community resilience discourse be resituated in the context of heritage community micro-regeneration in China? | 2. What are the existing strategies/policies making steps towards the objective of resilient community regeneration? | Policy review | | A textual analysis of policies and other materials. |
| | 1. What are the attributes and indicators that interpret community resilience in the context of community micro-regeneration? | Multi-case studies | In-depth interviews with multiple stakeholders (experts, staff from the government, planners, residents, designers) | Interview with key actors and stakeholders from a range of agencies and organisations involved in the selected micro-regeneration cases. |
| | 3. What are the specific words/concepts used in China to frame the terminology 'community resilience'? | | Participant observation | Diaries and photos to record the ongoing cases. |
| To what extent can micro-regeneration of heritage communities help to enhance community resilience? | 1. How do initiators enable and constrain community resilience through planning regimes and practices? | Multi-case studies | Reports review | A textual analysis of news reports and reflective papers. |
| | 2. How can the social value of heritage community micro-regeneration be demonstrated using the community resilience discourse? | | In-depth interviews with experts (planners, designers, researchers) | Interview with planners, designers, politicians and others who took part in the initiation and implementation of projects. |
| | 3. What are the roles of planners in the process of community micro-regeneration? | | Participant observation | Observe actors' behaviours and interactions in the projects. |

5.3 Methodology and research design

5.3.1 Research philosophy

Social science research is guided by basic beliefs and hypotheses which help researchers understand, predict, and control their environment (Saunders et al., 2009; Neuman, 2011; Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Research paradigms are essential to the research process and involve examining theoretical debates, implementing qualitative research methods, and analysing data sets (Crotty, 1998; Wahyuni, 2012). The two key philosophical dimensions that distinguish research paradigms are ontology (the nature of existence) and epistemology (how to understand reality) (Grey, 2018), while methodology refers to the systematic methods taken for doing research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). These components combine to form different research paradigms, with four dominant paradigms presented in a diagram (Figure 5.1).

A critical assessment of the strengths and drawbacks of the varied social science research paradigms was conducted while developing the research design and methodology. This research takes a constructivist interpretivist approach to reach the theoretical and empirical goals. The interpretive paradigm is a major anti-positivist stance. Interpretivism, simply put, is a way of looking at meaning that is contextualised, based on the idea that reality is socially constructed, filled with various meanings and interpretations, and influenced by emotions. Accordingly, researchers based on interpretivism believe that the aim of theorising is to provide an understanding of direct lived experience rather than an abstraction (Mathison, 2013).

5.3.2 Research design

The research design is guided by three principles. Firstly, research design and methodology help to create a clear plan for achieving the research objectives, which guides the direction of the study. Secondly, research methods allow for producing ample and complementary data sets that can support the analysis in a robust manner. Finally, the study is carried out in accordance with appropriate ethical norms that are widely recognised as meaningful and effective within the realm of social sciences (Ali and Kelly, 2012). Therefore, this research adopts a *qualitative approach* based on case studies as a way to analyse and interpret different stakeholders' views and experiences of micro-regeneration as well as the outcomes of regeneration projects. As Flick (2009) highlights, qualitative research addresses social reality by examining participants' life experiences and interpretations. Qualitative research, which is "highly contextual, being

collected in a natural real-life setting” (Gray, 2018, p. 163), helps unpack the specific meaning of community resilience in this study.

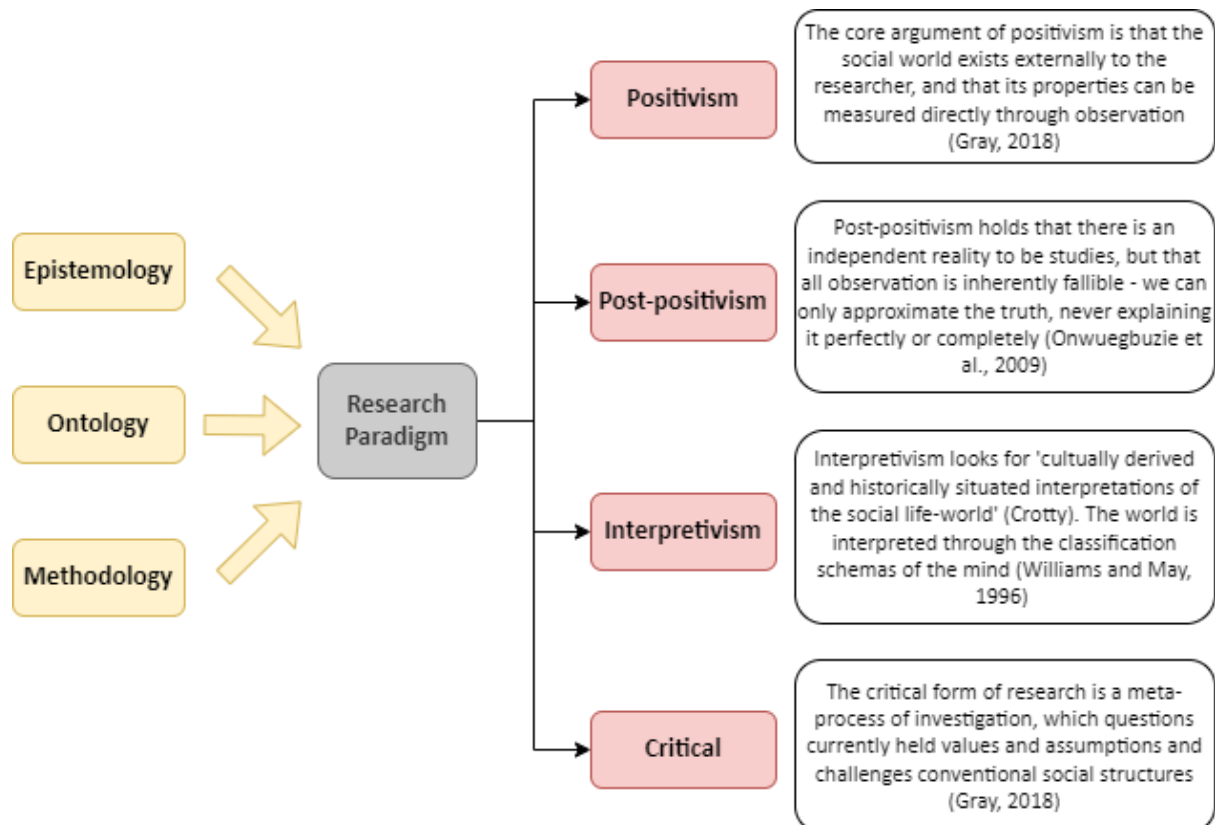


Figure 5.1. Research paradigms (Author, 2023, based on Gray, 2018)

At the heart of the qualitative research methods, *the case study* is the approach adopted for this research. According to Yin (1994), case study research is a widely adopted research strategy among social sciences that involves examining a specific contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using a variety of evidence sources. Case study research allows for the examination and understanding of complex issues in specific settings (Gulsecen and Kubat, 2006). It is particularly important in the investigation of issues that directly affect communities (Johnson, 2006), and is useful when the researcher wants to uncover the relationship between a current phenomenon and its broader context (Gray, 2018). In the same vein, the case study method is highly relevant to this research, as it enables the achievement of the research aim through discussions with multiple stakeholders and engaging with real-life contexts of projects.

5.4 Remarks of attributes selection

The selection of six attributes is introduced in Chapter 2, while their derivation is underpinned by examining the Chinese administration in Chapter 3 and the discourse on stock-based planning and urban regeneration in Chapter 4. The presentation here perfectly aligns in a linear manner, sequentially showcasing research theories and implementation, but it is still pivotal to recognize that the research design and analysis are iterative processes. Consequently, it is imperative to elucidate that the selection of these six attributes is shaped by the insights garnered from the subsequent chapters, accentuating the dynamic interplay of the research progression.

The initial selection of adaptive capacity and transformation stems from their pivotal roles as fundamental concepts within the framework of resilience theory. Simultaneously, the definitions of these attributes are intricately interwoven with the discourse surrounding urban planning transformation in China. It can be evidently found by drawing insights from the discussions presented in Chapters 3 and 4 that both individual and institutional capacities, along with the propensity to assimilate lessons from practical experiences, stand underscored as key components in adapting to evolving social dynamics. The evolution of community planning mechanisms and strategic realignments further mirrors the overarching theme of transformation, as articulated in the resilience research.

The inclusion of collaboration as a focal attribute is primarily driven by its alignment with the 'co-production, co-governance, and benefit-sharing' strategy championed by the central government. Given that co-production in China is often manifested as a 'state-led' initiative,

delving into the dynamics of collaboration within this particular context holds substantial merit. This very attribute encapsulates the nuanced interplay between state-led co-production strategies and their operationalisation, and offers a platform to assess their practical efficacy and implications.

The selection of social capital as a research attribute stems from its distinctive significance and interpretation within the Chinese context. While social capital holds an institutional connotation in Western settings and underscores the formal linkages between diverse entities, its Chinese equivalent 'guanxi' embodies a more informal dimension, often denoting the mutual informal affiliations between individuals or other entities. Thus, the examination of social capital within a Chinese framework bears the potential to augment the comprehension of resilience from a social perspective, which offers valuable insights into the dynamics of informal networks and their impact on resilience outcomes.

The inclusion of connectivity and resourcefulness originates from their congruence with the micro-regeneration strategy. In this study, micro-regeneration underscores the efficient utilisation of resources and the establishment of interconnections among various local facets within a community. Such a resonance between micro-regeneration's essence and the fundamental definitions of resourcefulness and connectivity underscores their significance. Consequently, a thorough examination upon these attributes within the micro-regeneration context is warranted to illuminate their role and impact within the framework of the micro-regeneration strategy.

5.5 Choice of cases

5.5.1 Case selection

As mentioned above, this research project is based on case study research which seeks to generate reliable and robust data sets that provide a rich and detailed understanding of micro-regeneration projects in urban China, especially in the case study area of historical districts in both Beijing and Shanghai. Case study research offers the opportunity to explore specific urban spaces in depth and multi-case study allows for generalisations to be made across locations and at different spatial scales (Creswell, 2009; Mills et al., 2010). To that end, the selection of cases

plays an important role in terms of developing the understanding of relationships between community resilience and micro-regeneration.

The selection of Beijing and Shanghai as the study cities can be attributed to three primary reasons. Firstly, both cities have transitioned into the stage of stock-based planning, a transformation discussed in Chapter 4. This shift from incremental planning to stock-based planning mirrors the broader urban planning transformation prevalent in numerous Chinese megacities, with Beijing and Shanghai serving as exemplary representatives of this transition. Secondly, the historical significance of both cities is marked by the presence of numerous historical communities aspiring for environmental enhancements. Lastly, Beijing and Shanghai are at the forefront of urban development, often spearheading policy implementation on behalf of the central government. The policies tested and experiences garnered from these two cities hold the potential to set the precedent for other Chinese cities, making them integral to the study.

Another pivotal criterion for case selection is accessibility. While acknowledging the existence of other cities boasting commendable micro-regeneration practices with widespread influence, it's essential to note that this research adopts qualitative methods, predominantly interviews and participatory observation. Hence, direct access to cases on-site, events, and key stakeholders holds paramount importance for conducting comprehensive research. Although cities like Chengdu or Shenzhen also exemplify remarkable micro-regeneration instances in China, practical constraints within my network restricted my ability to access these cases during the one-year fieldwork period. Moreover, as highlighted in the research proposal, one of the most significant challenges was securing access to higher-level Chinese government officials. Consequently, I turned my focus to Beijing, a city where I spent five years as an undergraduate student and where my existing connections could facilitate the research process.

For case selection in Beijing, potential case studies were identified from the internet and other sources, focusing on the active role of local government and the availability of observation as well as interviews with other actors. It materialised that one pilot project in the hutong area was organised by Beijing Municipal Planning and Design Institution (abbr: BMPDI) where I previously interned during my undergraduate period. Another choice project was implemented by my alma mater, Beijing Forestry University (abbr: BJFU), although it was difficult to contact the local

government about this project. In light of these considerations, I chose projects in the Historical and Cultural Protection Area of Dongsinan (abbr: HCPAD) that were implemented by BMPDI, as my first case. While searching for cases in the traditional historical districts (hutong areas in Beijing), I discovered that participatory micro-regeneration projects were conducted not only in hutong areas, but also in old urban communities built five to seven decades ago, which also represents the memory and history of Beijing's city development. Therefore, I searched for micro-regeneration projects conducted in old urban communities, and eventually found two alternatives in which my previous tutor in BJFU could help me to build connections. After considering the access to the local officer, I chose the Keyu Community project. Because the student research group in BJFU were conducting social research at the same place and same time, the interview part for this project was conducted together with these students.

During my fieldwork in Beijing, I attended workshops, lectures and forums on the topic of micro-regeneration. I listened to many presentations from other cities in China, which allowed me to recognise the different implementation and organisation modes used across China. While the Chinese planning system is relatively homogeneous, there are significant regional differences in how particular policies are implemented at the local level. Therefore, I started to think about conducting a comparison between different cities. Shanghai, as one of the most open cities with abundant history and historical districts, was chosen as the second city. Here, I contacted one NGO that focuses on micro-regeneration and community revitalisation, and over several years, I worked as an intern and observer with them, completing several community projects. I selected the main programme that the organisation had completed before as the case study.

All three cases were undertaken at the same operational level, signifying their execution within communities and integration within sub-district programs or with support from sub-district offices. These cases share comparable scales, encompassing areas spanning from a few square meters to several hundred square meters, aptly reflecting the essence of micro-regeneration. Furthermore, driven by the significance of the thematic area and the cases' representational value, each instance epitomizes a distinct practice mode. The hutong case in Beijing exemplifies micro-regeneration projects in the traditional historical and cultural district, spurred by local government initiatives. The Keyu community case underscores practices within old urban communities, also originating from local government efforts. Conversely, the Shanghai case signifies a practice initiated by an NGO, subsequently seeking governmental support—an illustration of diverse pathways towards micro-regeneration practice. The inclusion of these

three cases ensures their comparability and representation, aiming to enrich the understanding of community resilience in the context of general micro-regeneration in urban China.

5.5.2 Cases in Beijing: basic information about the site and programme

Case 1: The Historical and Cultural Protection Area of Dongsinan – Site information

The primary reason for choosing this case is its representativity and accessibility. The case is one of the earliest historical communities that collaborated between the government and residents to regenerate public spaces. This co-productive community regeneration project aims at improving the living environment while enhancing residents' ability to engage in participatory planning and shoulder responsibility for better community construction. Benefiting from my personal resource, I had the opportunity to interview government officials, planners, residents, NGO staff and volunteers, and join the ongoing projects to do observation.

The HCPAD is located in the Old City of Beijing. As seen from the *Regulatory Plan of the Core Districts of the Capital (2018-2035)* (Figures 5.2 and 5.3), there are thirty-three protected areas in the Old City, and the HCPAD is located in the *Chao-yang-men* (abbr: CYM) sub-district, *Dongcheng* district, being included in the third batch of Beijing historical and cultural protection areas in 2012 (Figure 5.4).

The HCPAD is a typical *hutong* (胡同 in Chinese) style residential area. A *hutong* is a strip of space resulting from the tight arrangement of *siheyuan*, or quadrangle dwellings. *Siheyuan* buildings have either a front or a gable facing the street, and their walls constitute the continuous interface of the *hutong* (Heath and Tang, 2010). Combined with the ancient trees, varieties of lane spaces are formed. The continuous interface of grey-black bricks sets the overall style of the *hutong*, and the continuous closed interface creates a sense of privacy (Figure 5.5). This spatial experience makes residents of the *hutong* feel secure, fostering connections between neighbours and the construction of good neighbourhood relationships (Liu, 2019). Currently, traditional residential housing in Beijing Old City, especially in *hutong* areas, mostly takes the form of *dazayuan* (大杂院 in Chinese). *Dazayuan* is a conventional concept and has no standard definition. Generally, *dazayuan* is characterised by its basic shape, a quadrangle dwelling (*siheyuan* in Chinese). *Dazayuan* evolved from traditional residential quadrangle dwellings which line the *hutongs*, with significant closure and an interior orientation. Second, the prominent difference between *dazayuan* and quadrangle dwellings is that *dazayuan* are much more 'hybrid' or 'messy'. On the one hand, multiple families are living together in a complex

population structure, generally in the middle and lower strata of society. On the other hand, the physical environment decays gradually, including poor housing quality and widespread added construction in yards (Figure 5.6).

With a history spanning more than 700 years, HCPAD is one of the oldest sub-districts in Beijing. Despite the historical changes, the area still maintains the classical *hutong* structure and a large number of traditional *siheyuan*. The area spans 1.24 km², containing 9 *hutongs*, such as *shi-jia hutong*, *yan-yue hutong* and *nei-wu-bu-jie hutong*. Between the hutongs, there are mainly *siheyuan* housing. As the typical residential historical area here, it retains the traditional *hutong* fabric and living style as well as the form of public spaces (Liu et al., 2020).

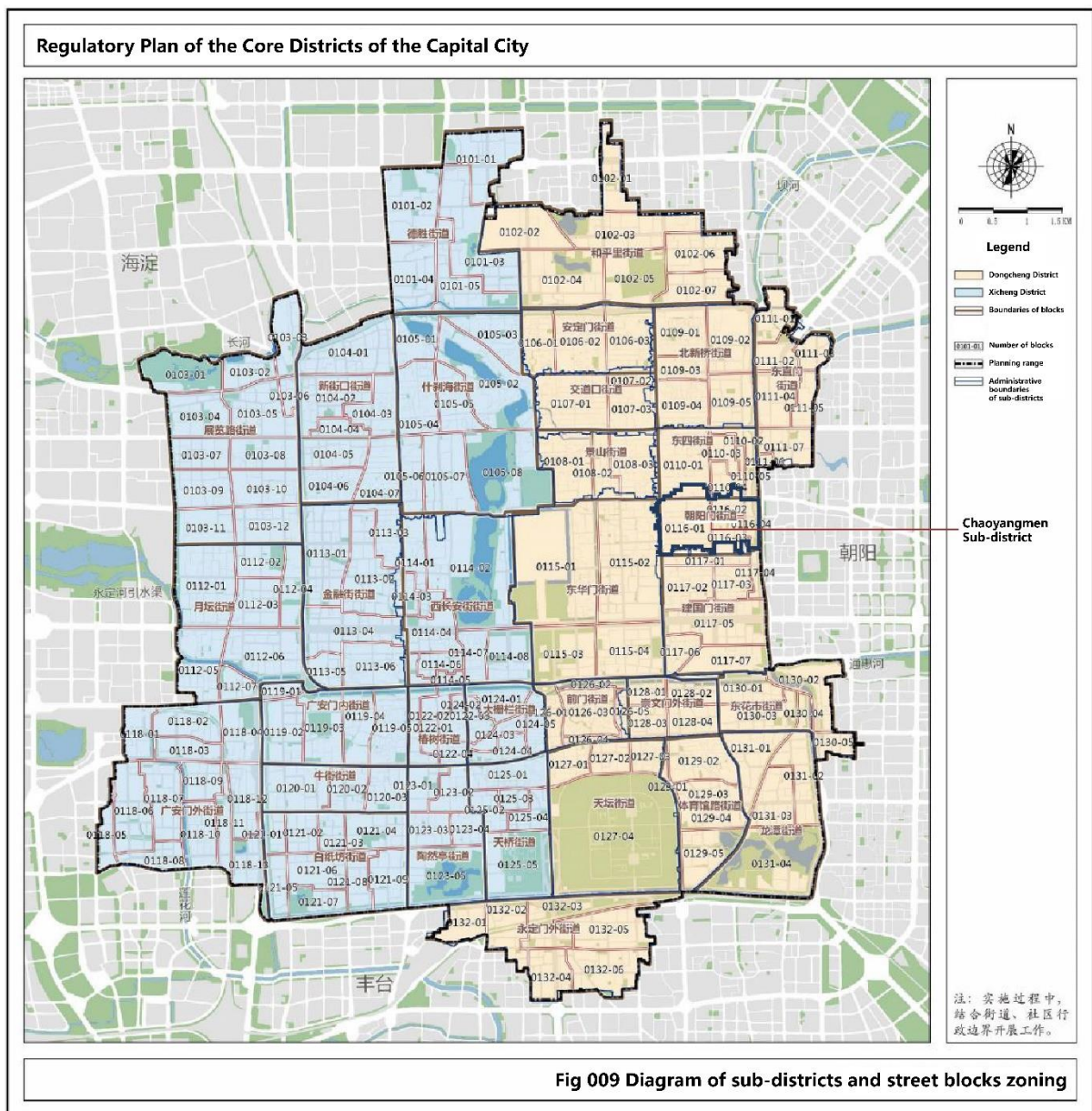


Figure 5.2 Regulatory Plan of the Core Districts of the Capital City - Boundaries of sub-districts
(Author, 2023, based on Regulatory Plan of the Core Districts of the Capital, 2020)



Figure 5.3 Regulatory Plan of the Core Districts of the Capital City - Historical Areas (Author, 2023, based on Regulatory Plan of the Core Districts of the Capital, 2020)

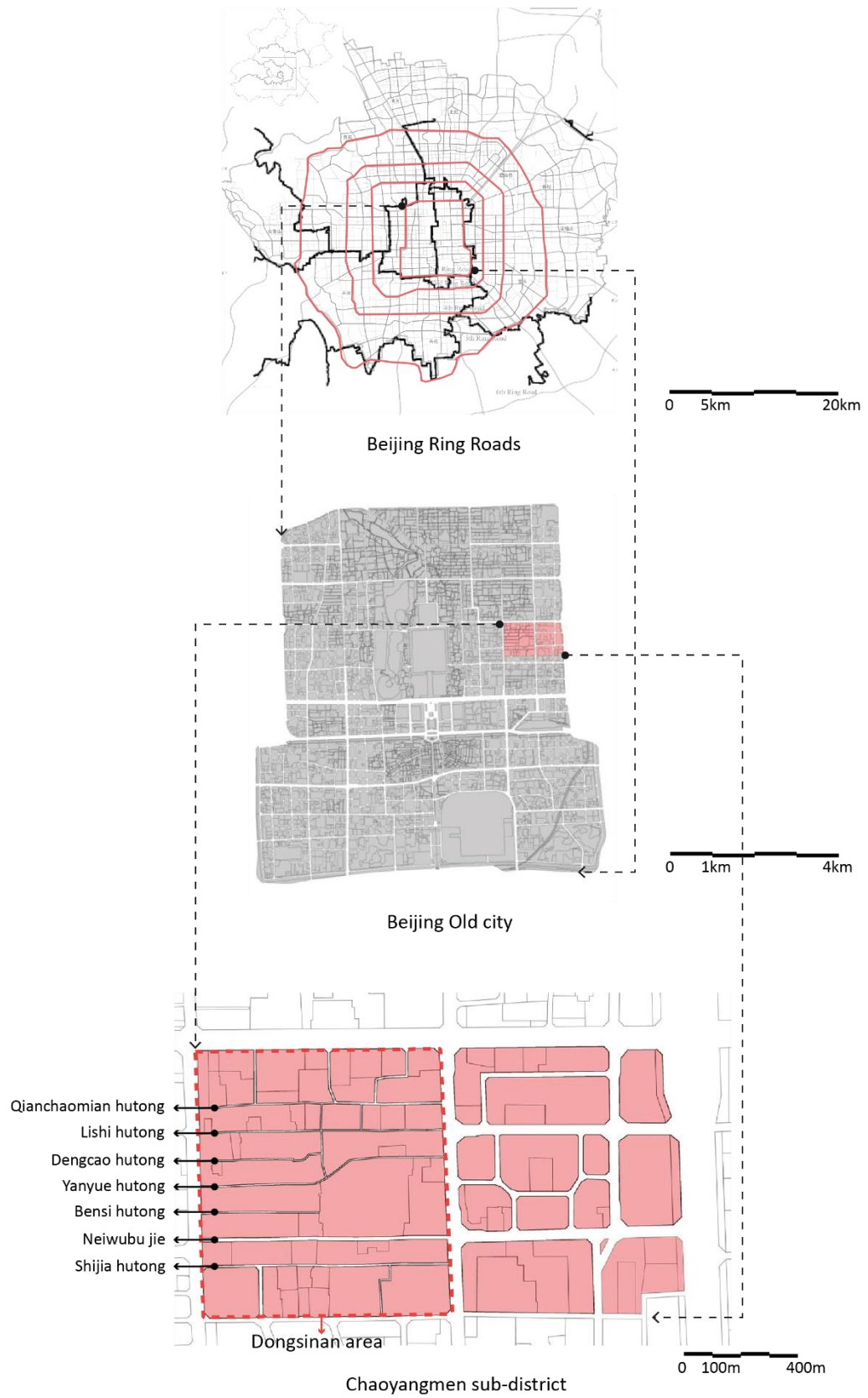


Figure 5.4 Locations of CYM sub-district and DSN area (Author, 2023)

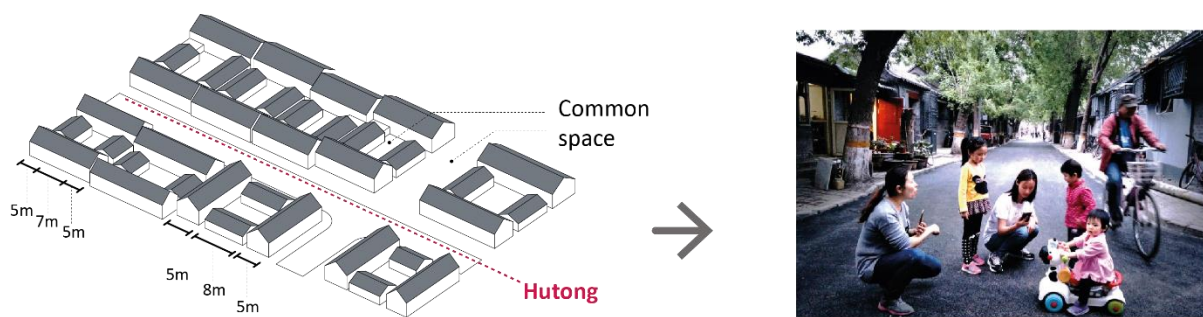


Figure 5.5 Left: Hutong space (Author, 2023),
Right: Scene of *hutong* (SHHPS, 2022)

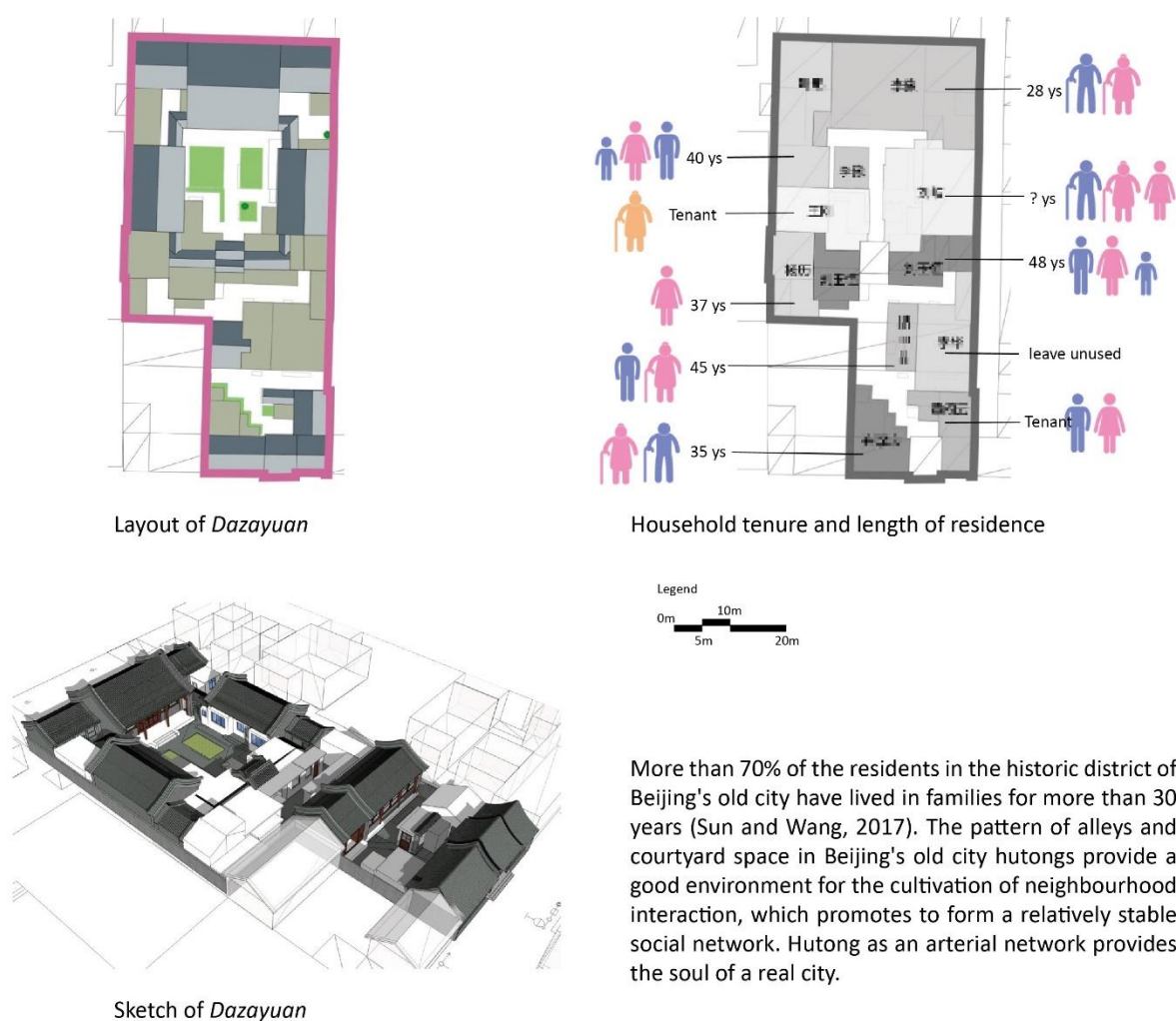


Figure 5.6 Sketch of *dazayuan* (Author, 2023, based on SHHPS)

Case 1 – Introduction to the programme

In 2011, the BMPDI was entrusted by the *Dongcheng* sub-district office of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Planning and Natural Resources (BMCPNR) to compile the *Conservation Plan of the Historical and Cultural Protection Area of Dongsinan*. Meanwhile, the CYM sub-district office collaborated with a foundation to regenerate an empty courtyard in the *Shi-jia* neighbourhood, creating a community museum (*Shijia Hutong* Museum) by introducing participatory approaches. These two initiatives promoted community building and garnered solid public and governmental support for public in engagement in community planning. The positive social reputation of the museum project stimulated government investment (Liao et al., 2020), showcasing the diverse cultures of *shi-jia hutong*, instilling local residents with pride and a sense of belonging. However, during the redevelopment of jurisdictional property, one property institution (产权单位 in Chinese) destroyed a historical construction, resulting in the need for improved preservation consciousness. In response, planners and cadres in the sub-district office proposed the establishment of an organisation to advocate for historical area preservation. With support from local resident representatives, the Residents' Committee as well as specialists, the *Shi-jia Hutong Heritage Preservation Society* (abbr: SHHPS) was established in 2014.

Aiming to emphasise the localisation of this NGO, the society is mainly composed of local residents, staves from RC and property rights units, with the director of the RC serving as the association's president. The aim of this structure is to allow the RC to play the role of a grassroots self-governance organisation. However, the high overlap of key members between the SHHPS and RC has hindered staff from developing extra work beyond their daily work in the RC. Moreover, because of the lack of specialised knowledge, the association has found its difficulty to cultivate conservation projects spontaneously on the ground. To address these challenges, planners began to intervene in the management of the association and supported the development of various projects, including culture education and physical micro-regeneration projects, such as the oral history recording, courtyard regeneration and micro garden series projects. Through this process, planners tried to explore residents' opinion leaders and cultivate their capacity of self-governance. As a result, the SHHPS has transformed from a community self-governance organisation to a professionally supported organisation with a focus on heritage conservation and community regeneration.

Furthermore, the sub-district office, BMPDI, and the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning at Beijing University of Technology signed a cooperation agreement in 2017 to explore sub-district regeneration via the projects incubated by SHHPS. Then in 2018, the CYM sub-district office and delegated planners jointly promoted the establishment of the Dongsinan (abbr: DSN) Governance Innovation Platform and entrusted the SHHPS to manage the platform. The DSN Governance Innovation Platform is a mechanism and system guarantee, which helps to connect communities and local governments, introduce outside resources, and promote collaboration among stakeholders (Figure 5.7). The platform's work content includes six aspects: 1) discovering local residents', communities' and institutions' needs and requirements; 2) teasing out policies and tasks from the governments at higher levels; 3) building resources network; 4) carrying out publicity and education activities; 5) collaborating with delegated planners; and 6) incubating small scale projects.

The platform implements a third-party operation and maintenance model, entrusting SHPS to operate and manage the platform and assigning full-time personnel. The strategic cooperation unit assigns instructors to the platform as well. Meanwhile, the responsible planner team enters the platform and simultaneously establishes the responsible planner sub-platform. The platform innovatively establishes a project incubation sub-platform and builds an expert database, a media database, a spatial resource database, and an institutional resource database. Hence, there is a mechanism structured as 'one large platform, two sub-platforms and four databases', which is an innovative governance system.

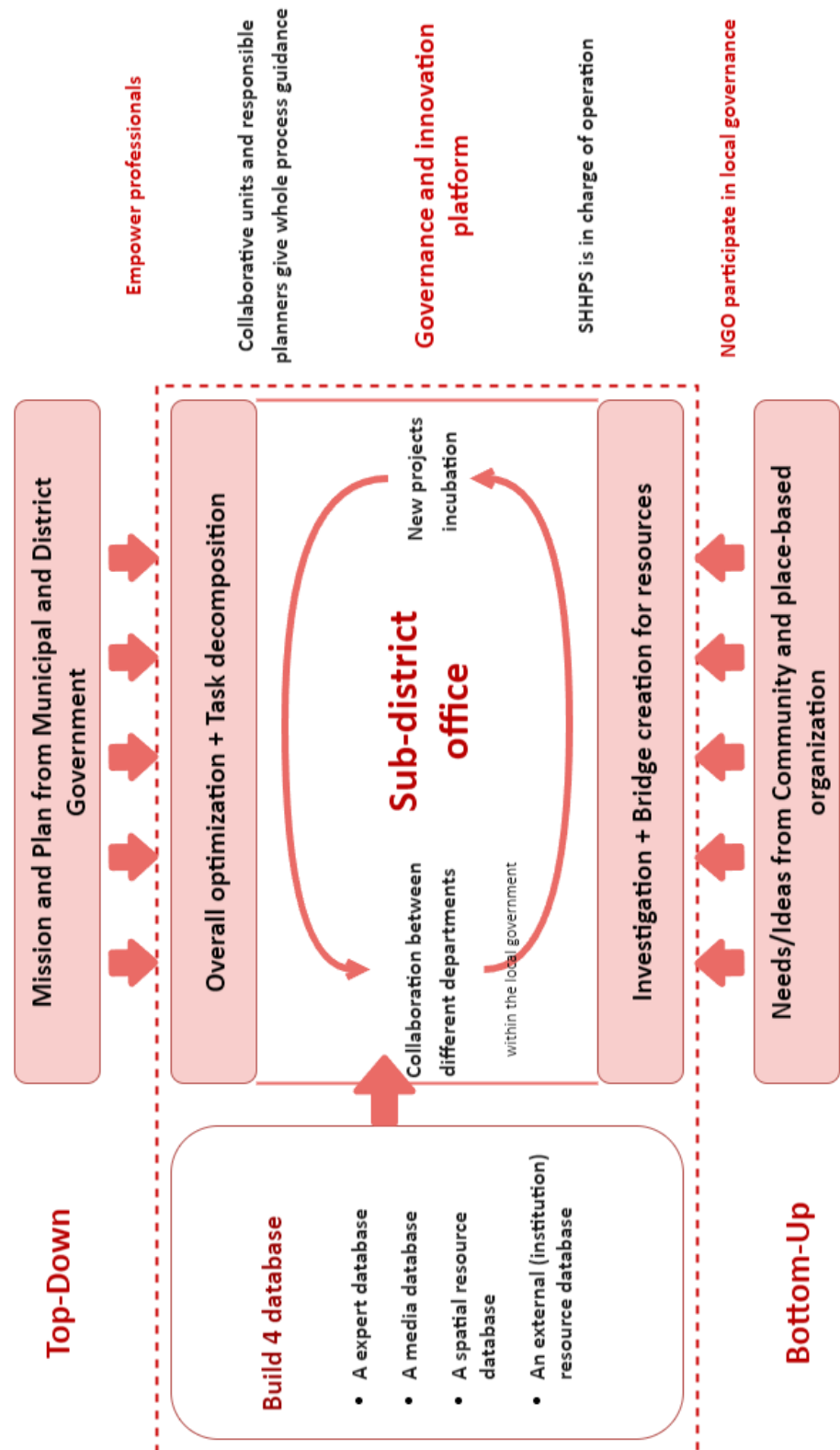


Figure 5.7 The management of Platform (Author, 2023, based on Liu et al., 2020)

Case 2 - Keyu community – Site information

The case of *Keyu* community was selected due to its accessibility and representativeness in the old urban community regeneration field. This case has finished its construction stage and received widespread attention. It is one of the first in Beijing to adopt participatory approaches from the very beginning to the post-governance stage. With the help of the previous tutor in BJFU, I had the opportunity to interview RC staff and designers. Helped by students from the BJFU, I obtained 30 interview transcripts and recordings with the residents.

The *Yuyuan* Garden, located in the *Keyu* community, is pilot project for co-productive micro-regeneration in Beijing covering an area of 600 square metres. The old urban community is located in the *Zhongguancun* Sub-district of *Haidian District* in Beijing (Figure 5.8). It was built in the 1960s and is a family dormitory gated community of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Despite over ten years of effort spent mobilising its redevelopment, it has not been accomplished because of the huge financial compensation required for the relocation of local residents and the lack of commitment from the higher-level government policies. In this context, it is necessary to improve the living environment of old communities.

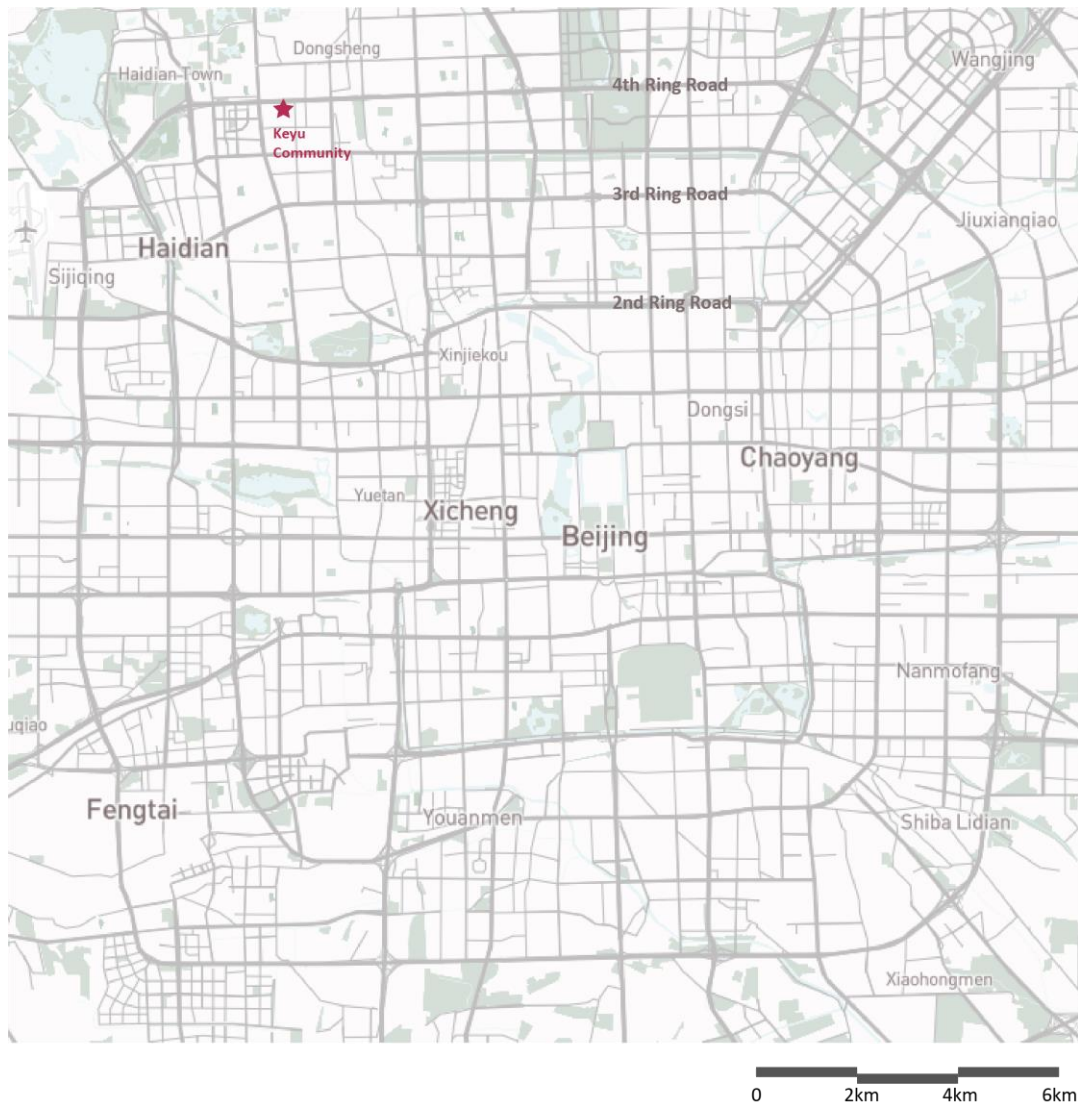


Figure 5.8 Location of Keyu community (Author, 2023)

The *Keyu* community is a typical *dan-wei* housing. As discussed briefly in Section 4.5.2, *Dan-wei* is a basic constituent cell and operating unit related to national politics, economy, and society during the planned economy period. Its conceptualisation is similar to that of enterprises and companies (Li, 2019). Each *dan-wei* is allowed to build gated communities, named *dan-wei* housing (or *dan-wei da-yuan*), for workers, which contain nearly all basic infrastructure necessary for the denizens' daily lives (Qiao, 2004; Jie, 2000). Beijing is the birthplace of the *dan-wei* system and contains concentrated *dan-wei* housings, which were mostly built in the 1950-1960s. *Dan-wei* housing is a combination of urban spaces and social systems, which produce the 'da-yuan culture'—a socialistic urban culture that emphasises collective spirit—which gives residents a strong sense of identity and belonging (Qiao, 2004). After 1978's opening-up reform, the operational system of *dan-wei* housing collapsed. With the growing number of leased apartments and residents relocating, the original society disappeared, resulting in a mixture of residents with limited emotional connections and sense of belonging. With increasing recognition of the historical value of *dan-wei* housing, the regeneration and protection of this type of housing has received attention. Recently, this type of housing has been recognised as "highly symbiotic of Communist China on political and ideological grounds" (Wang et al., 2015, p.518).

Case 2 – Introduction to the project

The mobilisation to redevelop the community started in 2017 when the sub-district office proposed a project aimed at enhancing the landscape of the old quarter corners and exploring the community collaboration in building a model. The Yuyuan Garden project, jointly designed by design firm Gaiascape and local residents, has received the largest share of total funding extended by the sub-district. Multiple social and community forces came together to participate in building a 'poetic dwelling' - a satisfying and enjoyable inhabited environment - with the involvement of local users based on the values of public participation, common knowledge and common action. The project took three years to complete and applied the concept of sustainable and resilient living on the land.

This project has been viewed as a response to three salient issues in old community development. Firstly, it is difficult for each stakeholder to break through its own interests and make practical concessions. When multiple stakeholders are involved in common interests, they need to cooperate with each other. However, competition may arise when encountering interest disputes. When a party is at risk of losing its benefits, the contradiction is difficult to resolve

through negotiation due to the lack of an effective compensation mechanism currently in place. Secondly, government departments are overburdened. As discussed in chapter 3, under the pressure of administrative management, the government does too many things for the community affairs. However, due to a lack of in-depth understanding of the community contradictions, the investment of resources often cannot solve the actual problems of the community. Finally, the degree of residents' effective participation is low. Residents lack interest in participating in affairs that are not directly related to their own interests, even blocking the implementation of agreed resolutions. This project seeks to mitigate these issues by introducing long-term and gradual public engagement.

5.5.3 Cases in Shanghai: basic information about the site and programme

Xinhualu sub-district - Site information

This case is one of the most famous NGO-led, with help from the government, co-productive community regeneration projects. It is directly related to my research context and is located in historical areas. Similar to the two cases in Beijing, this project, took place within the sub-district level. The project aimed to improve both physical and social aspects by equipping the residents with skills, knowledge, space and platforms to build a better living environment by themselves, with the backing of local authorities.

Xinhualu sub-district is located in *Changning* District in *Shanghai*, and was built during Shanghai's concession period in 1925. The area spans 2.2 square kilometres and is bounded by St. Yan'an Xi, St. Xingguo, St. Kaixuan and St. Huai'ai Xi (Figure 5.9). The area was designated a *Historical and Cultural Area* by the municipality in 2005. Along the main street, Xinhua Road, there are more than 120 villas in miscellaneous architectural styles, with most of them built by colonisers from the UK, Germany, Italy, the United States, and the Netherlands. There are also many *lilong* (里弄 in Chinese) communities, which are heritage communities located in the sub-district. *Lilong* is one of the earliest residential forms in urban *Shanghai*, originated from traditional south-facing architecture and was built into a cluster of rows and then, at scale, formed a residential compound. This particular type of residence is symbolic of memories collectively shared by ordinary Chinese citizens and migrants in Shanghai. However, these historical buildings have suffered structural degradation over the years. When the Communist Party took over the area in the 1950s, most historical residences were redistributed to many people in need, and some were used as dormitories for state-owned industry. Apart from the

lilong community, which is one of the earlier developed areas, there are many old urban communities as well. Some of them are state-owned housing that was built from the 1960s to 1970s, while some commercial housing was developed in order to meet the needs of an influx of migrant workers settling in the neighbourhood in the 1990s. After nearly 60 years, the environment of these old urban communities is obsolete and cannot meet residents' requirements.

The characteristics of the *Xinhualu* sub-district are as follows. Firstly, the area is densely populated with a high proportion of elderly residents. The sub-district has a population density of 34,400 people/km², and more than 35% of the population is over 60 years old. Secondly, there is a high degree of built community, leading to limited space resources. According to statistics, the ratio of built community is 96%, and the available land area is only 7 hm². The types of residence are diverse, including old villas, public housing and commercial housing, with old communities accounting for 77% of the total. Finally, there is an urgent need to improve the infrastructure and built environment while preserving the historical and cultural area's humanistic context and Shanghai-style architectural features. The features indicate that *Xinhualu* sub-district has entered into the stage that requires organic regeneration.

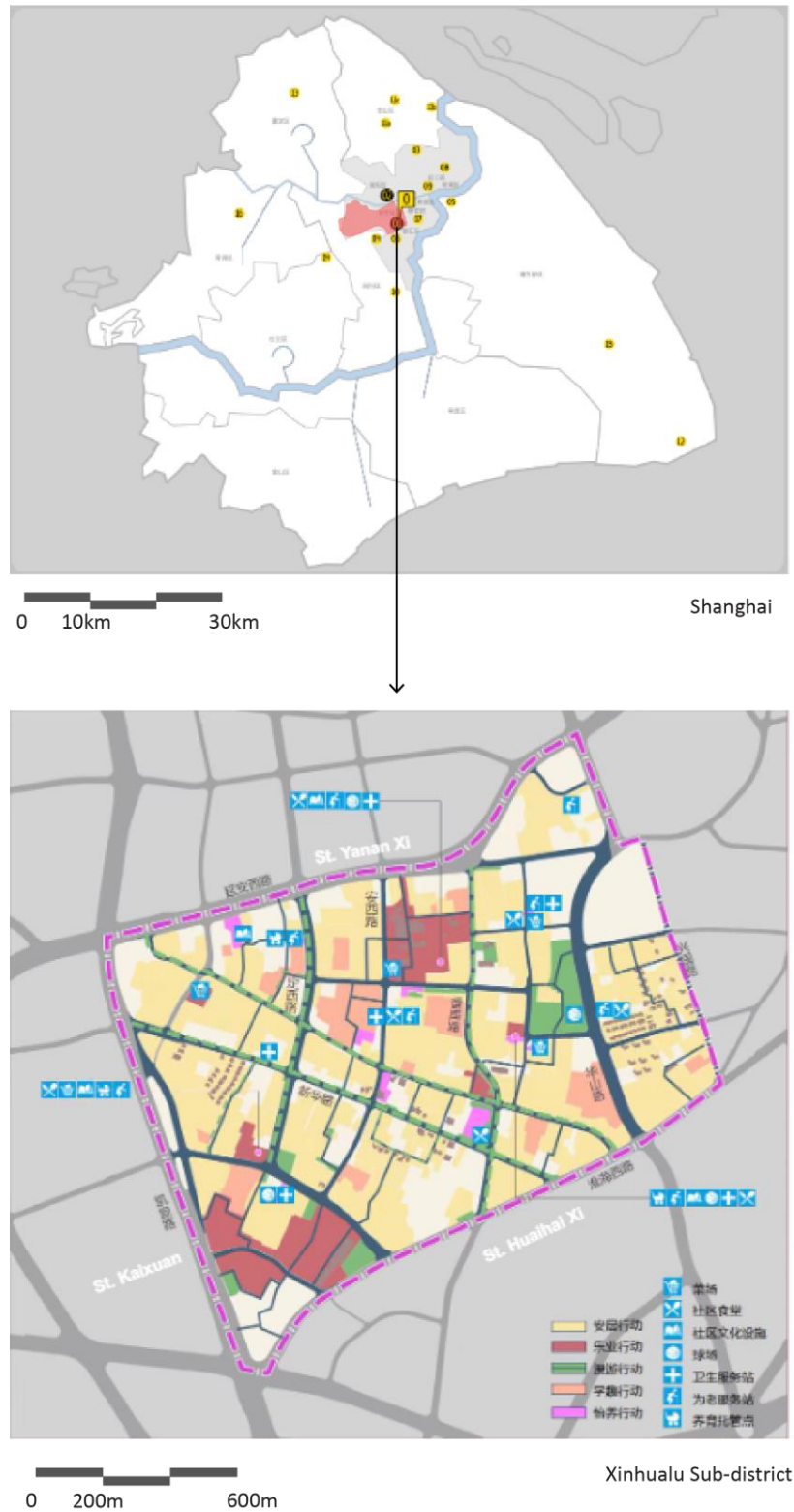


Figure 5.9 Location of Xinhua sub-district (Author, 2023)

Programme introduction

The practice in *Xinhualu* Sub-district is hybrid mode of government support and grassroots initiation. In 2016, the *Xinhualu* sub-district government started the micro-regeneration project as a response to the citywide initiation to improve public spaces. Since the promulgation of the *Shanghai Planning Guidance of 15-Minute Community Life Circle*, the Municipal Planning and Land Resource Bureau has developed several programmes, including 'Walk Around Shanghai 2016 - Community Space Micro-Regeneration Plan' (2016) and 'Three-Year Plan (2018-2020) of Beautiful Home of Shanghai Residential Communities Regeneration' (2018). In 2019, the bureau organised the '15-Minute Community Life Circle' community regeneration pilot work, focusing on several areas to enhance infrastructure improvement through urban regeneration and small-scale regeneration. 15 pilot sub-districts were chosen, and the *Xinhualu* sub-district was one of these. The top-down programme was developed from five aspects. The first aspect is the demerits evaluation, focusing on the non-motorised traffic system, service infrastructure and public spaces. The outcome of this assessment indicates the need to revitalise micro spaces in communities that can be used as infrastructures, such as community common kitchens. Regarding public spaces, several walkable streets and lanes need to be improved, and tiny public green spaces need to be upgraded.

The second aspect is a survey of residents' requirements. The survey was developed on three levels: sub-district office, Residents' Committees, and residents. The interviews with sub-district officials allowed the clearance of the general issue, while questionnaires survey and interviews with RC allowed the project organiser to understand the diverse issues in different communities. Interviews and questionnaire surveys with residents aimed to obtain detailed requirements and information to support the regeneration project.

The third aspect is to identify available space resources. Focusing on community demerits, the programme plans to improve community vitality and service quality by diversifying space use and regeneration approaches, including sporadic space renewal, attached space reuse, micro space regeneration and staggered shared space use. The next step is to create a blueprint and a list of projects based on the endeavours in the previous three steps. A blueprint reflects the forward-looking planning and forms an overall action plan for the community on the basis of sorting out the shortcomings, enabling sub-district offices and residents to better understand the vision of community development. The list reflects effectiveness, helping the sub-district to

promote the implementation of projects according to the list. The last step emphasises the necessity to keep a connection with various bureaus of the district. The effective mutual connection between sub-districts and districts can guarantee the implementation of existing projects and exploration of potential projects for the future.

Apart from the top-down work plan, grassroots initiations regarding community regeneration have also emerged since the government's work cannot cover every corner. One of these programmes, named Urban Design Festival, was promoted by a group of local residents with architectural backgrounds in 2018. The festival is a bottom-up event launched by a sub-district-based architecture studio called AssBook Design Media (referred as AssBook below). Established in 2015 as a social media platform with an architectural context, AssBook acts as a platform to gather designer and sponsor resources and initiate architectural and urban design events in various areas. In 2018, AssBook initiated the Urban Design Festival in the *Xinhualu* sub-district, and they endeavoured to get support from local authorities. During the festival, eight small-scale sites, were selected with guidance from the sub-district office and the experience of local designers. By the end of this festival, seven projects were finished while one is still paused due to a lack of support from the related bureau.

In summary, the government's work plan and policies offered a space and opportunity for the initiation of grassroots actions, highlighting the importance of micro-space regeneration. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Urban Design Festival could not be conducted without the backing of local authorities. From the perspective of local government, space regeneration projects within the Urban Design Festival are also the part of the pilot 15-Minute Community Life Circle programme because eight sites were selected from the list of potential projects. In this research (Chapter 7), two projects in the Urban Design Festival will be selected to introduce and analyse in detail.

5.6 Research methods and analysing data

5.6.1 Research methods

Aiming to interpret community resilience in the urban China context as well as to investigate the influence of community micro-regeneration in the three cases, multi-level policy analysis, semi-

structured interview, and participant observation were used as research methods. Data collection in cases started in May 2021 and ended in December 2021.

Multi-level policy analysis

This thesis employs critical policy analysis to examine the dominant narratives and meanings of policy, planning documents, and other texts relevant to the research. Documents include both municipal-level and district-level policies as well as project reviews. The multiple-level policy analysis provides a broad picture of government attitudes and strategies in terms of historical community development and micro-regeneration, paving the way to answer the first research question.

Policy analysis is embedded in text analysis. The social sciences are increasingly using language analysis to conduct empirical social life investigations (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Silverman, 2004). Language has a significant role within social science, and approaches such as 'textual' and 'discourse' analysis emphasise the importance of the words and phrases used in the utilisation of language (Delyser et al., 2010). Discourse and textual analysis both give us a deeper understanding of the process by which 'truth' becomes embodied and enacted in a conversation. In reviewing the merits and demerits of discourse analysis, Philips and Hardy (2002) emphasise that textual analysis is crucial when it comes to understanding the relationship between texts and the production, dissemination, and reception of texts. This view stresses that discourse and textual analysis is fundamentally about understanding the interaction between language and social reality.

I accessed documents mainly in three ways. First, through the online platform open to the public for consultation by governments. Second, through the BMPDI, which produced the *Conservation Plan for the Dongsinan Historical District*. As for the second case in Beijing and the Shanghai case, many materials were published online by the NGO and social media. These three channels complemented each other, helping me to gain access to most of the necessary official and unofficial documents in study areas. My working experience in cases benefited my identification of related and useful policies. All policies referenced in this thesis are public and without conflicts. Specifically, materials published by NGO are used as secondary data to explore the support that the projects receive from governments and to identify how the projects follow official requirements and conduct state-led co-production.

Semi-structured interviews

This research employs semi-structured interviews with predetermined topics to guide conversation with stakeholders, allowing new questions and insights to evolve during discussion (Pretty et al., 1995). The creation of discussion topics emerged from the analysis of project outcomes and the policy reviews. The adoption of predetermined topics in informal conversation encourages informants to shape the questions, resulting in the co-production of data between the interviewer and interviewee (Heyl, 2001; Longhurst, 2009). Despite the use of guide questions, the interviews were conversational, purposeful, and open-ended. Before stepping into the field, pilot interviews were conducted online to test the interviewees' responses to questions and to enhance my knowledge of the breadth and depth of the topic. The interviewees included residents, representatives in community-based NGOs, policy-makers and planners in the government, clerks in Residents' Committees, designers, and researchers from universities. The goal was to understand how aspects of community resilience are demonstrated in their lives from the perspective of residents and community-based NGOs, and from the government, designers, and researchers, to understand the demonstration and meaning of community resilience. The interviews were recorded in the form of recordings and transcripts with the interviewees' permission. Both recordings and transcripts were used as data in the following analysis. In situations where the interviewees preferred not to be recorded, notes were taken of the main points they made.

Researchers can benefit greatly from in-depth interviews because they can gather detailed insights into and information about a particular topic from fewer but thoroughly interviewed informants (Denscombe, 2001). The semi-structured interviewing technique with open-ended questions was used since it is flexible and in-depth, and allows for more comprehensive facts to be gathered during interviews with key stakeholders (Gillham, 2005). The aim of choosing semi-structured interview over structured interviews was to facilitate discussions that go beyond the written questions, enabling issues that arose during the interview to be explored fully and honestly.

Participant observation

In this research, participant observation was employed to observe and understand the involvement and experiences of participants in micro-regeneration projects. Observations are conducted on different activities with different stakeholders at single sites. For ongoing activities, such as the *hutong* case in Beijing and the Shanghai case, the observations aim to record the

implementation of activities, behaviours of organisers and participants, interactions between different actors, and the researcher's own reflections. For cases that has finished, such as the *Keyu* community and finished projects in Shanghai, the observation aims to record the utilisation of the space and infrastructure, the governance and maintenance of the sites, and potential activities that occur there. The results of this stage are documented in field notes that include text and photographs. By combining the observations with interviews, the research gains a more comprehensive understanding of the micro-regeneration projects and the experiences of the participants.

Participatory observation is an important tool of data collection in the social sciences, which, along with other methods, helps to illuminate, unpack, and understand the nature of daily activities (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). Moreover, observers not only record what happened (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994) but also their own actions, questions and reflections (Emerson et al., 2011). Undeniably, participant observation asks for in-depth and continuous fieldwork guided by the "principles of systematic, intensive collection and interpretation of field data to a level of complexity unknown before" (Firth, 1985, p. 30). By observing the behaviours and activities of people and engaging in the daily lives of respondents, researchers can gather abundant information, emphasising everyday interactions and observations rather than directed inquiries about specific behaviours (Grills, 1998). This particular approach allows for the flexibility of relationships between researcher and observer, depending on the degree of researcher's engagement, such as an observer as a participant and a full observer (Junker, 1952).

5.6.2 Analysing data

The process of data analysis starts with policy analysis. Initially, policies in terms of stock-based planning, urban regeneration, micro-regeneration and community planning were discussed (see Chapter 4) to identify the sustainability-oriented or resilience-oriented shifts of higher-level guidance. Next, each case was examined through local policies review (see Chapters 6 and 7). The policies of the municipal level authorities were given priority while analysing each case such as the *Beijing City Master Plan (2016-2035)* and the *Ordinance on Beijing Urban and Rural Planning*, since the policies at this level serve as guidance for the action of district and sub-district offices. By effectively summarising and emphasising key concepts and ideas present in policies issued over a period of time, the analysis can accurately trace the trajectory of policy direction in terms of promoting sustainability and resilience. This analytical process helps to identify patterns and trends in policy-making, shedding light on the evolution of sustainable and

resilient policies over time. Tables 6.1 and 7.1 are used to demonstrate the extraction of pertinent information and the examination of policy language and intent, providing valuable insights into how urban regeneration approaches have changed or evolved over time.

Interview analysis typically begins with creating transcripts, which are then reviewed, coded, and interpreted to identify key concepts and ideas. In this particular study, the interview analysis was conducted in Chinese to ensure the accuracy of discourse analysis. The process involved reading the data literally and reflectively, as described by Mason (2002). The first step was to conduct open coding, which involved going through each transcript sentence-by-sentence in NVivo software and using one word or phrase to note the idea of the sentence (Figure 5.10). This process was designed to identify the ideas generated from the interviewees and was conducted during the fieldwork phase. After completing the open coding, the notes were revisited to summarise and extract key concepts. Then, by comparing different transcripts, indicators, such as “social networks” were extracted and coded under specific attributes, such as “social capital building”. This iterative process continued until no new ideas could be found. To validate the initial findings and ensure the accuracy of the analysis, the draft of indicators and their explanation was taken back to several interviewees to check if the key had been correctly extracted and understood. During the writing-up stage, important quotations were chosen to be translated from Chinese to facilitate understanding for English-speaking audiences. Overall, this methodical approach to interview analysis allowed me to identify and interpret key concepts and ideas accurately and effectively.

The process of analysing field notes generated from observation follows similar steps to that of interview analysis. The first step is to transcribe the field notes into a format that can be easily read and analysed. In this study, the handwritten notes taken during in-place observation were transcribed into word documents. Once the field notes have been transcribed, they are carefully read through and coded. For instance, in this study, it was observed that training is necessary for participatory community regeneration, and it was assigned the code 'necessary training'. After coding, relationships between the codes are identified, and appropriate indicators and attributes are determined. In this study, the code 'necessary training' was allocated to the 'social learning' indicator, which falls under the 'adaptive capacity' attribute. The process of analysing field notes is iterative, and coding can be revisited and refined as the analysis progresses.

The research methods used in this study are complementary in nature. Policy review provides a broader context and understanding of resilience imperative, micro-regeneration strategies and co-production trends in urban China. This information then informs the development of interview questions and participant observation protocols. By contrast, participant observation and interviews provide insight into the lived experiences of individuals and project organisations. This data is then used to inform the development of recommendations for policies and regulations. Semi-structured interviews are used to explore and clarify issues that arise from policy review or participant observation. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, a triangulation approach is used, which includes semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and revisiting interviewees. By combining and cross-checking data from multiple sources, the research can be strengthened and the findings can be more robust.

Additionally, this research utilises a mixed-methods analysis that combines deductive and inductive approaches. The conceptual scheme used is the six attributes framework, which is used deductively to interpret the data as the first step. As soon as the data analysis process begins, these factors are reviewed and re-illustrated to ensure their compatibility with the raw information of this study. Following this stage, the study proceeds to a detailed evaluation of processes, organisations and outcomes of the community micro-regeneration programmes. The next step involves using the inductive approach to explore *“how to resituate community resilience in the context of micro-regeneration”* through the grounded theory method. The grounded theory is a method that involves a “systematic process of theory-building” through the “constant comparative analysis”, aiming to explain ‘action, interaction or process on a topic’ (Charmaz, 2011, p. 396). As this research intends to investigate and understand the interpretation of community resilience with specific concepts in the context of the micro-regeneration practice of historical communities, grounded theory is used as it can interpret and explain this process when there is a lack of a pertinent theory (Creswell and Clark, 2017).

| Name | Files | References | Created on | Created by | Modified on | Modified by |
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| ○ build the context for MR gradually | 1 | 1 | 11/01/2022 02:22 | JTF | 11/01/2022 02:22 | JTF |
| ○ build trust between multiple stakeholders | 1 | 1 | 10/01/2022 09:31 | JTF | 10/01/2022 09:32 | JTF |
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| ○ connection between top-down tasks and bottom-up requirements | 1 | 2 | 10/01/2022 07:17 | JTF | 10/01/2022 07:19 | JTF |
| ○ criteria of site selection (inclusiveness) | 1 | 4 | 11/01/2022 02:34 | JTF | 11/01/2022 02:35 | JTF |
| ○ decision-making | 1 | 3 | 11/01/2022 03:11 | JTF | 11/01/2022 03:15 | JTF |
| ○ deliver skill training to residents | 1 | 1 | 11/01/2022 02:31 | JTF | 11/01/2022 02:31 | JTF |
| ○ financial | 0 | 0 | 11/01/2022 08:06 | JTF | 11/01/2022 08:21 | JTF |
| ○ government's fundamental thinking has not been changed | 1 | 1 | 10/01/2022 08:54 | JTF | 11/01/2022 03:55 | JTF |
| ○ influence on residents' spontaneity and initiative | 0 | 0 | 10/01/2022 09:06 | JTF | 10/01/2022 09:06 | JTF |
| ○ influence on the local authority | 1 | 1 | 11/01/2022 06:19 | JTF | 11/01/2022 06:20 | JTF |
| ○ innovation of the governance | 0 | 0 | 11/01/2022 09:48 | JTF | 11/01/2022 09:48 | JTF |
| ○ integration between top-down and bottom-up | 2 | 3 | 10/01/2022 07:57 | JTF | 11/01/2022 02:56 | JTF |
| ○ limitation of micro-space projects | 1 | 1 | 10/01/2022 09:33 | JTF | 10/01/2022 09:33 | JTF |
| ○ local (bottom) need to know orientation from the top | 1 | 2 | 10/01/2022 07:18 | JTF | 10/01/2022 07:19 | JTF |
| ○ make the project outcome visible (to government before getting their support) | 1 | 2 | 11/01/2022 07:23 | JTF | 11/01/2022 07:24 | JTF |
| ○ management of the platform - NGO to local government | 1 | 1 | 10/01/2022 07:24 | JTF | 10/01/2022 07:25 | JTF |
| ○ mechanism change (resource integration and use) | 0 | 0 | 10/01/2022 09:12 | JTF | 10/01/2022 09:17 | JTF |
| ○ NGO as a key node to connect | 2 | 5 | 10/01/2022 09:09 | JTF | 11/01/2022 14:12 | JTF |
| ○ physical improvement | 1 | 2 | 11/01/2022 07:11 | JTF | 11/01/2022 07:11 | JTF |
| ○ provide opportunities to designers | 1 | 1 | 10/01/2022 09:30 | JTF | 11/01/2022 03:54 | JTF |

| Name | Files | References | Created on | Created by | Modified on | Modified by |
|----------------|-------|------------|------------------|------------|------------------|-------------|
| ○ 不同主体间的张力 | 1 | 4 | 06/05/2022 10:40 | JTF | 06/05/2022 10:42 | JTF |
| ○ 不同人群间的壁垒 | 1 | 2 | 06/05/2022 09:39 | JTF | 06/05/2022 09:40 | JTF |
| ○ 专业的人需要洞察问题本身 | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 10:31 | JTF | 09/05/2022 10:31 | JTF |
| ○ 专业组织很重要 | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 10:00 | JTF | 09/05/2022 10:00 | JTF |
| ○ 专业者突破壁垒链接资源 | 1 | 1 | 10/05/2022 04:25 | JTF | 10/05/2022 04:25 | JTF |
| ○ 专业陪伴 | 1 | 1 | 06/05/2022 07:54 | JTF | 06/05/2022 07:54 | JTF |
| ○ 两个项目 | 0 | 0 | 05/05/2022 08:30 | JTF | 05/05/2022 08:30 | JTF |
| ○ 主体 | 8 | 24 | 10/05/2022 09:31 | JTF | 10/05/2022 09:31 | JTF |
| ○ 主体能力 互信 共识 | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 03:49 | JTF | 09/05/2022 03:49 | JTF |
| ○ 主体性 | 5 | 9 | 05/05/2022 08:22 | JTF | 09/05/2022 09:35 | JTF |
| ○ 主体-桥梁和长效支撑 | 2 | 3 | 07/05/2022 09:04 | JTF | 09/05/2022 03:43 | JTF |
| ○ 主动参与-agency | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 08:47 | JTF | 09/05/2022 08:47 | JTF |
| ○ 互助网络 | 1 | 1 | 05/05/2022 08:18 | JTF | 05/05/2022 08:18 | JTF |
| ○ 人地 资源挖掘 | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 08:43 | JTF | 09/05/2022 08:43 | JTF |
| ○ 人与公共事务的关系 | 1 | 1 | 07/05/2022 09:21 | JTF | 07/05/2022 09:21 | JTF |
| ○ 人与空间的对接关系 | 1 | 2 | 09/05/2022 08:01 | JTF | 09/05/2022 08:01 | JTF |
| ○ 人才储备 为规划赋能 | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 08:46 | JTF | 09/05/2022 08:46 | JTF |
| ○ 人的网络也是资源 | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 09:43 | JTF | 09/05/2022 09:43 | JTF |
| ○ 人的营造为内核 | 1 | 1 | 07/05/2022 07:21 | JTF | 07/05/2022 07:21 | JTF |
| ○ 人的需求为导向 | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 08:40 | JTF | 09/05/2022 08:40 | JTF |
| ○ 人群的汇聚 | 1 | 1 | 05/05/2022 09:43 | JTF | 05/05/2022 09:43 | JTF |
| ○ 人际网络的构建 | 1 | 1 | 05/05/2022 08:48 | JTF | 05/05/2022 08:48 | JTF |
| ○ 什么是公共 | 1 | 4 | 07/05/2022 07:22 | JTF | 07/05/2022 07:32 | JTF |
| ○ 价值观-scaling | 1 | 1 | 09/05/2022 09:44 | JTF | 09/05/2022 09:44 | JTF |

Figure 5.10 Examples of coding using Nvivo (Author, 2023)

5.7 Case study process

As previously mentioned, this research conducted case studies in both Beijing and Shanghai. In this section, I explain the case study process based on two phases. Phase one refers to the online interview and fieldwork in Beijing, while phase two refers to the subsequent research in Shanghai and following analysis.

5.7.1 Research phase 1

Before conducting fieldwork, a review of laws and regulations related to stock-based planning and urban regeneration was carried out in order to understand the question 'What are the existing strategies/policies implying resilient community regeneration orientation?' Then, focusing on the city level of Beijing, relevance policies were reviewed to map the guidance and value of micro-regeneration practices in the capital city, which was also tested in the interviews in the first phase of fieldwork and used to conduct interviews. The cases selected for investigation were briefly investigated to gather background information on the organisation, which also helped to formulate interview questions. Because of the influence of Covid-19, interviews were initially conducted online. During this stage, it was determined that studying practices in an old urban community, rather than only in historical areas (the *hutong* district), was meaningful as well, as discussed in section 5.4.1.

Data analysis began immediately after data collection. Inductive analysis allows researchers to explore new ideas derived from the data rather than relying on pre-existing frameworks. As mentioned before, sentence-by-sentence coding was therefore applied to interview transcripts. For example, an interview piece with a planner: *'I think the planner's role will change in the future. In the past, planners drew land use plans. But now, planners are wandering about the streets and chatting with residents'* was classified as 'planners' experience and understanding about micro-regeneration'. The code 'planners' experience and learning' was developed for this statement, which was further developed in later interviews with planners, researchers and other stakeholders. Responses like 'improve communication skills', 'become the platform to link resources and requirements' and 'translate policies to grassroots' were grouped into the code of 'planners' experience and learning'. Similarly, other initial codes were constantly developed such as 'collaboration between top and bottom' and 'building trust between government and grassroots'.

During my fieldwork, I conducted interviews with planners, officials, residents and committee staff. Most interviewees were introduced by planners who I knew from previous work experience and from university. An appropriate name for this strategy would be “snowballing” or “chain referral sampling” (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). The interviewees felt more relaxed when referred to me by friends or acquaintances, as well as being able to share more in the interview than if no referral was made. In addition to snowballing, I also interviewed people that I met in workshops or activities on the site, those who are willing to share more information after the events. Table 5.2 below is a summary of data type and amount collected in Beijing.

Table 5.2 Data collected in Beijing (Author, 2023)

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| CYM PROGRAMME | Interviews: 30 | Designers/Planners: 4 (Wang+Wang+Hou+Zhao) |
| | | NGO: 2 (Liu+Guo) |
| | | Local authority: 2 (Zhao+Li) |
| | | Residents: 18 (Garden 12 + Courtyard 6) |
| | | Academia: 3 (Liu+ Qian+Li) |
| | | Community-based business: 1 |
| | | |
| | Participatory observation: 10 days | Workshops: 2 |
| | Programme summary book/report: 2 | 1 book + 1 report |
| | Beijing policy documents: 6 | 6 policies |
| | | |
| ZGC PROJECT | Interviews: 33 | Designer: 1 |
| | | Local authority: 2 |
| | | Residents: 30 |
| | | |
| | Observation: 6 days | |
| | News report: 3 | 3 News |

Apart from conducting interviews, I also conducted participant observation mainly during workshops, meetings and building activities. My role in these activities was as a volunteer, which enabled me to understand the schedule and organisation of activities, and to experience observation at close range. It is also in workshops and meetings where I learned more about precedents and realised how the implementation of particular policies at the local level varies significantly by region. Therefore, the first stage of fieldwork led me to the second phase of fieldwork in Shanghai.

5.7.2 Research phase 2

In the second phase of fieldwork, similar to the first, I conducted desk research before stepping into the field. I had the opportunity to work as a volunteer at *Dayu* Community Empowerment Association, which allowed me to observe their work and attend meetings and forums regarding micro-regeneration. Through snowballing again, I could interview planners, designers, residents and officials in the programme. Table 5.3 provides a summary of the data collected in Shanghai.

Table 5.3 Data collected in Shanghai (Author, 2023)

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| XHL PROGRAMME | Interviews: 13 | Designers/planners (NGO): 4 (Wu+He+Jin+Wang) |
| | | Local authority: 1 |
| | | Residents: 8 |
| | | |
| | Participatory observation: 15 days | Workshops: 2, Festival: 1, Forum: 1 |
| | News report: 9 | 9 News |
| | Shanghai policy documents: 7 | 7 policies relating to micro-regeneration |

Initial coding was conducted as soon as the second stage of data collection commenced. After finishing initial coding for all cases, focused coding began, which involves selecting the most important or commonly used codes to “sift through large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). It was during this stage that more conceptual, directed and chosen codes were identified, whereas the comparison of codes and data revealed some unexpected concepts and ideas. For instance, the observation 'transformation of subjectivity' was suggested to conceptualise the shifts of subjects in community planning, especially the co-productive micro-regeneration practices. More specific codes, such as 'subjective role of residents,' 'subject's capacity and awareness improvement,' and 'shift of conventional planning pattern,' were developed by comparing all cases. Then, these indicators were classified into the attribute 'transformation'. 'Transformation of subjectivity' explained the tactics micro-regeneration used in empowering local residents and balancing the roles of 'elites' and 'grassroots'. In this research, concepts such as 'transformation of subjectivity', 'capacity-building and agency', 'scaling up' were developed to explain the shifts and sometimes contradictory practises encountered in micro-regeneration implementations.

Confronted with extensive amounts of coding and memos, the next step was to compare the data and identify links, which could lead to formulating conjectures or hypotheses regarding the shift in the community resilience framework mentioned in Chapter 2. The connections were

established by bringing all attributes and indicators together. For instance, tight and abundant 'social connectivity' is the insurance of 'availability of human resources', which implies that connectivity and resourcefulness cannot be split and understood in isolation. The aim of the comparison between cases and attributes is to better understand the impact of micro-regeneration through the lens of community resilience. More importantly, community resilience should not be explained through simple attribute separation. On the contrary, it needs to be interrogated systematically, which delivers its performance through system transformation.

5.8 A reflection on methodology

5.8.1 Accessibility and research ethics

In exploring projects and sites, a co-productive research approach is used. I chose to focus on the practices of stakeholders with a role in fostering community resilience during urban regeneration projects in historic districts and on how to locate resilience discourse in a specific context. As such, a co-productive framework is useful because it generates 'data that are more representative of community needs; and increased opportunities for local capacity building and empowerment' (Guta et al., 2013). Co-producing research allows for democratising knowledge production (Horner, 2016) and helps produce new knowledge that is in alignment with the expectations, requirements, and values of a specific society (Xavier Grau et al., 2017).

From an epistemological perspective, co-productive research provides me with a mechanism for the double-checking process with the stakeholders involved. As an external observer with limited knowledge or some preconceptions to some extent, co-productive research helps me to gather knowledge which "is shaped by the social, political, and policy environment in which it is situated" (Flinders et al., 2015, p. 265). This research approach empowers participants by giving them tools to decide the desired outcome of the research. Moreover, co-productive research in this thesis could align knowledge with the expectations, needs and values of modern society in China (Grau et al., 2017), making the outcomes a tool for helping stakeholders rather than harm them.

In terms of the fieldwork and analysis process, conducting ethical research requires us to avoid behaviours and actions considered to be wrong (Hay, 2003), which takes the idea that research participants should not be harmed in any way (Gray, 2004). Informed consent should always be

a part of the research process, meaning that participants are given a full explanation of the research purpose and how their information will be used (Bell, 2010). Therefore, participants' private information will be protected by using pseudonyms and storing all data safely.

5.8.2 Translation

The data had to be translated because the interviews were conducted in Chinese. Müller (2007) asserts that translation is a political, intricate, and subjective process that gives the translator the duty to interpret and translate meanings from one context to another as well as convey the cultural and social connotations of practises, viewpoints, and ideas. Bearing this in mind, this research has taken into account the complexities of the many social and cultural connotations ingrained in the words and attitudes of practitioners in China. According to Crane, Lombard, and Tenz (2009), I have tried to create a broader insight into distinct cultural understandings of ideas, as well as retain an awareness of the varying connotations of different words. I also made an effort to preserve the logical integrity of the respondents' ideas by recognising the underlying connotations of words. To ensure the accuracy of data analysis to the largest extent possible, translation was conducted after policy review and transcript analysis.

Translating from Chinese to English poses various challenges. Firstly, the translator must first determine which of the words 'it,' 'she,' and 'he,' the interviewee truly means in the dialogue because they are all the same in Chinese. Secondly, Chinese sentences are typically shorter than English ones after translation, and some metaphors may be challenging to comprehend in English. Therefore, to provide the most appropriate translation rather than a direct one, the translator must refer back to the context. In my translation process, I used square brackets [] to include missing parts of the text and in quotation marks ' ' to indicate metaphors. For example:

Planners and organisers need to be a kind of 'medium' [within the project]. We need to know residents' requirements and what the 'pain points' are. When initiating projects, we also have to master communication skills. Because traditionally, residents may not think those [the regeneration or governance of spaces] are their businesses. So we need to motivate residents to pay attention to public affairs [in their lives].

Finally, there is no clear tense for verbs in Chinese, which posed an issue for this research as it focused on the impact of implemented or finished micro-regeneration projects on community

resilience over time. To address this issue, I provided a historical introduction of completed projects and used a timeline to aid understanding.

5.8.3 The limitations of the methodology of this research

The high-level issue is the limitation of case selection. Although I have added Shanghai cases in the second phase of my research, I must admit that selected cases in Beijing and Shanghai cannot represent all types of micro-regeneration mechanisms in China. Practices in other cities such as Shenzhen and Chengdu have their own organisational experience and deserve in-depth exploration as well. Despite this, my personal experience and network in Beijing and Shanghai ensured the successful conduction of my fieldwork and data collection. Furthermore, three case studies in this research allowed me to interrogate the process and impact of the practice in detail and depth.

Secondly, using interviews as a methodology raises some practical concerns, especially regarding the content of the interviews according to the interviewee's professional status and power. The possibility that people in privileged positions might lead the interview was something I considered when interviewing them. Government officials always recite public rhetoric during interviews for this study rather than disclose personal views or providing an account of their experiences.

Lastly, there is a concern about potential difficulties with cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication. According to Michaud, et al. (2001) and Redmond (2003), researchers from English language countries are increasingly conducting bodies of research with non-English-speaking subjects which, in turn, raises ethical considerations in terms of accurate translation and interpretation. As I discussed in the preceding section, as a bilingual researcher-translator, I tried my best to interpret as closely as possible when conducting any research. Notably, cultural translation is an important part of this research. Beyond translating transcripts, I aim to bridge different cultural, policy and practice frameworks regarding resilience discourse research, which is an added value and a contribution to knowledge that this research makes.

5.9 Summary

In this chapter introduces the research design, including the research questions, the research philosophy, case selection and introductions, data collection and analysis approach, and the

critical reflection. In doing so, it has highlighted the importance of engaging with research paradigms to offer fundamental guidance and structure for the content and conduct of the research. The research design was described with reference to the conceptual framework and the ways in which the research objectives and questions underpinned by both ontological and epistemological orthodoxies were explained. The following chapters offer more detailed insights into the case study location and policy, and present the detailed research findings which have emerged from the robust and rigorous approach to data collection and analysis.

Chapter 6. Case Studies in Beijing

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to answer the research questions: 1) What are the words and indicators that help to understand community resilience in the context of community micro-regeneration in urban China? 2) How do micro-regeneration strategies enable and constrain community resilience through practices and research? Following the seven steps of evaluating RTP mentioned in Chapter 2, this chapter starts with a justification for the selection of the case study areas in Beijing based on a review of general profile data (such as location and population size) and an identification of the territorial issues. It then provides a detailed introduction of Beijing-related planning policy, which implies and responds to the imperative of resilience. The chapter then maps the stories of the programme and project design as well as the implementation, which are guided and supported by reviewed policies. This chapter aims to evaluate three attributes of the initial community resilience framework, which were selected because they are particularly relevant to the Beijing cases. The first attribute, *capital building*, is relevant because the cases reveal that social networks, general trust, and place attachment are important to facilitate community cohesion in heritage communities such as *hutong* areas, which is crucial for a community's sustainable development. The second attribute, *adaptability*, is appropriate in that social learning, adaptive planning system and self-governance help the heritage community adapt to various changes, such as in residents' needs and requirements for governance capacity improvement from central government. The third attribute, *collaboration*, is applicable since the integration between government support and grassroots motivation is vital to promote urban development in China, and this kind of collaboration has strong Chinese features. The analysis will be developed by combining findings from in-depth interviews with different key stakeholders and participant observation, using site drawings and photographs as evidence. In doing so, the analysis also informs the connotation of each attribute of resilience and contributes to the articulation of resilience theory, especially by adding indicators to the explanation of resilience attributes in the context of urban China.

6.2 Beijing: The city of political privilege

Beijing, the capital city of the People's Republic of China, is located in northern China (Figure 6.1). With a construction history dating back 3,000 years, it served as the capital of five dynasties for more than 860 years. Today's Beijing was built upon and expanded from the old city left by the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The urban area occupied 16,410 square kilometres and has a population of 21.89 million (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). It has 14 districts and 2 counties, but the population densities vary significantly (Figure 6.2).



Figure 6.1 Location of Beijing (Author, 2023)

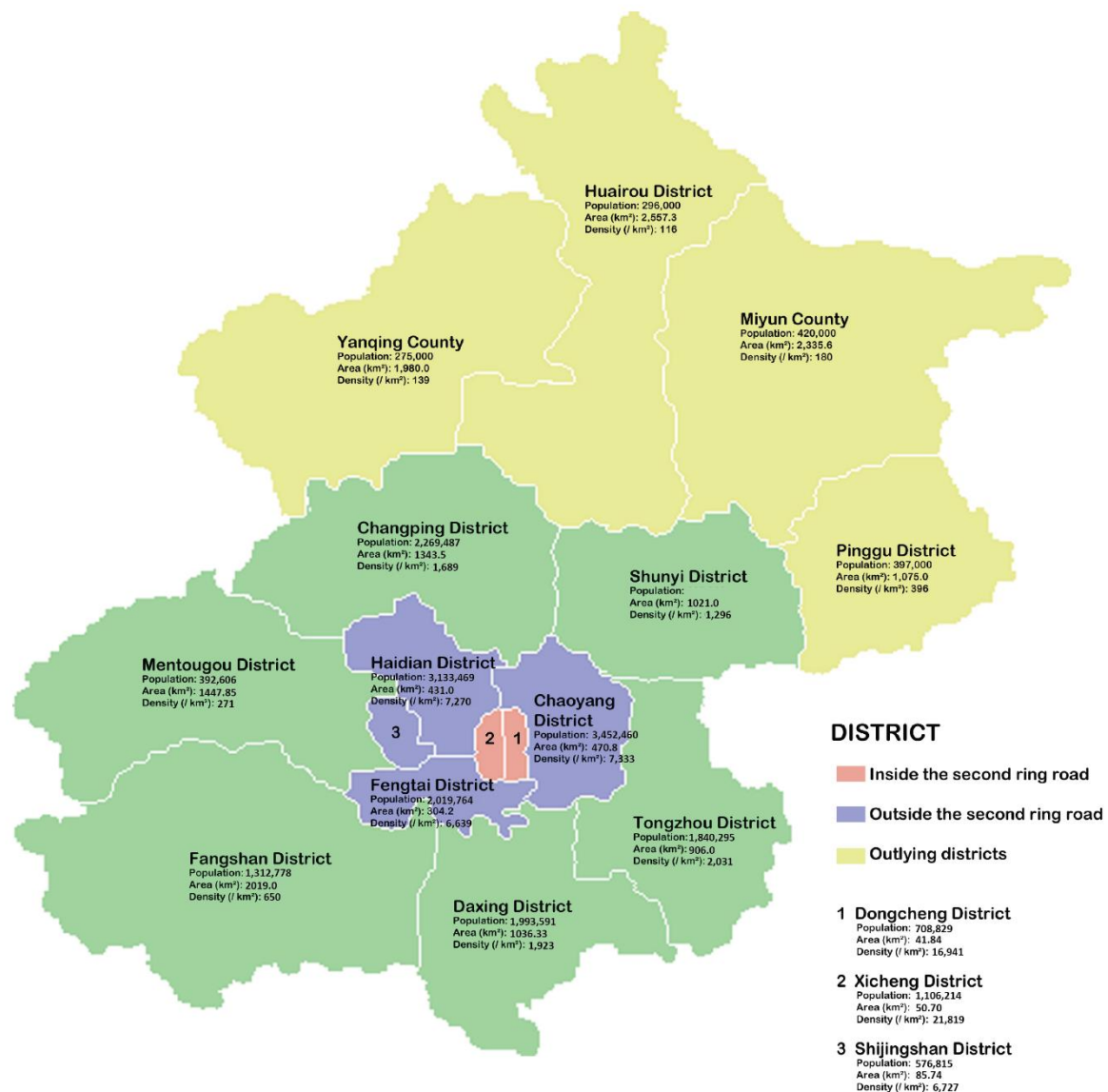


Figure 6.2 Districts and densities of Beijing (Author, 2023)

Based on the Beijing City Master Plan (2016-2035), Beijing is positioned as the national political, cultural, international exchange, and technological innovation centre, highlighting the plans to strengthen the functions of ‘the four centres’ according to the official statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2020, Beijing’s annual gross domestic product (GDP) was 3,610.255 billion RMB (401.2 billion GBP), a 9 percent increase compared to 2018. The total financial income of the municipal government was 581.7 billion RMB (69.92 billion GBP), with a budgetary defray for urban and village community affairs of 107.5 billion RMB (12.92 billion GBP) in 2019.

Beijing, as the capital city, is embedded in the specific function of capital, which refers to the functions undertaken by the capital city to ensure that the central state organs carry out government affairs and international exchange, provide safe and orderly urban operation conditions, and adapt to the needs of work, infrastructure and related services. In essence, the capital function is the function of providing guarantees and services for the central government by the local government of the capital city. Public administration researcher Liu (2011) identifies several characteristics of China's capital system. Firstly, the Beijing municipal government has full jurisdiction, which is a political privilege (Hsing, 2010). Secondly, Beijing has established institutions to coordinate the relationship between local and central governments. For example, Capital Planning and Construction Committee is the deliberation and coordination institution set up by the State Council, responsible for coordinating significant events, such as the Olympics and the National Day ceremony. Members in this institution include leaders or heads from both the local and central government and departments. Thirdly, the awareness of the capital city, including the awareness of service and the awareness of being the best (Peng, 2000), has permeated the working state of government and the living state of residents. The awareness of service can be summarised as the 'four services' principle⁶ which is a general awareness of the Beijing citizens with the concept of the bigger picture and an overall perspective. As for the awareness of being the best, it implies that Beijing should strive to excel in most aspects, including urban development and governance. Finally, major decisions regarding capital city planning and construction management are often characterised by the Golden Mean⁷ (*Zhong-yong* 中庸 in Chinese). To maintain stability and social harmony in the capital, important decisions often take a moderate approach, neither radical nor conservative. All measures to reform the policy process that may pose risks and face strong opposition from some aspects are put on hold as they are not conducive to stability. However, management problems are often deferred until the last resort, resulting in less forward-looking decisions. Finally, the management system of Beijing is often viewed as an advanced practice, and a 'direction marker' for the central government, with many other cities looking to learn from it. However, the system's uniqueness as a capital city and a developed city in China means that it cannot be copied directly (Liu, 2011).

⁶ 'Four services' principle means serving the work of the leading organs of the Central Party, government and military, serving the country's international exchanges, serving the development of science and technology and education, and serving the improvement of people's lives.

⁷ It refers to a concept in Confucian philosophy that emphasizes the importance of moderation, balance, and harmony in all aspects of life. According to the Golden Mean, the ideal state is one of equilibrium and harmony, where individuals maintain a balance between their desires and responsibilities, their relationships with others, and their relationship with the natural world. This involves avoiding extremes of behaviour and emotion and striving to find a middle ground that is both ethical and practical.

The Old City of Beijing, which occupies 62.5 km² within the second ring road, is the core and symbol of urban development due to its historical and cultural features. Architects Rasmussen (1969) and Bacon (1974) heaped praise on the pre-eminence of the Old City in their publications. Based on the three Beijing Historical and Cultural Areas Conservation Plans, there are 43 sites in the list of conservation areas, of which 33 are located within the Old City. Therefore, Beijing is not only an important political centre in China, but also possesses great historical and cultural significance.

6.3 Policies relating to community regeneration

As previously stated, Beijing is usually viewed as a pioneer and precedent regarding urban development. In this view, the municipal government, and urban development-related bureaus and departments in Beijing, have issued several policies involving community regeneration. For residential historical districts, there are specific conservation plans, while in terms of old urban communities, there are more universal policies guiding the practices. The context of urban regeneration in Beijing is featured in three aspects: the scale, the quality and the approach. As reviewed in Chapter 4, many metropolitan cities in China have stepped into the era of stock-based planning. Based on this, *Beijing City Master Plan (2016-2035)* further puts forward a reduction plan, which aims to reduce the size of cities and improve land-use efficiency. The plan highlights development towards high-quality, raising the threshold for project application and implementation. By emphasising organic and gradual regeneration, urban renewal in Beijing underlines the reduction of major demolition and construction. In 2021, MOHURD released the *Notice on Preventing Major Demolition and Construction Within Urban Regeneration Actions*, emphasising the transformation of urban development modes, stating that urban regeneration should be based on reservation, utilisation and improvement. As the capital city, the director of Beijing Municipal Commission of Planning and Natural Resources (BMCPNR) stated, Beijing will insist on a reduction plan and micro-scale, gradual and sustainable urban regeneration to ameliorate environmental conditions over the next five years. For example, in the regeneration of old urban communities, plans and projects endeavours to add more infrastructure and optimise public spaces. In the regeneration of historical areas, such as the *hutong-siheyuan*, attention has been paid to 'every single brick and tile', to maintain the city's memory and history (Zhang in Beijing Evening News, 2022).

Following the blueprint and general guidance of urban regeneration mentioned above, in 2020, the Beijing People's Congress passed the *Ordinance on Beijing Urban and Rural Planning*, emphasising the need to control the 'metropolitan disease' (*da-cheng-shi-bing* 大城市病 in Chinese) and achieve sustainable development by protecting Beijing's history, improving public participation mechanisms, and promoting urban regeneration in a unite of 'block' (*Jie-qu* 街区 in Chinese). Then, the People's Government of Beijing Municipality (PGBM) released the *Guidance on Urban Regeneration Implementation* (PGBM, 2021, p. 10), which outlined four principles for urban regeneration, which are 1) leading by planning and giving priority to people's livelihoods, 2) promoting by the government and operating by the market, 3) insisting on public participation, co-production and benefit-sharing, and 4) piloting projects in an orderly fashion. Here, Beijing adopts the approach of implementing urban regeneration in sub-districts. By establishing the sub-district regeneration system, urban regeneration in Beijing accentuates both physical renewal and precision governance. Tangible urban regeneration projects are anchored at the sub-district level. Precision governance is featured by local authorities as promoters, regeneration projects as the approach, and planners as the bond to identify people's real needs precisely and enhance local governance capacity.

Regarding residential areas, the BMCPNR ratified the *Suggestion on Old Communities Regeneration Actions* (BMCPNR, 2021), which advocates public participation, innovation, and investment of social capital. The document pointing out simplifying approval procedures regarding micro-regeneration projects which do not add building area. For the Old City, the BMCPNR promulgated the *Regulatory Plan of the Core Districts of the Capital (2018-2035)*, encouraging the redevelopment of underused micro spaces, advocating collaborative and refined governance, improved public infrastructure adaptability, constructing a sharable green space system by training residents and improving residents' sense of belonging (BMCPNR, 2020). At the same time, the operation of regeneration projects needs to comply with the *Regulations on Conservation of Beijing Historical and Cultural City (2021)*, in which Article 34 requires the local government to adopt and promote organic regeneration, aiming at the preservation of historical character buildings and fabric.

In terms of local government's work on community development and governance, the *Opinions on Strengthening the Work of Sub-district Offices in the New Era* published by the Beijing Municipal Government in 2019, clearly illustrated requirements for urban governance. The key theme of this document is to insist on co-production, co-governance and benefit-sharing. It

emphasises innovating the governance model and transforming governance thinking from a one-way top-down approach to a deliberative and collaborative governance approach among multiple shareholders. The document also encourages public participation and promoting community self-governance. In particular, it highlights ‘the city is built by people’ (*ren-min-cheng-shi-ren-min-jian* 人民城市人民建 in Chinese) and local government should allow third parties to participate in programmes.

Policies issued by Beijing municipal government and bureaus mirror a sustainability-orientated urban regeneration approach. The evolution of policies is consistent with the transformation of urban regeneration thinking discussed in Chapter 4, of a ‘demolish and rebuild approach’ (*da-chai-da-jian* 大拆大建 in Chinese) in the 1980s/90s to ‘preservation-oriented redevelopment’ (*bao-hu-xing-kai-fa* 保护性开发 in Chinese) in the 2000s, and then to the preservation and micro/incremental/subtle regeneration in 2010s/20s. This approach is embedded in China’s aspiration of sustainable and long-term development strategy, showing the hope to enhance the capacity of participatory community development at different levels. It reflects the rhetoric of reviving the outstanding traditional culture of the Chinese nation and the attempt to improve urbanisation practices. These policies aim to show that Chinese cities are not just the biggest but also among the best. Although these policies are relatively recent, they have been compiled over a long period, with sustainable development thinking permeating into the practices through interactions between policymakers and practitioners. In turn, pioneer practices such as the ones selected for this research, have profoundly influenced the policy-making process. Table 6.1 summarises key information on policies relating to micro-regeneration in Beijing.

Table 6.1 Policies regarding community regeneration in Beijing (Author, 2023)

| Policies | Overviews | Time |
|---|--|------|
| Report on the renovation of dilapidated buildings and the preservation of ancient capital features of Beijing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Put forward 'incremental regeneration' for the first time. | 2004 |
| Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Institutionalized the process of public participation in planning | 2007 |
| Guidance on Strengthening Ecological Restoration and Urban Repair Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Emphasised the regeneration of old urban community-increasing green space and sponge transformation communities. •Paid attention to traditional culture features preservation | 2017 |
| The Beijing Master Plan (2016-2035) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Announce increasing green space by utilising residual space. •Emphasised public participation and traditional culture preservation | 2017 |
| Notice on the regeneration of old residential communities in 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Proposed co-production between residents, NGOs, local authorities and others in participatory micro-regeneration projects. | 2019 |
| Implementation measures of Beijing delegated planner policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Advocated planners to integrate ideas of public participation and community building within works and to innovate social governance ways. | 2019 |
| China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The overall goal of the urban regeneration initiative is to build liveable, green, resilient, smart, and cultural cities, constantly improve the quality of urban living environment, people's living standards, and urban competitiveness, and blaze a path of urban development with Chinese characteristics. | 2020 |
| Beijing Urban Renewal Action Plan (2021-2025) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Beijing's urban renewal adheres to the new master plan and development realities, focusing on improving existing urban spaces rather than extensive demolition and construction. It promotes six types of renewal projects (i.e., siheyuan and old urban community) and aims to establish a self-renewal mechanism. | 2021 |
| Guidance on the implementation of urban regeneration in Beijing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Highlighted public participation and co-production as well as common sharing. •Encouraged market investment. Promoted government service provision. | 2021 |

6.4 Case of the Historical and Cultural Protection Area of Dongsinan (HCPAD)

Practices in the HCPAD have been ongoing for eight years now. Various actors within this programme initiated different projects during the period, including physical space regeneration projects such as the 'Our Courtyard' regeneration project, market regeneration, Micro Garden

Series project, and Shop window design. Additionally, there were intangible cultural projects such as community convention, Oral history recording project, and Community reading group. In this section, I have selected two projects to illustrate in detail, which are both co-producing practices and have influenced practices in other districts as well as policy-making.

6.4.1 Actors involved and their interactions

The implementation of projects in this programme, depends on the collaboration among multiple actors. ‘Multi-stakeholder governance’ (*duo-yuan-gong-zhi* 多元共治 in Chinese) has been a significant planning approach in community regeneration. This section illustrates the main actors involved in the case and their roles in the project implementation (Figure 6.3).

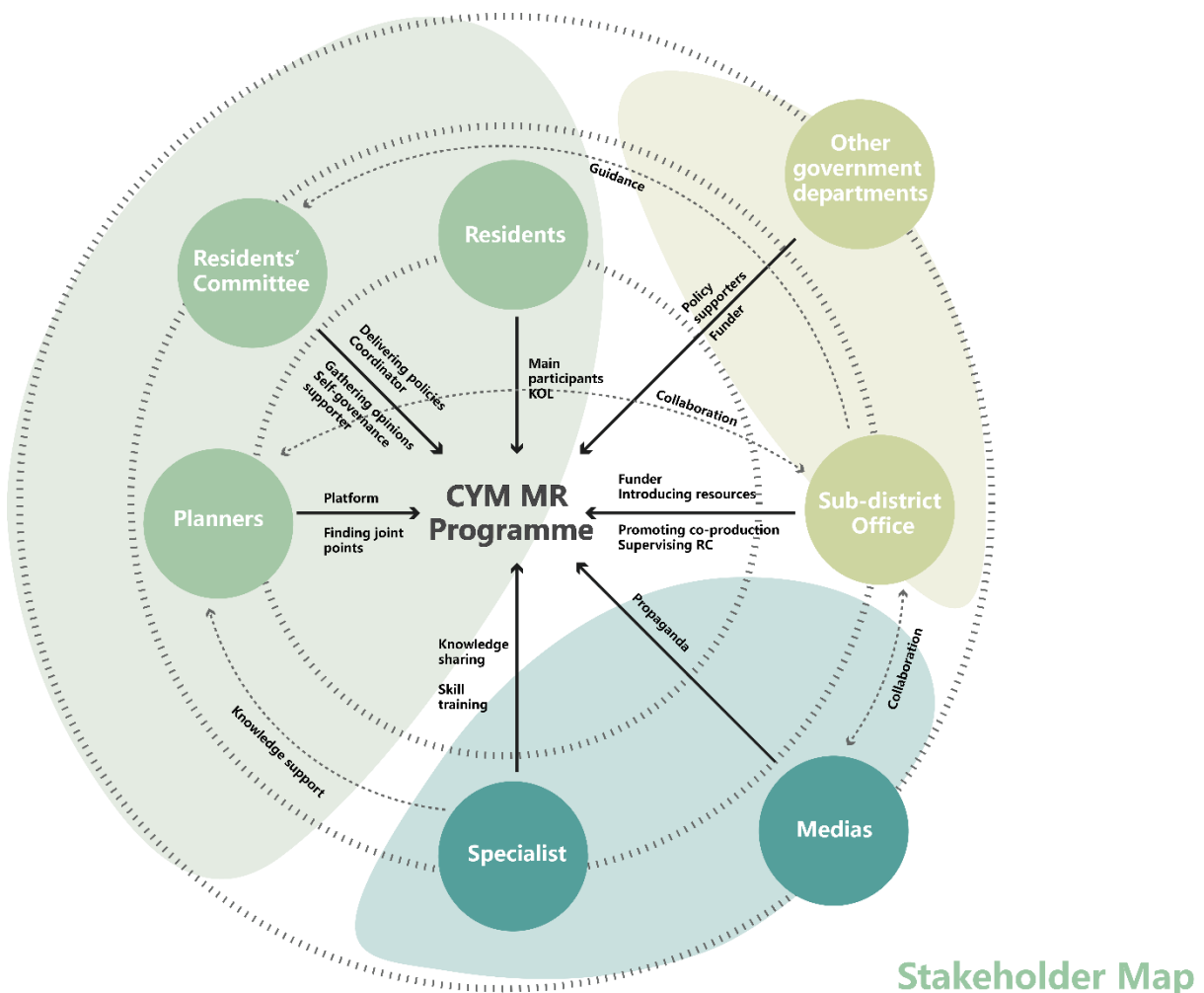


Figure 6.3 Stakeholders involved in the case (Author, 2023)

Local government - sub-district office

In this case, CYM sub-district office is the key actor. The cadres in local government, especially the vice director, promoted the establishment of cooperation. SHHPS, although as the NGO and coordinator in this programme, it still receives strong support and supervision from the local government. After establishing the DSN Governance Innovation Platform in 2018, both the president and director of the sub-district office attended regular platform meetings to meet with planners, local businesses, and organisations face to face, discussing potential projects directly and skipping the complex application procedure.

The leading character in the story of the local government was the vice director. He is recognised as a well-educated government official and was in charge of the cultural development of the sub-district. The vice director has interacted with some start-ups, introducing them to come into the area. These start-ups do not need to pay rent, and in return, they would provide services for the local residents as well as the government.

Specialists

In the process of incubation and implementation of projects, specialists were engaged. On the one hand, these specialists are interested in heritage preservation and community regeneration; while on the other hand, most of them have connections or previous collaboration experience with planners. When building the DSN Governance Innovation Platform, specialists' resource were one of the important elements embedded in the mechanism.

The roles of the specialist can be various. For example, when implementing the oral history recording project, two researchers were invited to three workshops to deliver training and feedback to participants. With their help, the project resulted in an oral history book that documents the history of this sub-district, which was published in 2019. Specialists can also initiate projects independently, with the support of the SHHPS. The Micro Garden Series is an example that began as a research exhibition and evolved into a garden rebuilding project on the ground, coordinated by SHHPS and the funding provided by the local government.

Local residents

In this case, the participation of ordinary people was mainly through expressing their opinions on regeneration and design schemes and taking part in the building process. Local residents are the main body responsible for preserving historical building in daily life. Therefore, knowledge

training and education for ordinary people is vital in this process. In this context, residents are the main participants of community-based workshops, lectures, and other promotional activities. Aimed at improving residents' self-governance capacity, project coordinators and planners always advocate and encourage residents to express their opinions on project organisation, design schemes, implementation and feedback. The key opinion leaders among the residents play a crucial role in projects. For example, in the courtyard regeneration project, several residents helped to coordinate the relationship between neighbours who live in the same courtyard, the time of construction and the communication between residents and planners, contributing to the successful implementation of the project.

Residents' Committee

As discussed in Chapter 3, the RC is identified as a self-governing organisation that represents the public interest in law, while paradoxically being controlled by the sub-district office in many circumstances. In this case, RC needs to deliver superior policies to residents, such as the requirements of 'Land vacated and reclaimed for greening' (*liu-bai-zeng-lv* 留白增绿 in Chinese) and 'co-production, co-governance and benefit-sharing'. At the same time, the RC is also expected to gather people's concerns and build a 'bridge' between residents and designers. With the help from the RC, planners as outsiders, can build trust with ordinary people more easily. More importantly, the RC performs a role in post-project self-governance. It organised meetings for residents to discuss emerging issues, developing neighbourhood conventions to guide people's self-governance.

Planners

Planners themselves are the 'platforms' and 'media' to assemble resources in this case. Planners from the BMPDI are in charge of managing the SHHPS and are members of the DSN Governance and Innovation Platform. On the one hand, they help the sub-district office and RC to tease out policies from the governments at higher levels regarding community revitalisation and regeneration. On the other hand, with the help of the RC, planners need to understand the requirements of local residents and community-based organisations clearly. By doing so, planners should find the common ground between 'top-down' policies and 'bottom-up' concerns, promoting the incubation of projects in the next step. Furthermore, planners as the media build trust with residents and allow the implementation of government's work to be smooth and easier. Based in the planning institution, planners hold design and research

resources, helping to build the resource network on the ground. Moreover, with the long-term fieldwork in the DSN area, planners can initiate projects and practice participatory approaches in fields that, in turn, benefit policy-making.

The media

The media was involved in this programme mainly through the process of reporting. Reports on the programme of DSN have been released in newspapers and social media since 2014. The media is one of the four kinds of repositories embedded in the mechanism design of the DSN Governance Innovation Platform. Its role is to publicise the progress, outcomes and experiences of projects as well as the mechanism.

Apart from the normal media, the programme in DSN utilises the resource of Beijing International Design Week to communicate with the general public. Beijing International Design Week is a cultural event launched by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the People's Government of Beijing Municipality. The event was introduced to the DSN area in 2015 and showcases urban planning concepts and projects to the public, aiming to increase public engagement. Each year, the event had a different theme. For example, in 2016, the theme of the Design Week in the DSN area was 'CITY INTERFACE 3.0', and the purpose of this event was to gather more partners and resources. Ultimately, the event in 2016 attracted several teams in the urban study realm to develop the exhibitions and activities, and universities such as Tsinghua University joined the design of participatory and experimental activities. In 2019, the theme of Design Week was 'promoting sustainable communities'. The event demonstrates how the CYM sub-district office utilises spatial resources in the DSN area to introduce NGOs and deliver public service to the neighbourhood. Additionally, there was an exhibition on traditional building regeneration that used sustainable conservation techniques. Meanwhile, the event focused on cultural sustainability, and the outcomes of oral history recording were displayed to the general public.

6.4.2 Projects overview

This section discusses two pioneer projects in the micro-regeneration programme in HCPAD: the Micro Garden Series and Our Courtyard project.

Micro Garden Series

The Micro Garden Series is a co-productive micro-regeneration project initiated by researchers from the CAFA (a university) based in Beijing. To date, the project has two series: the first, dubbed Micro Garden 1.0 located at *Shijia* community, started in 2015 and ended in 2019. The second, Micro Garden 2.0, which expanded to the whole CYM sub-district, started in February 2021 and is still ongoing. This project is embedded in the sub-district level's micro-regeneration programme, helping to promote community resilience and provide tools for urban regeneration in the Old City. The project mechanism of community garden has expanded to other neighbourhood level micro-regeneration projects and even scale out to the city level.

The approach to the Micro Garden Series is community revitalisation (*She-qu ying-ao* 社区营造 in Chinese), with co-production as the strategy. Beginning in England in the twentieth century, it is claimed by Chinese scholars that the British Community Development Project is the precedent of community revitalisation (Bian and Lyu, 2018). Community revitalisation has its crucial point in the people, aiming to recover the atomised individual within residential quarters to the community (*She-qu*). That is, via self-organisation and self-governance, residents can negotiate orderly, engage in public affairs and shoulder the responsibility of implementation (Luo et al., 2019). It has been argued that binding people's relationships is far more important than creating a place (Ryo, 2019). Despite the fact that revitalisation appears to be within the community's scope, it has a direct impact on the city's planning and development, becoming an essential component of urban regeneration (Hou, 2019). The project adopted participatory approach, bringing actors together to realise negotiations and the development of co-governance mechanisms. The designer claims that the Micro Garden Series concept is based on Sharon Zukin's (2012) notion of Authentic Urban Places and Kevin Lynch's (1961) viewpoint on the identifiability of public space (Hou, 2019). The Micro Garden Series is not a straightforward application of theory; instead it considers the characteristics of Beijing's Old City and China's political system, attempting to demonstrate how micro-regeneration can improve community cultural, social and physical resilience.

The project is a bottom-up initiative, originating as a university research topic in 2014. Researchers and students from the CAFA mapped spontaneous gardens in *hutong* area which includes the DSN area. Collaborating with SHHPS, the research team held several exhibitions and workshops at the community museum from 2015 onwards. These exhibitions showcased all types of spontaneous gardens observed by the research team and summarised them into

four main categories⁸. During the exhibitions, the team collected residents' opinions about the gardens, and the endeavours of residents' self-directed greening were recognised and encouraged. From 2017, workshops for the residents were held based in the community museum, supported by the SHPS and RC. These workshops covered different themes, for instance, transforming old items into potted plants and co-designing micro gardens for residents. The positive influence of exhibitions and workshops attracted the attention of the local authority, which then supported the research team to implement physical practices on the ground. Therefore, Micro Garden 1.0 renewed four small-scale public spaces into micro gardens (Figure 6.4).

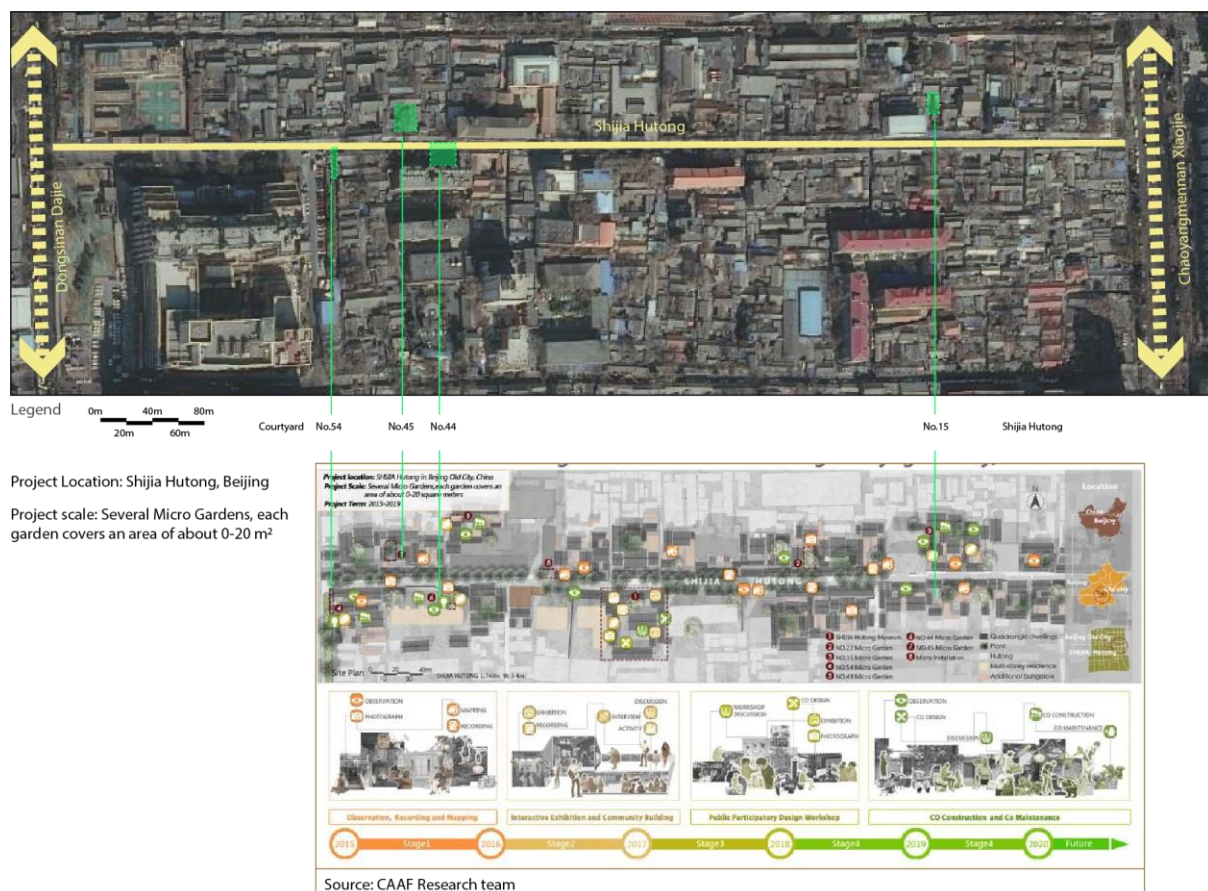


Figure 6.4 Location of selected courtyards in Micro Garden Series 1.0 (Author, 2023 based on CAFA)

⁸ The four categories are Stacked type - The entire micro-garden or a portion of it is built by stacking plant containers, in order to save space; Hanging type - Mostly hanging flower pots near windows to keep plants within the sight range; Striped type - Flower pots or plants are placed along the walls of alleyways, without affecting traffic; Climbing type - Mostly composed of flower stands built against walls, growing climbing plants, providing shade.

Micro Garden Series 2.0 has made several adjustments and upgrades to its conceptual principles. One alteration is in the scope of the project. The new series project now involves more neighbourhoods and spans the entire sub-district. Depending on the amount of funds from different RCs and the project work plan, activities in various neighbourhoods may differ. Similar to Series 1.0, local residents are encouraged to build micro gardens in their courtyards. Another modification concerns the initiative's educational and demonstration roles. The entire sub-district is served by a demonstration courtyard.⁹ The local government has donated a courtyard, which was previously an underutilised courtyard for hosting Communist Party building events. The intention for this action is that residual spaces in residential historical districts are large in number and various in shape, making it impossible to commission designers to design each area. Therefore, the building of demonstration courtyard allows residents to visit and learn skills of micro garden building freely. The third change modification has to do with the selection of participants, which is more inclusive compared with Series 1.0.

'Our Courtyard' regeneration project

Our courtyard project is the one that SHHPS took as the starting point of the whole sub-district community revitalisation and micro-regeneration programme. The reasons are as follows. Firstly, public space in courtyards is a grey zone, meaning it is not private or public property and has been in need of holistic improvement for many years. Therefore, SHHPS works as a third-party organisation to bridge the gap between the government and individuals. Secondly, improving public space in courtyards is a step towards implementing the *Conservation Plan for the Historical and Cultural Protection Area of Dongsinan*. Thirdly, since public space in courtyards concerns public businesses which are closely related to the people's interests, such projects can work as an entry point to develop a courtyards self-governing mechanism and encourage people to formulate a long-term and voluntary negotiation mechanism to maintain the living environment and form a virtuous circle.

Eight pilot courtyards, with varying scales, values, and preservation situations, were selected from HCPAD. These courtyards are classified into two types of 'well-preserved courtyards' and

⁹ The demonstration garden includes three different micro-garden design samples that are simple to understand and replicate for locals. Specifically, 'Hutong life micro-garden' shows the utilising of old stuffs such as mugs, thermos bottles and even broken door frames, demonstrating the life aesthetics in hutong area; 'Healing micro-garden' presents how to use plants and landscape devices to mobilise the five senses, so that people can be fully relaxed physically and psychologically; The 'Edible micro-garden' is an organic way of growing edible and ornamental plants to enrich the diversity of urban species and spread the concept of healthy eating.

‘poorly-preserved courtyards’. ‘Well-preserved courtyards’ are those with satisfactory protection situations and intrinsic or historical significance. By focusing on such courtyards, planners can attract social resources, build better reputations, and enhance heritage values. For instance, the No. 45 courtyard in *Shijia Hutong* is a protected landmark that has not been repaired for years, with its loral-pendant gate severely damaged and posing a safety risk (Figure 6.5). Such buildings with satisfactory but not high protection status usually struggle to get attention and capital for regeneration. To address this, SHHPS obtained a specialised fund from the Historical City Committee and hired a professional team from Beijing University of Technology for regeneration. ‘Poorly-preserved courtyards’ are typical compounds of households (*dazayuan*), and residents who live there crave regeneration. Excessive buildings and housewares in these courtyards take up original public space due to insufficient living areas. Here, planners invited professional design institutions to help residents solve various liveability problems such as lack of night lighting and the need for barrier-free transportation. The planners used SHHPS as a platform to collect resources and capital, such as sub-district’s specialised funds and community public welfare funds.



Figure 6.5 The loral-pendant gate in No.45 courtyard, before and after the regeneration (SHHPS, 2022)

6.4.3 Co-production processes

Micro Garden Series

The Micro Garden Series is not a conventional top-down regeneration project following rigid managerial structures. By organising wider public engagement, the project enables non-

specialists and ordinary citizens to join the co-production process quickly. Co-production took place between planners, researchers, RC, local authorities, volunteers, and residents in the Micro Garden Series 1.0. However, due to the site selection standard, there was no collaboration between residents, which triggered a number of issues during the governance stage that followed the actual construction.

Every co-productive player assumed responsibility for their particular part of the project. The local government funded the initiative and acted more as a facilitator than a manager, without imposing too many restrictions on its operation. The planning team and SHHPs organised project since they have been in place for several years and have experience in organising such initiatives. The research team was responsible for co-design and co-construction operations involving residents. The RC, as an autonomous mass organisation at the local level, acted as a coordinator and assisted in the mobilization of participation.

Because of the participants' selection, there was a dearth of co-production between locals. The Micro Garden Series 1.0 was a ground-breaking and experimental endeavour that was a novel concept for both inhabitants and the RC. Therefore, when mobilising and selecting participants, the RC and planners were more willing to select those who had previously participated in public affairs and were passionate about gardening. These individuals were more likely to collaborate with other stakeholders and support designers' work. Consequently, all chosen participants were single-family households located within their courtyards. Although the locations for developing micro gardens were habitually maintained by the selected individual households, all accessible areas in the courtyards were considered public spaces from the standpoint of property rights. If there is no co-production or agreement amongst neighbours inside a quadrangle dwelling, there may be concealed hazards when it comes to the next governance level.

In Micro Garden Series 2.0, the RC is still in charge of mobilisation of residents and acts as coordinator. For this time, the RC and design team are not excluding anyone who is interested in planting. More than 30 families have applied to participate, implying that the design team will not be able to complete a full design scheme for everyone. Furthermore, the size and shape of places vary in a multitude of ways. As a result, the design team conducted a basic survey and provided each applicant with a modest design example, along with particular plants and gardening kits. Residents will be energised by the design team to enhance public spaces and green historical places on their own in the future. The funding for this project is diverse: The

local government funded the construction of the demonstration garden, a social fund is used to promote educational programmes (i.e., micro-garden practice handbook), and RCs fund neighbourhood-scale events and buildings within their jurisdiction. Co-production between neighbours, as well as between residents and community-based units, is also encouraged at this stage. The team is continually seeking out these type of co-production opportunities.

‘Our Courtyard’ regeneration project

For this project, SHHPS invited six design institutions¹⁰ with the aim of ensuring that regeneration plans were professional and public engagements were suitable. The design institutions served as volunteers to take charge of the participatory regeneration design of eight courtyards. On behalf of the SHHPS, responsible volunteer planners took the lead and formulated a five-phase implementation plan consisting of the following steps: early scouting, participatory design, mobilisation; implementation, and long-term maintenance. Residents participated in the whole process of implementation. At the early stage, residents were informants, supported with historical information of the courtyards, the usage of infrastructures within the courtyards, and ideas about the design proposals. Then at the construction stage, residents joined to build and repair the physical spaces and some key residents played the role of mediator between neighbours, construction crews and designers.

Within the co-production procedure, four improvement criteria¹¹ were introduced to guide public engagement. Throughout the course from initiation to implementation of participatory design, designers and planners guided residents to adapt to the working methods of mutual communication and consultation, and begin to discuss the public affairs around them. During the design process, each design unit stepped into the courtyards dozens of times to have in-depth face-to-face communication with residents. Planners here provided professional technology and built a consensus to motivate planning applications. They helped to coordinate governmental resources, call for social assistance and organise public participation.

6.4.4 Post-construction

¹⁰ Professional design institutions include the China Academy of Fine Arts, the Beijing University of Technology, the Beijing Institute of Architecture and OSO Studio, B Platform and CROSSBOUNDARIES.

¹¹ First, use space reasonably and guarantee safe and convenient living environment; second, beautify courtyard environment and exhibit cultural features; then, promote neighbour communication and enrich public life; and lastly, develop public participation and establish self-governing mechanism.

Micro Garden Series

During the workshops and project presentation, participants were informed to govern the garden by themselves after the project's implementation. Although residents oversee the daily maintenance of the gardens, this does not imply putting the full onus of governance on them. A collaborative governance approach is adopted, which involves multiple stakeholders' partnership: the RC provides tools and resources for garden maintenance, while the design team continues to share skills and knowledge after the construction, and residents can submit input to both the RC and design team. Furthermore, the SHHPS promotes the development of co-governance, particularly during the early incubation phase of the project. The NGO, usually as a long-term in-place partnership, can form a joint force with community self-organisation to promote community coordination and community building (Hou, 2019).

'Our Courtyard' regeneration project

As the pilot project gradually developed, the organising committee anticipated both physical improvements and changes in residents' ideas about the community. Several efforts were undertaken to achieve the latter objective, such as guiding residents to familiarise themselves with the project through mutual communication and negotiation. In the designing process, design institutions conducted much face-to-face communication with residents. Regular meetings were organised to ensure that the regeneration plan was heading in the right direction. Based on the workshops and exhibitions held by Beijing Design week, local residents were encouraged to participate in discussions and to actively modify plans with planners. Residents were also encouraged to think about how to balance personal interests with collective interests at the meetings.

Before the end of the project, a 'Courtyard Convention' was formulated collectively to embed the project conclusions made by households. Community conventions include, for example, 'neighbours shall care about and respect each other' and 'negotiation is the first step in solving problems'. This co-productive project took 2 years to finish. It is claimed by the project manager Mrs. Zhao that 'both heritage in courtyards and space utilisation has been greatly improved'.

The diagrams (Figure 6.6 and 6.7) in next pages demonstrate the timelines of the two projects.

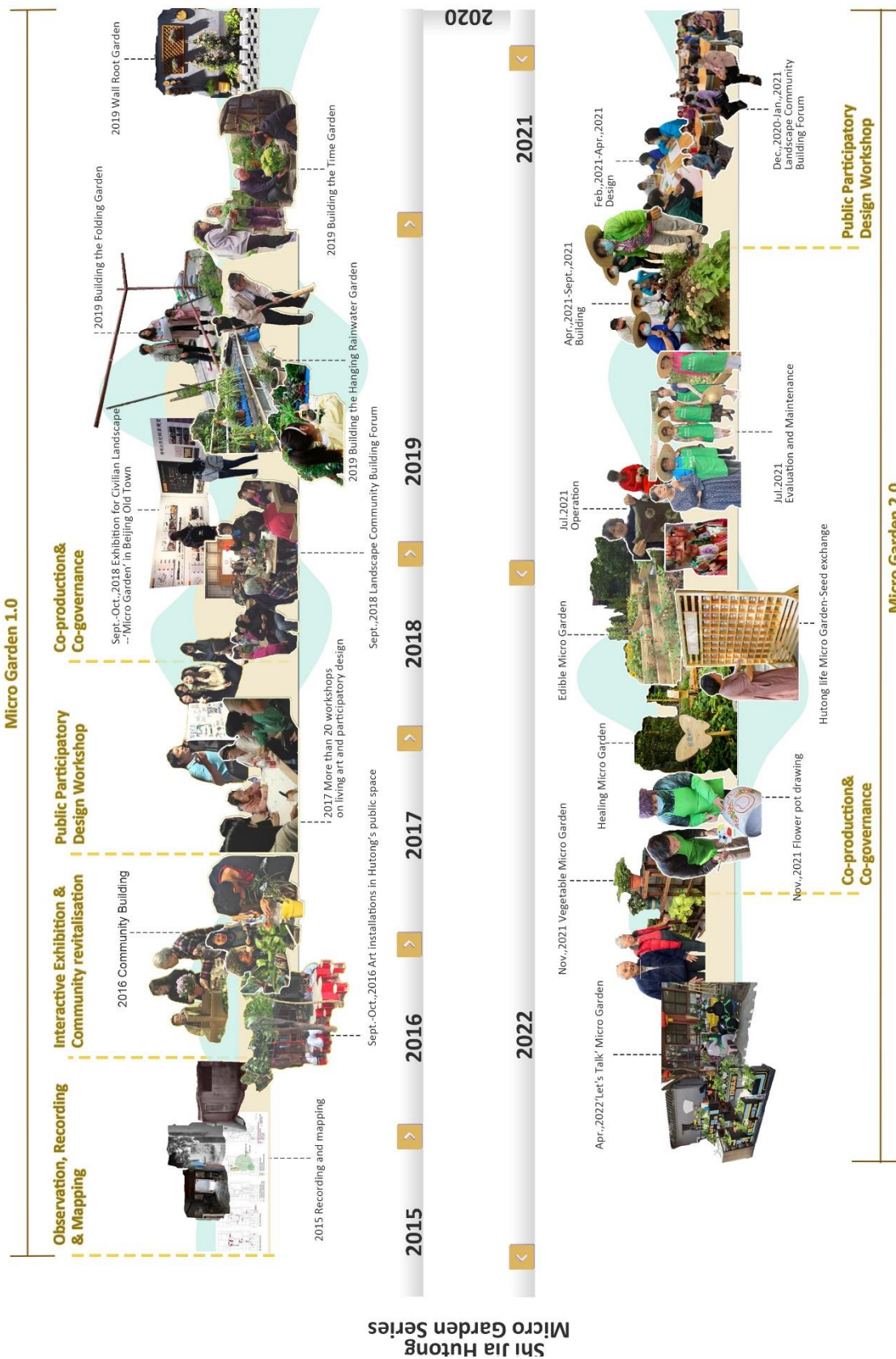


Figure 6.6 Project Timeline of Micro Garden Series (Author, 2023)



Figure 6.7 Project Timeline of Our Courtyard regeneration (Author, 2023)

6.5 Case of the Community Garden in an old urban community, the Keyu Community

Following the site information discussed in Chapter 5, this section introduces the actors, project overview, co-production process and post-construction governance of the Keyu Community Garden in an old urban setting by using the same project description structure of HCPAD micro-regeneration programme.

6.5.1 Actors involved and their integration

Although the project is a small-scale landscape construction project, it adopted a multiple actor collaboration strategy by introducing a professional design and organising agency, becoming the first co-productive community garden practice in Beijing (Figure 6.8).

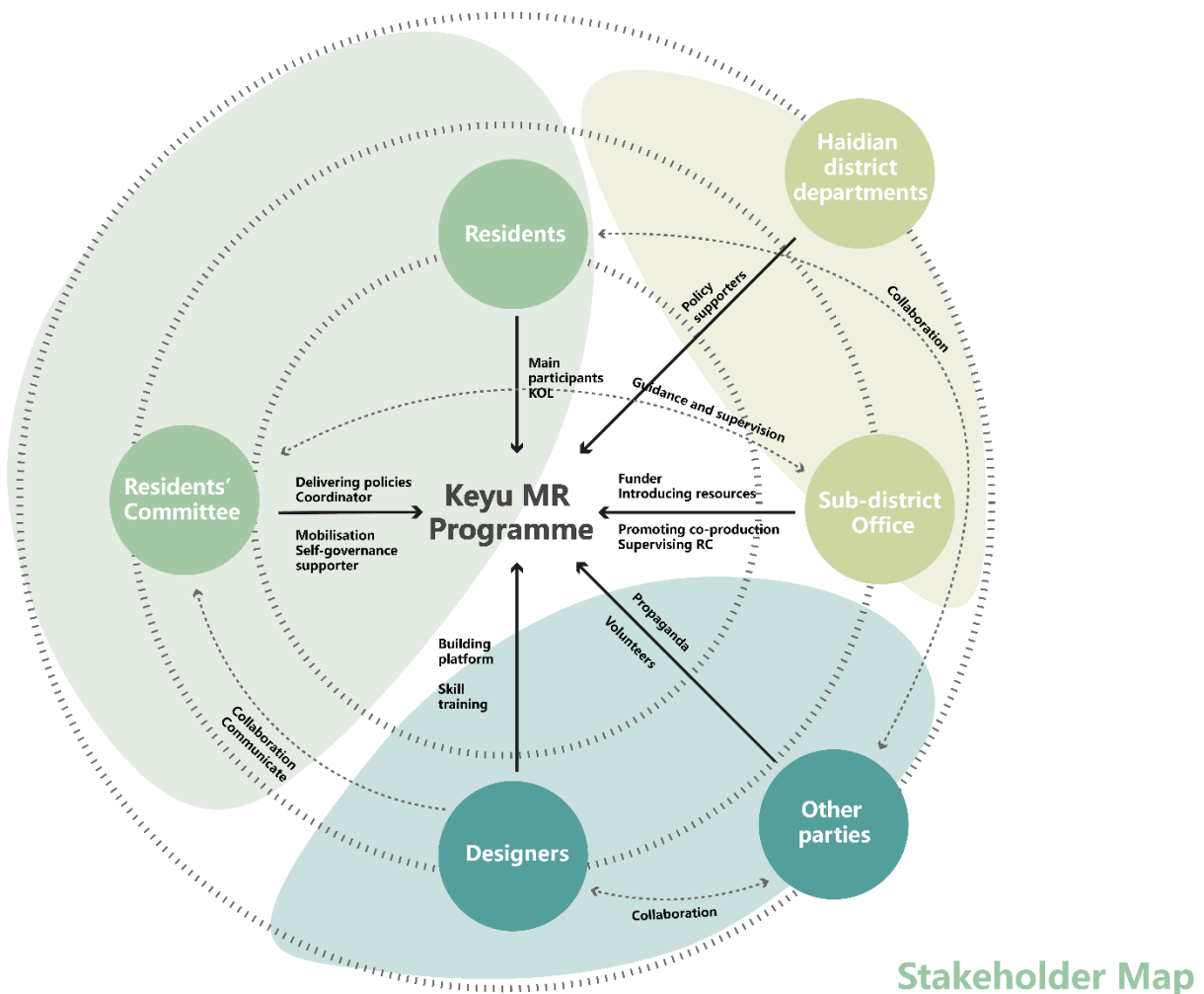


Figure 6.8 Stakeholders involved in the case (Author, 2023)

Local government - sub-district office

In accordance with the central government's principle of 'co-production, co-governance and benefit sharing', the local government emphasises the approach of 'community revitalisation' in managing the issues in old urban community regeneration. The deputy director in sub-district office, who wishes to prompt public engagement in neighbourhoods, is the catalyst for the implementation of this project. The local government is also the funder of the project design.

Residents' Committee

The RC plays an important role in coordinating and informing the residents about the project as well as mobilising residents' engagement. A residents' committee is the basic unit at local level to promote self-governance in the urban residential area. As discussed in Chapter 3, the RC aims to assist residents in managing their daily affairs and at the same time, take on missions from the sub-district office to deliver public services. In this case, the RC undertook the task from the *Zhongguancun* sub-district office to assist with the community garden construction and facilitate community revitalisation. Members of RC mobilised public participation by using a hybrid method - official announcement and mobilisation in private, such as on official bulletin boards and door-to-door promotion, because they know very well who might be interested in the gardening project.

The director of RC played a key role in funding support and collaborative governance after the construction. When the sub-district office cannot approve the expenditure on construction, the RC director proposed to apply for the community's Party building funds. This suggestion finally helped to solve the funding dilemma. The director also assisted in organising the residents' self-governance team and encouraged RC members to join the garden maintenance.

The design team

Gaiascope, a professional design agency, is the design team for the Community Garden in Keyu community. It had agreed partnerships with *Zhongguancun* sub-district office at the beginning of the project. Gaiascope established a platform for internal communication and discussion with the sub-district office, the RC and residents with the aim of breaking down information barriers, playing the role of synchronous communication and sharing of information between various parties. The platform is divided into two parts: online for the 'Keyu Community Volunteer Group' and offline for the 'Community Garden Construction and Maintenance Team'. The ambition of

Gaiascope is to help the residents to increase their awareness of the 'think big, act small' (Gaiascope, 2017), encouraging them to care about the neighbourhood and strengthen community cohesion.

Residents

Residents are the main participants in this case. During the three years of the implementation, 18 garden-building activities have been attended by a total of 600 people (the total number of residents is about 6,000 people). Residents participated in every stage of the project, including scheme design, naming, garden construction and post-construction maintenance.

Other parties

In Keyu Community case, the construction stage involved participants from outside of the neighbourhood. For example, the *No.1 Primary School of Zhongguancun* is the adjoining educational institution in the same sub-district. Students from the school joined the building of part of the garden and the *Yuyuan* garden became the base for naturalistic observation and education. Enterprises and NGOs such as Mercedes-Benz Auto Finance Ltd. and BoKang Foundation participated in the construction of the garden as well. The publicity delivered by the media also inspired the attendance of other parties and further gave rise to the number of community revitalisation practices in other communities.

6.5.2 Project overview

The Community Garden, named *Yuyuan*, is a public green space between the buildings in the Keyu community, which belongs to the households collectively (Figure 6.9). There was a lack of vibrant public space in this old community (Figure 6.10). Many places in the community were covered by temporary houses, and many dump corners have not been cleaned up. Residents were not satisfied with the shabby environment of the community. The site of Yuyuan is an abandoned corner plot in the community. There were three temporary coloured steel houses on the site that divided it into the north part and south part. The wasteland on the south side was a temporary parking space for residents and the ground was bare, dry and muddy when it rains. The wasteland on the north side is a dump corner area of the community (Figure 6.11). Being locked by iron gates, few people have entered it for years. Various debris, garbage, overgrown weeds, mosquitoes, and terrible odours have troubled the surrounding residents and residents avoided the detour here. More importantly, the messy and ungoverned condition of the site has brought inconvenience to the life of the community residents, which is not

conductive to the harmonious development of the community. Therefore, improving the environment of the mess area has become a community issue that needs to be solved urgently by the Residents' Committee and residents. All situations mentioned prompted the site to be chosen as the experimental field of community micro-regeneration.

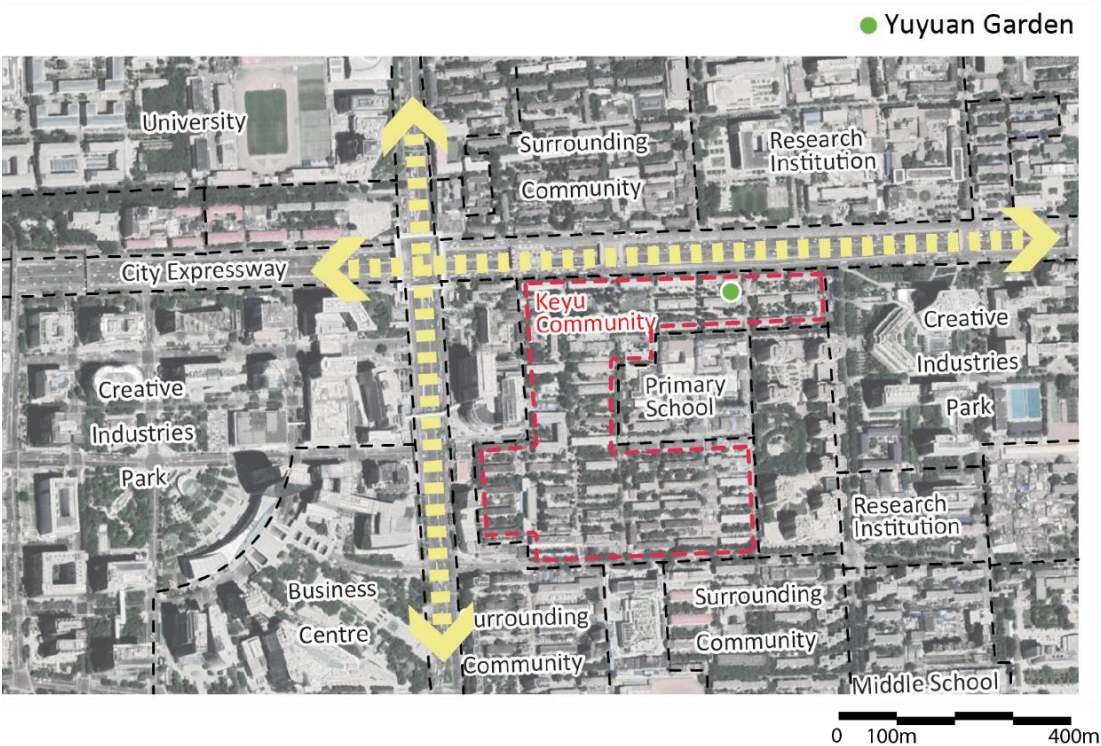


Figure 6.9 Location of community garden, *Yuyuan* (Author, 2023)



Figure 6.10 Situation of the community before project (Author, 2023)

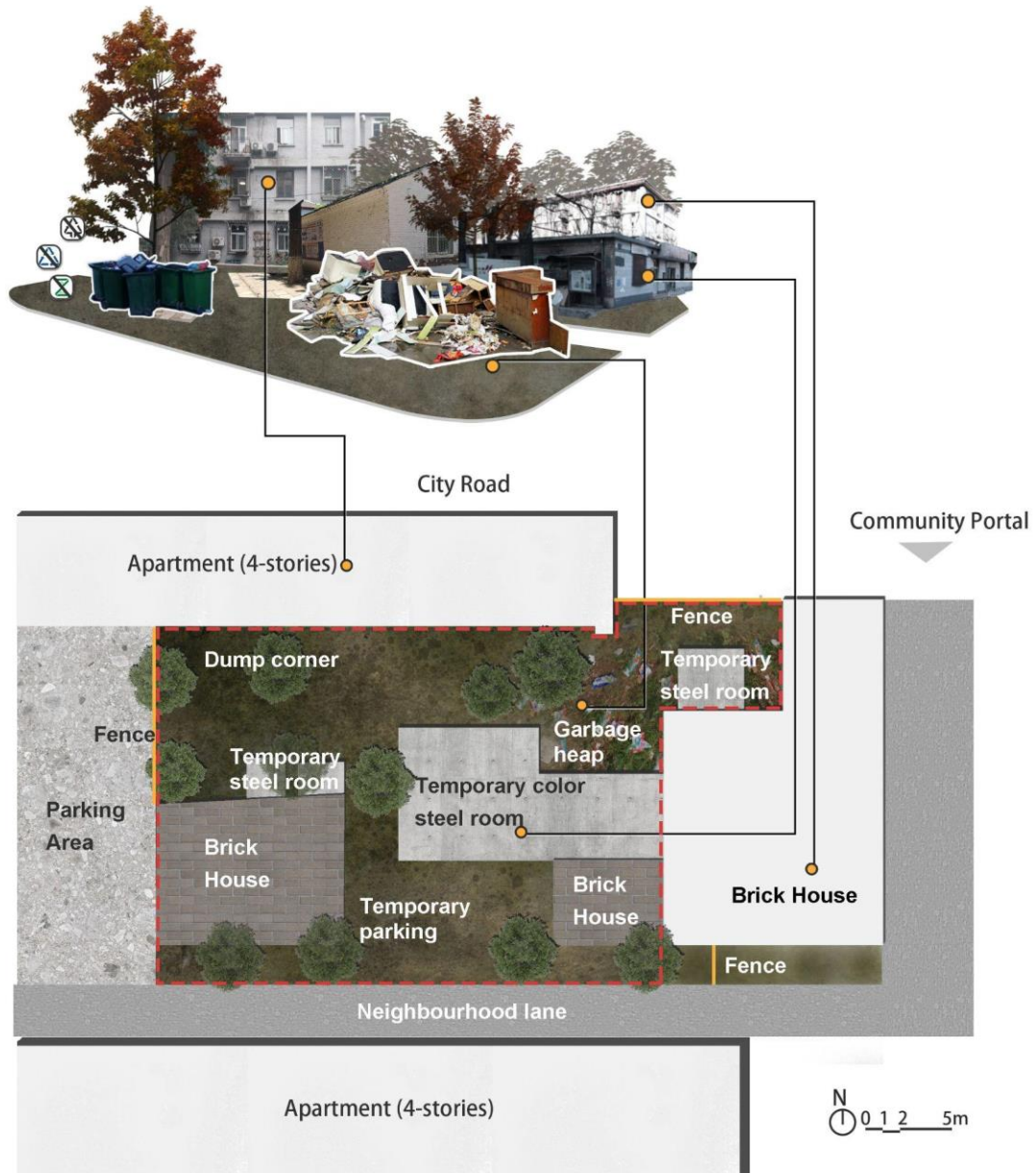


Figure 6.11 Layout of *Yuyuan* before the regeneration (Author, 2023)

6.5.3 Co-production process

Gaiascope conducts garden-building work in the community with the concept of ‘everyone is a designer’ and ‘local users are the main design participants’. The design team has organised enlightened resident and community activists to carry out participatory design workshops, empowering the residents to express their demands and visions for garden construction, making up for the shortcomings of the designer’s professional perspective on community life. Participants are divided into children, young people, and the elderly.

Participatory design includes community garden-building training, residents' participatory survey, design proposal discussion and design plan consensus meeting. Training was delivered in the form of co-learning lectures regarding ecological community planning and design principles and community garden cases. Participants learned about tools and ideas of community garden building from precedents. This approach allows residents to gain a preliminary understanding of the ecological community, master the methods of community investigation and observation, and the concept of creating sustainable communities. It also boosts the confidence of residents in terms of transforming run-down sites into co-produced shared community gardens. After the training, local residents participated in site surveys. Participants carried a drawing of the site's current situation to experience and observe the built environment to find out the advantages and problems of the site. Summarised and analysed collectively, they found that the advantages of the site include: complete space and large area; a small house next to the garden can be used as supporting facilities; and the nearby *Zhongguancun No.1 Primary school* is convenient for student participation. Problems involve: lots of waste and mosquitoes; illegally built coloured steel houses affecting the area and aesthetics; unmanned management and random parking. During the participatory design and discussion period, 30 residents were divided into four groups. The venues designed by four groups were sorted out. Residents exchanged and interacted in the group, reached a consensus, and used the method of drawing design sketches to transform the consensus results into four different design solutions. These served as the design basis for the design team. Following the workshop, Gaiascape transformed residents' imagination into understandable drawings and solid models (Figure 6.12 and 6.13). A consensus meeting on the plan was held, attended by sub-district office, the RC and residents. Through discussion at the meeting, attendees determined the name of the garden, called Yuyuan. The main function of the garden was to be a sustainable community shared garden, to meet the daily leisure needs of the residents, to carry out community activities, and to serve as an educational outdoor classroom.

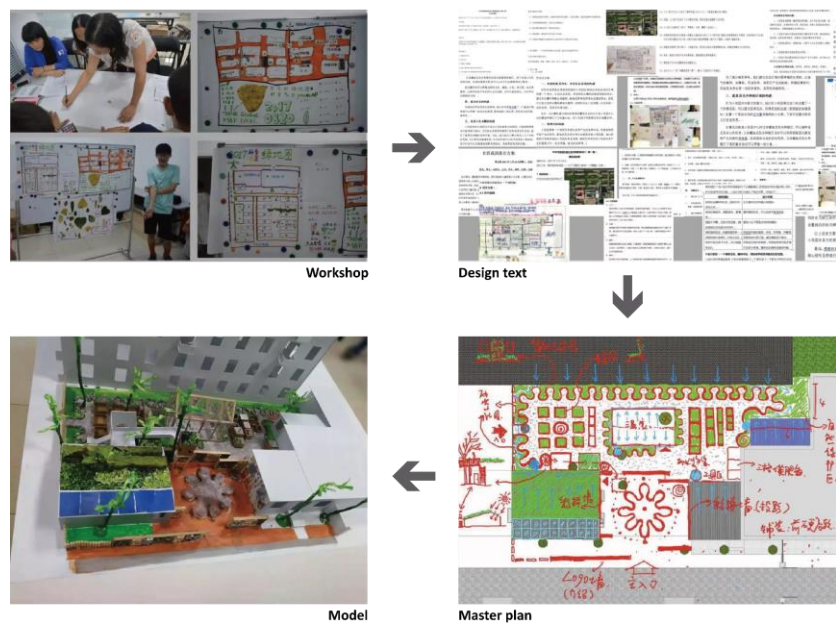


Figure 6.12 Co-productive design process (Author, 2023, based on Gaiascope, 2020)

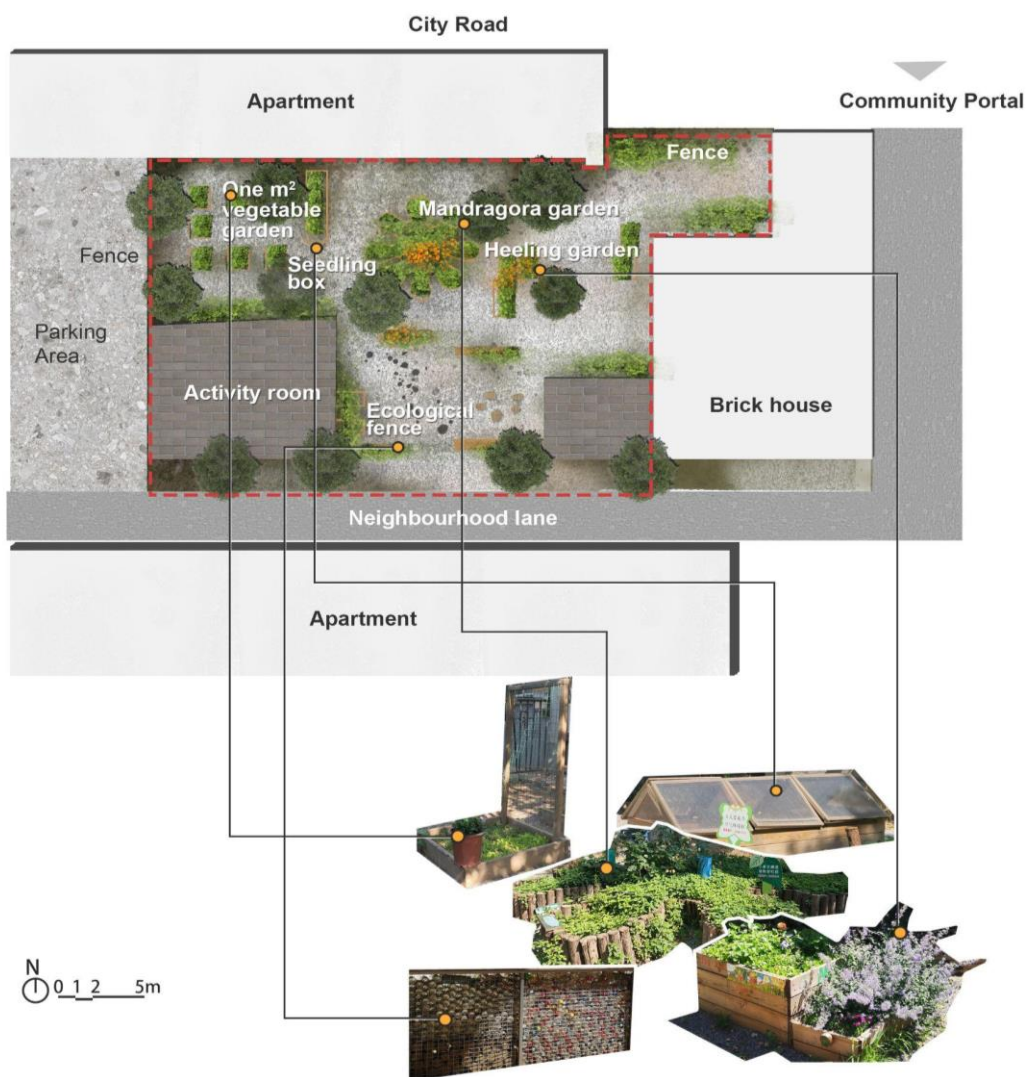


Figure 6.13 Master plan of Yuyuan after regeneration (Author, 2023)

6.5.4 Post-construction

Entering the implementation stage, activities such as building bird feeders, making one-square metre vegetable garden and seeding box, creating a rainwater harvesting system and building a climbing garden used tyre were carried out. By the third year of construction, a number of enthusiastic residents had emerged as volunteers to participate in the garden construction, forming a garden maintenance team, assigning three volunteers daily for plant conservation. One person was designated to manage kitchen waste in compost bins. The RC staff were responsible for the logistical guarantee of garden construction and the resource coordination, thus addressing concerns about the operation and maintenance of the volunteers. The RC invited experts to carry out horticultural classes and training for volunteers and residents, leading to positive interactions among RC, residents and specialists. The phenomenon of spontaneous construction by nearby residents demonstrated that they had acquired basic knowledge of gardening. Additional two community garden projects were initiated by the RC. Students from a nearby primary school wrote a script depicting the story of the Yuyuan construction process, which enhanced the connection between the school and the neighbourhood. The primary designer of the Yuyuan garden claimed that its value lay in providing a platform for mutual learning for multiple participants.

The diagram (Figure 6.14) demonstrates the timeline of the Yuyuan Garden project.



Figure 6.14 Timeline of Yuyuan Garden (Author, 2023)

6.6 Attributes analysis - capital building, adaptability and collaboration

In this section, three attributes - capital building, adaptability (or adaptive capacity) and collaboration - will be analysed in detail. These attributes have been distinctly demonstrated in Beijing case studies in response to community development requirements of cohesion, system adaptive change, governance improvement and co-production. The analysis is based on in-depth interviews and observations.

6.6.1 Capital building as a social outcome of community micro-regeneration

As discussed in Chapter 2, capital building is an important attribute to consider when evaluating resilient planning. Here, capital refers to social capital, implying a society's social interactions (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013). Pinho et al. (2013) argue that capital building as an attribute should correspond to the question: do policies and practices contribute to the build-up of capital and enhance the stability and cohesion of the territory? As discussed in Chapter 2, social capital has its unique translation (*guanxi*) and understanding in China. In this section, the evaluation of the attribute capital building is based on a definition of indicators - objective associations and subjective values (Paxton, 1999) - bearing in mind the measures and reflections of community micro-regeneration practices, in which different dimensions and components of resilience are considered. The in-depth interviews with local stakeholders and key actors exposed views of social capital generated and developed in this area, highlighting the importance of micro-regeneration in enhancing stability and cohesion.

Objective association: the social network

Social network, as the objective dimension of social capital, refers to both formal and informal associations, which are formed and engaged in on a voluntary base. Considering this definition, in selected cases in Beijing, both formal and informal associations emerged during the implementation of the micro-regeneration programme. The SHHPS is a formal and non-governmental organisation in which members and leaders share common interests. The establishment of this organisation was based on the aspiration to protect the tangible and intangible heritage of the *shijia hutong*. It connects ordinary residents, Residents' Committee, planners, specialists and the sub-district office. Building upon the network, projects such as 'our courtyard' and 'oral history recording' were conducted. Regarding informal associations, we can

identify planting groups in both the Micro Garden Series and the Yuyuan project in Keyu community, in which members are loosely connected in the voluntary mass organisations. These groups are created alongside the project process - those who were engaged in the projects and were interested in planting form interest groups, supported by RC and planners. Moreover, projects in the selected cases were taking participatory approaches, activities such as meetings, discussions, and collaborative construction allow different actors to be involved in informal social networks in different cases.

The interviewees realised that the involvement of social networks leads to positive attitudes towards local political institutions. A similar statement on the positive relationship between social networks and local institution has been proved in Western societies by Putnam (2000). Community regeneration and conservation, as assignments and orientation from higher levels of government in the context of stock-based planning, need the support and participation of local residents. However, the institutional immaturity and environment uncertainty in China (Chen et al., 2013) and residents' passive attitude of waiting for government service rather than participating actively leads to negative relationships between ordinary citizens and institutions. In this research, I found that the engagement of social networks benefits the *guanxi* between citizens and authorities. The engagement in social networks may improve the level of trustworthiness of local institutions from the perspective of ordinary people, which could promote the generation of co-production and collaboration in the future. According to a planner leader in the DSN programme:

NGO with the identification of mass organisation and non-profit is more approachable and easier to receive residents' trust. Physical projects in historical districts usually involve complicated stakeholders. SHHPS as an NGO supported by professionals can weaken the role of government when communicating with other stakeholders. This network allows multiple parties involved to voice rationally.

(Planner 1-1)

The deputy director of the DSN sub-district office, who joined both 'Our Courtyard' and 'Micro Garden Series' also reported:

Community micro-regeneration projects are entry points from my perspective. Connections and groups generated in micro-regeneration projects make the relationship between residents themselves as well as between residents and local authorities to be better. Neighbours are more cohesive because they need to consult with each other during the project processes or they are in the same (interest) group. I think those projects respect the context of the Old City and they help to build an 'ecology' that those historical communities should have.

(Government official 1-1)

Social networks play a crucial role in promoting participation in collective actions among community activists. As Shi and Cai (2006) assert, social networks are critical factors in withstanding free-riding problems and favour collective activities. The case studies demonstrate that social networks are more likely to encourage people to participate in local affairs and take action for the common good. In the Micro Garden Series 2.0, for instance, the X community which is located at the north-east of the CYM sub-district, is abundant with social networks. This community boasts several mass organisations such as the fitness group and dancing team. When the decision was made to build a demonstration courtyard in X community, the RC enlisted the help of local residents who encouraged and informed each other to participate. As discussed in Chapter 3, the RC members are in tight human relationships (*guanxi*) with local residents and know everyone well. Therefore, when there was a need to set up a maintenance team, the RC director recommended one resident activist to be the team leader, who was embedded in the existing social networks and had also participated in the construction of the demonstration courtyard. Combining shared information and existing social capital, the maintenance team was successfully and quickly established, with the team leader organising the team based on their *guanxi*. The quote below illustrates how social networks facilitate people's collective action.

It is not difficult to establish the maintenance group in the X community. Actually, they organised themselves since the community itself is very organised and is rich in mass organisations... Besides, group members have a good understanding of the community's resources and plan to send vegetables grown in the garden to poor elderly people. Therefore, there will be a close loop between the physical materials and people. One of the aims

of our project is to build dispersive self-organisations, which might be able to gather when the community is confronted with emergencies.

(Designer 1-2)

Subjective value: generalised trust and place attachment

General trust and reciprocal feelings among individuals have been identified as a critical characteristic of the subjective value of social capital. Chen et al. (2013) claim that the progressively widespread contractual relationships among fellow countrymen have promoted general trust among both known and unknown individuals. General trust has been considered as the linchpin of the subjective dimension of social capital because such trust motivates people to act collectively for common benefits (Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 2001). It also motivates individuals to participate in public affairs. In Beijing case studies, the co-producing micro-regeneration projects allowed, on the one hand, ordinary people to engage in the decision-making process, meaning that their requirements and opinions can be heard by institutions. Taking the Micro Garden Series as an example, residents could decide by themselves to join or not. At the same time, residents produced the design scheme together with designers. On the other hand, the implementation of projects bolsters a positive relationship between general trust and support for political institutions. During the fieldwork, I observed that after the construction of pioneer projects - Our courtyard and Micro Garden Series 1.0 - residents witnessed the local institutions' working procedure and outcomes and they believed that the projects could really benefit their life. Some interviewees reported that they observed local government's endeavour of heritage preservation and built environment improvement. They were willing to participate in similar projects, motivating their neighbours to join public affairs and work with local institutions in the future. As resident interviewee Mrs Zong said:

I love gardening and horticulture [laugh]. At the beginning of the Micro Garden project, I did not intend to participate, but the RC staff encouraged me to join. It is amazing that, through our collaborative work, we have created such as beautiful garden. I think that co-productive projects are better than the government's one way action. You can see flower boxes in hutongs, which are a waste of money and look unattractive. I think the government might be cheated by the flower boxes construction team [laugh] (Figure 6.15). We need specialists to help us design and plan our hutongs for the long-term. In the 2.0 project, I encouraged my neighbours to join.

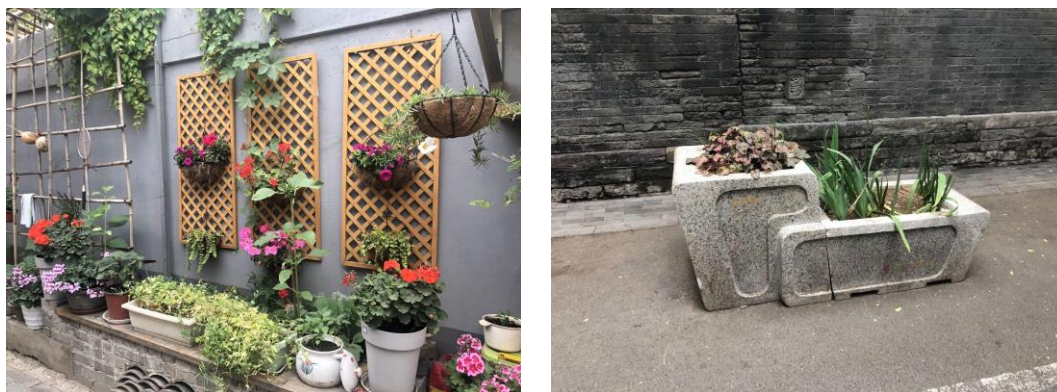


Figure 6.15 Left, One site of Micro Garden Series; Right, Flower Boxes in general *hutong* (Author, 2023)

In the interviews, planners and public officials also placed great emphasis on the importance of trust. Since community micro-regeneration takes place in old communities, in which residents may have lived for a long time, it is essential to respect their mutual tacit agreement and latent contract. As in Micro Garden Series 1.0, public spaces that were once barren gardens were transformed into sites for gardening. Before the project, some individuals took care of these spaces without complaint and objection from their neighbours. Then during the project, designers and planners respected this agreement in order to maintain trust and *guanxi* among residents. The existing *guanxi* among residents is based on their equal positions and long-term interactions, which provides a foundation for self-governance after the construction of the garden. Moreover, micro-regeneration projects have been viewed as opportunities to build trust between planners/designers and residents, which further strengthens the *guanxi* between them. Related studies have shown, for instance, that participatory planning can lead to constructive psychosocial outcomes such as trust building (Leach et al., 2002; Hoppner et al., 2007). In addition, social capital was built during the participatory planning process when trust levels are high (Wagner and Fernandez-Gimenez, 2009 cited in Menzel and Buchecker, 2013). Improved or generated trust could have a long-lasting impact that benefits other co-production between designers and residents. Various cases have shown that residents express gratitude towards designers for their guidance and support, which has facilitated the positive impact of these specific projects to continue. As the designer of community garden project in *Keyu* community reported:

People did not believe us at the very start. However, when we provided the design scheme which was proposed based on our previous workshops, brought materials to the site, and constructed the physical space with them, they truly trusted us ...Residents discovered by themselves that the power generated by community revitalisation could be used to deal with other community issues, such as garbage sorting and parking issue.

(Designer 1(2)-1)

The diagram below (Figure 6.16) shows the mutual trust among individuals and groups/organisations in the Micro Garden Series case. It was developed based on in-depth interview when Interviewees mentioned their feelings of trust or collaboration progress with others. The red nodes represent key members in SHHPS, the purple nodes represent key members in Residents' Committee, the green nodes represent designers, and blue nodes represent interviewed residents. The continuous interaction between different groups promotes the generation of mutual trust. SHHPS, at the centre of this diagram, facilitates the communication and interaction between residents and designers as well as between the RC and designers. Additionally, the project also promotes mutual trust within the residents' group through their reciprocal and mutual assistant actions. More importantly, the visualised project outcomes and participatory activities enhance mutual trust between residents and local government: 'We could see their [the government's] efforts in improving our living environment and how they [government] use money (from the revenue), so we believe the government's efforts in serving people', reported several residents. It is this kind of mutual trust that promotes the initiation of Micro Garden Series 2.0.

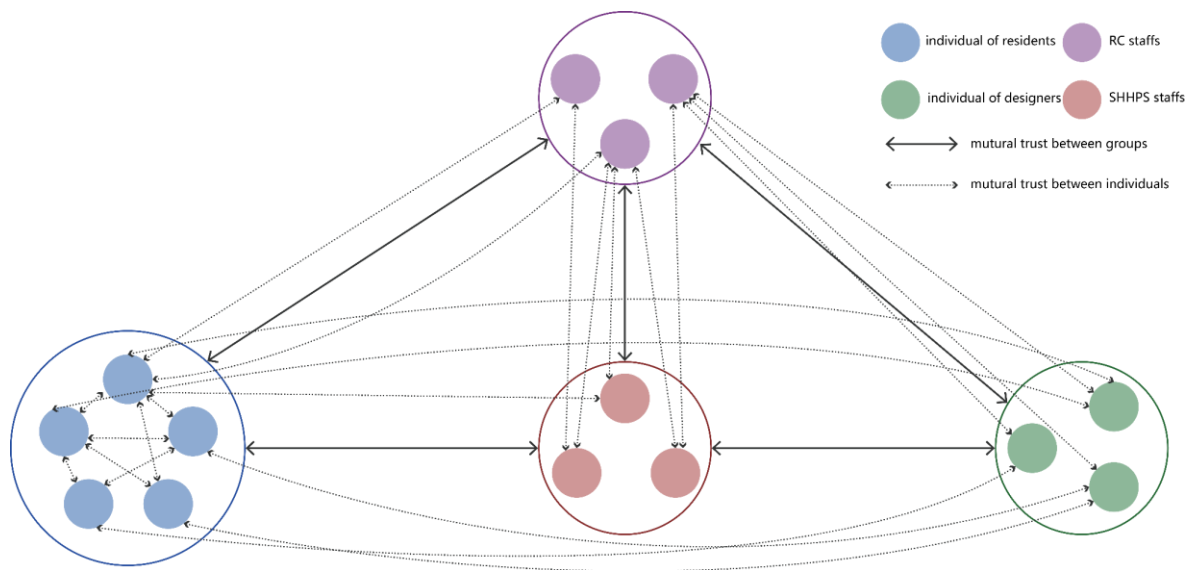


Figure 6.16 Mutual trust between actors (Author, 2023)

Cases studies in this research have found that co-productive micro-regeneration cultivates and enhances the residents' *place attachment* to some extent. Place attachment has been researched as an important factor contributing to strong social capital in urban development (Brown et al., 2003; Zhai and Ng, 2013). Residents behind old dilapidated facades in urban areas have a strong attachment to their place of residence. Zhai and Ng (2013) assert that place attachment serves as the positive bond between residents and their socio-physical settings. Micro-regeneration, as discussed in Chapter 4, is conducted in both tangible and intangible areas. Within the DSN case, projects such as 'oral history recording' and 'tea house reading group' facilitate residents' sense of belonging and reinforce their pride in *hutong* heritage and culture. In the 'oral history recording' project, for instance, residents have expressed that by sharing their memories of the community with others, they were able to uncover the hidden value of the heritage community that had been concealed behind old, dilapidated facades. Through their collective efforts, this has led to a renewed sense of love and belonging for the community among its residents.

Built environment revitalisation projects help enhance place attachment and community engagement, as residents could become proud of their environment and willingly contribute to preserving and improving it. Residents' daily experiences in their local environments and interactions with neighbours are intensified by participatory micro-regeneration projects. These projects make people proud because they are of high quality, require considerable work and are run on a voluntary basis. I have observed that in *Shijia hutong* many residents are willing to contribute to the heritage and environment preservation by donating old items to the museum,

volunteering as interpreters in the community museum, and supporting cultural and creative production voluntarily in *hutong* areas. These behaviours reflect residents' active attitude to community. In the case of Keyu community, some resident interviewees, who engaged deeply in the participatory design, expressed their desire to join environment improvement actions of their own accord in the future, and stated they would certainly miss the place if they moved elsewhere. In summary, behaviours and attitudes towards the physical surroundings have been significantly influenced by enhanced place attachment through micro-regeneration practices. The relationship between people and the built environment can serve as leverage to improve, for example, neighbourhood satisfaction, community engagement, and willingness to participate in local decision-making, further benefiting the sustainability of communities.

Nevertheless, there are challenges to community development, particularly with regard to involving residents and promoting broader participation. For instance, in DSN case, I observed a high level of overlap among participants in various activities. The rest of residents in community were not quite interested in participatory community development and some interviewees mentioned their lack emotional connections to the community. Additionally, existing conflicts among residents could serve as a barrier to enhancing place attachment.

Besides, micro-regeneration operates on a small scale, which means its influence on the environment and people is limited. The challenges of micro-regeneration include participants' involvement and physical impact. For example, in the questionnaire survey in collaboration with BJF University in Keyu Community, some responders reported that the community garden project did not benefit their lives, and there was no change in their attitude towards the place since the project did not solve their main requirements. Similar responses also happened in the fieldwork in the DSN case. The common features among responders holding these views is that they are not interested in the theme of the micro-regeneration projects - community garden building in these two cases. What they care about more are things that are closely related to their lives from their perspective, such as adding elevators, renewing corridors, and improving private toilets. More importantly, the sustainability of strong place attachment requires continuous cultivation and a catalyst. Observations show that a greater number of activities in both cases are the foundation to reinforce bonds between people and place, as well as between people themselves.

Then, small scale regeneration projects may accidentally intensify inequity and harm bonds between places and people because the project might not be fair or inclusive to every resident. This has been evidenced in Micro Garden Series 1.0 and 2.0 in which few residents thought the project did not benefit their lives or even harm their interests due to the garden location or construction schedule. For instance, the photos below show that a micro garden in DSN case was demolished because the owner of the semi-basement did not agree with the location of the garden, even though the household has not lived there for decades (Figure 6.17). This household was not informed at the beginning of the project, and he believed the building of this garden can harm his interest. The project organisers admitted their fault and it is this fault pushed them to improve the involvement and communication in Series 2.0.

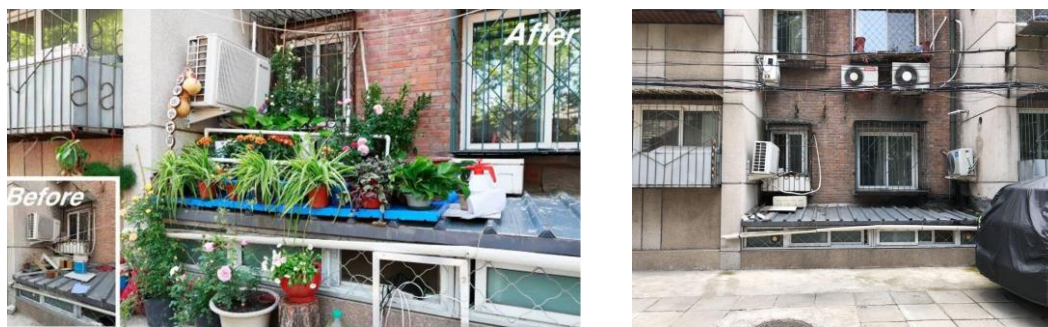


Figure 6.17 One site of micro-garden (Author, 2023)

The left photo is 'before and after' of one micro garden in 2019, and the right photo is the current scene of the garden. The garden was demolished in 2020.

Summary

Combining the two indicators mentioned above, this study found that participatory community micro-regeneration can somewhat contribute to generating and maintaining *guanxi* as well as spreading existing *guanxi* among individuals in the community. Participatory design leads to more interest groups emerging, which benefits the connection between multiple stakeholders. Social capital based on social networks, generalised trust, and place attachment in this research helps facilitates collective actions and helps actors to collectively deal with new and complex challenges. However, it is costly in terms of time and patience to build up trust, since it can be seen that each relatively successful micro-scale project in this research took several years to finish. Importantly, the trust may also erode over time and the limited involvement of participants in micro-scale regeneration projects is still a challenge for capital building. In summary, the process of participatory micro-regeneration, used synonymously with co-

production throughout this study, is expected to bring about social capital through social interactions, promote collective actions, and improve community cohesion.

6.6.2 Adaptive capacity generated from community micro-regeneration

In Chapter 2, I discussed that adaptive capacity is one of the most important aspects of resilience. It refers to “the patterns and processes of behaviour that engage change to maintain a system within the parameters of critical thresholds” (Cretney, 2014, p.630). Focusing on this capacity, it emphasises learning from past disruptions and experience as well as preparing for future change and uncertainty (Engle, 2011; Folke et al., 2003). Aiming to enrich resilience theory regarding urban planning and develop it in the context of urban China, this section will concentrate on three indicators generated from data coding - social learning, synergy and self-organisation - to demonstrate adaptation in this research.

Social learning

The in-depth interviews with local households and key stakeholders have revealed their views on the impact of micro-regeneration. A series of learning experiences related to the participatory planning process and relational change have been highlighted. The interviewed planners and officials identified the importance of how to lead a participatory planning process. Since the projects in the DSN area are pilot ones, the planners I interviewed led the collaborative planning process for the first time. They were aware that they were expected to do things differently from the past and give space to various residents’ concerns. Firstly, they have found that pure physical space design cannot solve too many problems and it is necessary to introduce social governance experience and concept into the community regeneration. The sustainable development of a historical neighbourhood requires synergy that involves multiple dimensions such as planning, practices, management, and governance and multiple levels including local authority, residents, agency and other parties. This approach helps to motivate much social power to join. As described in the programme review book:

The preservation of historical districts needs collaboration among local government, planners and residents. The SHHPS is representative of co-production. It links the planners, sub-district office, specialists and residents, which benefits the flexible management of projects.

(Review book, p.VI)

Secondly, planners have been conscious of the transformation of their roles. They are no longer just elites who stay in the office all day, compiling planning documents, and drawing blueprints. Rather, planners are now active participants in the projects, as well as organisers, consultants and coordinators in practices. This has been evidenced both in interviews and published programme review book:

Aiming to guarantee the courtyard regeneration can meet residents' requirements, planners take the roles of supervising concept implementation, creating a bridge between the project and government resources, gathering social power and organising public participation...After the construction, planners helped to establish a self-governance mechanism.

(Review book, P.39)

I think the planner's role will change in the future. In the past, planners drew land use plans. But now, planners are wandering about the streets and chatting with residents. The tasks for planners are more about providing suggestions for the city's development and here one city as a complex socio-ecological system is emphasised. Therefore, planners are asked to have the capacity to learn knowledge of multiple disciplines and make comprehensive decisions.

(Planner 1-2)

...that is why we have responsible planners now. The role of a responsible planner is to help the local authority build a platform that can introduce resources and understand grassroots requirements. Then the planner shall contribute to the incubation of practical projects... More importantly, responsible planners should not view themselves as outsiders but as a part of the community or sub-district. They need to use their empathy to experience the real issues of the area and take advantage of their professional competence to analyse and tackle issues, on the premise of meeting policies of urban management and urban planning.

(Planner 1-1)

Responsible planners themselves are single platforms to connect resources and requirements. I believe that enhancing community resilience should be via nodes embedded in the platform and network. These nodes are actually the individuals, and every single responsible planner should be more resilient.

(Planner 1-3)

According to planners' perspectives, I can observe that urban and rural planning has gradually moved from traditional technical work to broader governance behaviour. The emerging grassroots planner system in various cities is one of the significant representations of such reform (Tang and Zhang, 2021). In Beijing, the system has been named as the Responsible Planner System. It is believed that when these planners get involved in the local governance system as a 'new force', it brings not only the improvement of planning technical support for the grassroots, but also the reconstruction of the related planning governance system and power. In this context, the roles of planners have transformed from professional technologists to managers, communicators and coordinators equipped with communication skills in the planning process. BMCPNR summarises three functions and six identities of responsible planners (Figure 6.17). Through the new role construction, responsible planners have the means to influence the distribution of planning governance power at the local level: they play a special role in grassroots governance, possess the right to intervene in the construction of local-level urban space, and have a relationship with specialists in the governance field, which allow them to initiate public participation in planning under certain conditions. For details of the roles of planners who engaged in micro-regeneration and their impact on empowerment and capacity building, I will develop the discussion in Chapter 8, bringing all cases together.

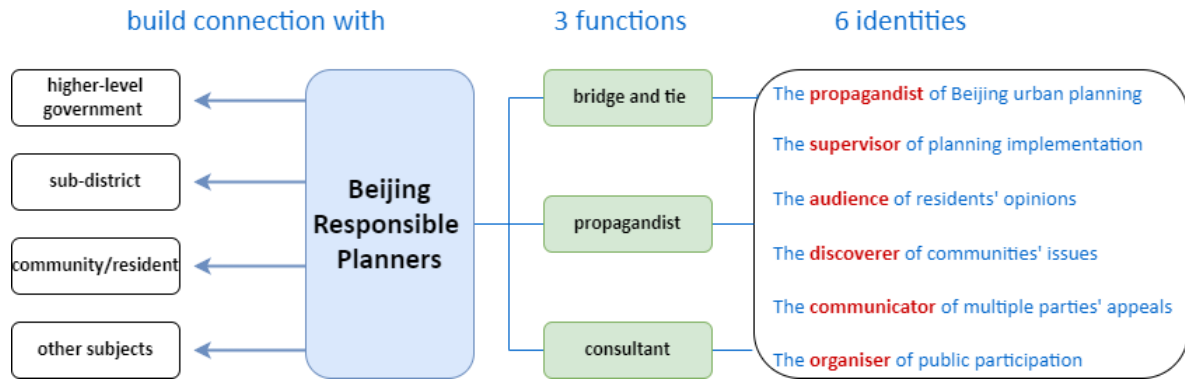


Figure 6.18 Functions and identities of Beijing responsible planners (Author, 2023, based on BMCPNR)

Additionally, the importance of communication in the implementation of participatory planning projects has been identified by the planners, as the outcome of social learning. The sustainable and effective promotion of projects cannot be achieved without long-term good communication. In the review book, residents, designers, and planners in ‘our courtyard’ project emphasised that sufficient communication is not only the guarantee of physical space regeneration but more importantly also the foundation of pleasant self-governance over time. Here, challenges could be the proper way to start the communication, stakeholder involvement and power dynamics. Urban/community planning involves complex concepts and technical jargon that can be difficult for the general public to understand. This can make it challenging for planners to effectively communicate their ideas and proposals to a diverse audience. Besides, challenges can emerge since micro-regeneration, especially in historical districts, involves multiple stakeholders each with their own interests and priorities. Complex stakeholder composition has made communication difficult. Effective communication requires understanding and addressing the concerns of each stakeholder group. In addition, power dynamics between different stakeholder groups can affect communication and decision-making in community micro-regeneration. For example, sub-district office or RC have more resources and influence than community groups, which may lead to unequal representation and decision-making. As resident interviewees in *Keyu* community case reported, they still do not have the power to launch initiatives by themselves and the RC is the representative of residents to voice their needs which might not be the most important ones.

In terms of the social learning of the ordinary people, it has been reported that local residents have learned the necessity of engaging in heritage preservation and collaborative regeneration.

Micro-regeneration, as a gradual and people-centred approach operating at a small scale, allows ordinary people to learn what participatory strategy is and how to join. They said they had learned how to interact with other members of the planning group without causing disagreements. One resident mentioned her feeling and experience during the 'our courtyard' project:

We know that this sort of co-productive project needs coordination, and I am willing to contribute. At the beginning of the regeneration construction, the construction team carted garbage at night, which sparked somewhat of fury among a few neighbours. So, I worked with Mr Gao to negotiate with neighbours in the courtyard. We are aware that we need to seek common points while reserving differences facing one courtyard's public affairs.

(Resident 1-1)

Furthermore, the mutual learning between residents and planners facilitates new collaboration and enhances the ability to adapt to changes. As one planner representative put it:

My feeling is that the value of the Micro Garden Series is in learning. We can find that residents gradually get to know the skills of participatory design during the project process. With the help from the Residents' Committee, designers and planners also get to know residents slowly. This kind of mutual learning helps to promote the implementation of the project.

(Planner 1-2)

Nevertheless, I observed that the learning experience of micro-regeneration projects on residents is limited. In the Micro Garden Series 2.0, although residents were encouraged to design their own mini garden and submit the design scheme to the design team for feedback and improvement, most residents did not submit their design and still wished to get the design directly from the design team. The reasons for this are twofold: firstly, the project did not provide enough training to residents. Compared to the Keyu community garden project, which took three years to build and organised nearly 20 activities and workshops to deliver skills, the Micro Garden Series 2.0 only organised one lecture and one workshop for residents. Secondly, although Micro Garden Series 2.0 is the continuation of Micro Garden Series 1.0, the 1.0 project only involved four households, and the promotion of participatory design to the mass

community residents was inadequate. Several interviewees who participated in the 2.0 project were not even aware of the 1.0 project that took place in the same community. Social learning for ordinary residents takes time, as has been evident in the narrative of both *Keyu* community garden project and Our Courtyard project, which took several years to deliver workshops and lectures.

Synergy among environmental context, space and people-centred principles

The cases presented reflect that the environmental conditions and context form the basis of adaptation. As discussed in Chapter 2, although a resilient system is transformable, it also has its limits. A system that exhibits resilience through change and adaptation is one with variability within elastic limits (Berkes and Ross, 2013). The urban community, as a unit of socio-ecological system, is influenced by various elements of its surrounding environment. These contextual elements play a filtering and screening role in the planning and design of urban communities, thus forming a range limit for urban community systems, while simultaneously revealing the conditions, resources, and ways to build resilience. Incorporating the background environment into urban community planning and design can endow the urban community with valuable uniqueness, such as culture diversity, local materials and techniques, and climate and terrain adaptability. Therefore, the natural environment background (e.g., climate, topography, vegetation, sunshine.) and human environmental context (e.g., population structure, local culture, traditional customs.) in which urban communities are located, form the basis and prerequisite for the formation of community adaptability. These has been evident in the DSN case. For instance, in ‘our courtyard’ project, a traditional structure (*chi-hua-men* 垂花门 in Chinese), which is an important characteristic of *siheyuan*, needs to be repaired since it was poor and in danger of collapsing. Respecting the localism (culture and technologies) and aiming for heritage preservation, the design team analysed the surviving structure using a 3D scanner and made recovery scheme by reviewing historical graphics and materials, and determining the original colour of the structure based on paint flakes. During the reconstruction process, the project team retained as much of the original parts, such as decorative cylinder (*men-zan* 门簪 in Chinese) and drum-shaped bearing stone (*bao-gu-shi* 抱鼓石 in Chinese) as possible. In the Micro Garden Series, the plant selection was based on the natural environment of Beijing and residents’ living habitat. In summary, the context of nature and society provides the precondition and threshold for micro-regeneration in historical districts.

Apart from environment concerns, the changeability of spaces is one approach to realise adaptation. The diversity of community space stems from the ability to characteristically change with the context in terms of space within the community and the environmental components within the site that define the space. For example, adjustments are made in terms of location, structure, area, shape or function according to needs, so that the community system has a range of choices at the structural and functional levels. In historical residential area, clearing up spaces within courtyard and hutongs is quite important to prepare for potential future development. As interviewees who engaged in the Micro Garden said:

Since 2017, Beijing municipal government has promoted practices such as micro-regeneration, 'making use of every tiny space to add green' (jian-feng-cha-lv 见缝插绿 in Chinese) and 'blank-leaving and green-adding' (liu-bai-zeng-lv 留白增绿 in Chinese) in historical areas. From the perspective of urban planning, the essential purpose of 'blank-leaving and green-adding' is to leave more blank spaces rather than add green space. In other words, green-adding is a temporary approach and micro gardens in historical areas are changeable, aiming to provide lands for future development.

(Researcher 1-2)

One objective of the Micro Garden Series is to clear up illegal constructions and piles of debris. We came up with a slogan - Swap illegal constructions for gardens - encouraging residents to actively clear up public spaces in courtyards. I also joined Yuyuan Garden project, which transformed a dilapidated site into a garden. From my perspective, a community garden helps to solve the land-use problem, leaving spaces for future use. Moreover, in extreme circumstances, such as the quarantine period, the community garden may be used as an urban agricultural area.

(Designer 1-3)

Moreover, the 'people-centred' principle can be viewed as the performance of adapting the socio-ecological system. The objective of resilient community building is to bring well-being to all members of the community. The realisation of this objective depends on the actions of all

stakeholders, including residents' requirements and behaviour, as well as organisers' decision-making and aims. Therefore, individuals' motivations, engagement and opinions are the foundation stones for a community's adaptive change. These elements impact the community's adaptive capacity from aspects of public service and management mechanisms. As interviewees declared and summarised, the diverse technologies and motivations (e.g., participatory approaches, the urgency of heritage conservation, policy requirements) provide an opportunity to meet multiple needs. Active public engagement and management then bring positive multilateral cooperation, such as collaboration between local authorities, RCs, residents, and designers, as seen in both cases, which has been learned from and scaled out to other districts in Beijing (Figure 6.19). Additionally, sufficient and timely opinion collection can influence project management and feedback. Conversely a lack of communication can result in the failure of the project, as I observed in the Micro Garden Series 1.0, where two garden sites vanished due to planners and RC members failing to consult with all potential affected stakeholders. As a result, several neighbours were dissatisfied with the location or governance of the gardens, leading to the destruction of the gardens. Similarly, in Micro Garden Series 2.0, poor communication before implementation caused several participants to become displeased with the project collaboration and progress mode, leading to them quitting midterm. Consequently following people-centred principles such as inclusive motivation, encouraging engagement and taking people's advice may improve the performance of public services and management, while high-performance community service and management can endow the community with collective resilience by enhancing the adaptability of the community at the operational level.

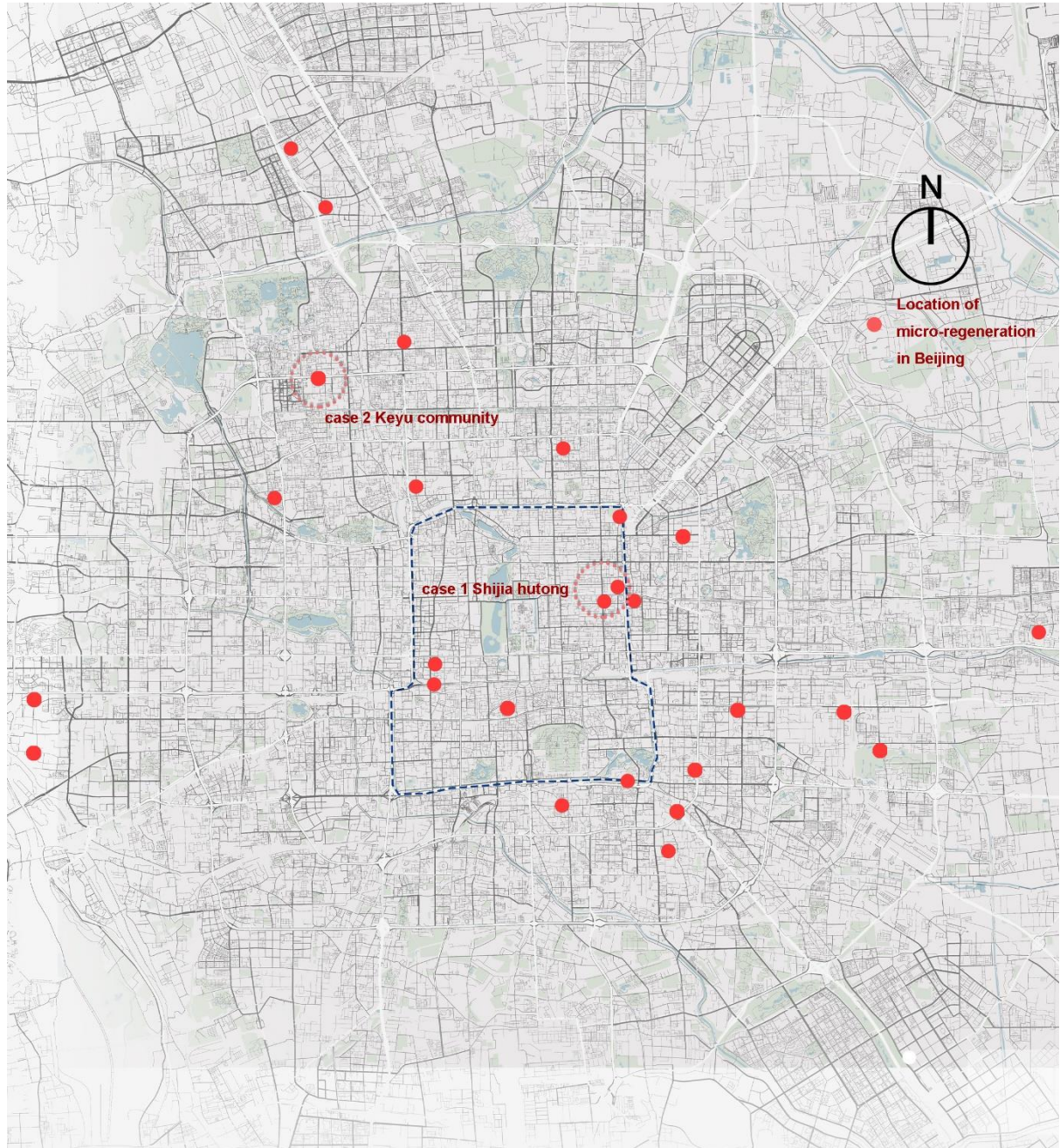


Figure 6.19 Micro-regeneration projects in Beijing from 2017 onwards (Author, 2023)

In summary, the adaptive change of community needs synergy among environment context, space usage and people-centred principles. The sustainable implementation of micro-regeneration claims 1) the favour of the environmental context that respects the uniqueness of community culture and nature situation; 2) the flexibility of space and 3) people-centred strategies that benefit the adaptive management.

Self-governance and self-organisation

The objective of micro-regeneration is not just to improve and renew single physical spaces. As emphasised by several planners and organisers, the core goal of participatory micro-scale community regeneration projects is to guide residents to engage in community maintenance and promote community self-governance. Planners hope that residents' awareness could be transformed to some extent, understanding that public affairs need negotiation and a balance between individual interests and common interests. For example, after the construction of 'our courtyard' project, several courtyards created the 'courtyard convention', which included articles such as 'care about our neighbours and discuss with neighbours when confronted with contradictions' and 'maintain the environmental sanitation and prohibit new self-built structures'. The project aims to establish a long-term self-governance mechanism within the courtyards, along with bettering the physical environment, and realising a virtuous circle. As for the Yuyuan project, residents were encouraged to participate in the workshops and lectures at the initial stage, which allow them to voice their opinions and improve their sense of responsibility. Then in the middle term, residents participated in the physical construction and planting. Afterwards, voluntary groups are established to look after the outcomes and take ownership of the community gardens. As the interviewees highlighted, practitioners carry out the '*overall process*' of public participation design to improve the living environment, to protect the courtyard style, and to mobilise residents to discuss public affairs and then establish a virtuous circle of the courtyard environment to maintain the autonomy mechanism:

It is worth mentioning that after the completion of the project, if the necessary mechanism design is lacking, the yard will often appear again in a state of piles of debris and additional construction. Therefore, on the basis of formulating the 'Courtyard Convention', we jointly elected the housekeeper of the small courtyard with residents to raise funds from various sources, establish a courtyard maintenance fund, encourage residents to carry out

self-organised public space maintenance work, stimulate residents' sense of responsibility, and promote the harmonious development of the courtyard.

(Planner 1-1)

Participatory micro-regeneration projects facilitate the rebuilding of community cohesion. Public spaces in neighbourhoods are supposed to be an integral part of residents' daily lives; however, the phenomenon of 'tragedy of the commons' often leads residents to alienate themselves from these spaces. The participatory design process mobilises the public's enthusiasm and attracts them to participate in the design, construction and maintenance, which brings people together to work towards a common goal. Reshaping community cohesion is essential for the sustainable operation of community gardens in the future. For example, in community garden cases, under the initial guidance and long-term participation of design groups, a standardised institutional system with residents' autonomy as the mainstay and community supervision as a supplement has been gradually formed. Introducing new ways to attract more and more residents to participate in the operation of community gardens can make them not only a place for residents to conduct daily activities, but also an excellent medium for community governance, bringing a positive and far-reaching impact. Several respondents remarked about their feelings and understanding of engaging in the community garden project:

R¹² 1(2)-1: Community is more splendid because we have more opportunities to communicate with other neighbours.

R 1(2)-4: The community I lived in before was boring, but the Keyu community is better. There are many activities and I love to meet people.

R 1(2)-7: The process of the project really helps me to know more about my community and neighbours. I hope there will be more similar activities to join.

R 1(2)-19: People can come together now and the community is cohesive. I observed that neighbours are enthusiastic to engage in public affairs now.

¹² R is the abbreviation of resident

R 1(2)-20: I can feel that the community is more like an entirety where the residents need to rely on the government and the government can support us. The things that RC cannot help can be supported by neighbours. However, it might be impossible to lead something purely by residents. We still need the promotion of the entirety and residents' spontaneous participation.

Inspired and guided by successful micro-regeneration projects, communities have initiated more similar projects through self-organisation. The *Yuyuan* Garden, which took three years to complete, was finished in 2020 following the participatory design approach. Before its completion, two other community gardens projects in the same neighbourhood were initiated by the RC adopting this approach. On the one hand, the RC understood the residents' requirements for pleasant public space and the necessity to better the environment of the community. On the other hand, the experience of the *Yuyuan* project helped the RC to utilise and gather resources such as design institutions and funding, and encouraged residents to support community self-organised projects.

The discussed cases in Beijing were mainly led by communities and planners, with the government playing the role of sponsor and not imposing strict requirements and constraints. In this vein, the case communities were provided enough time to learn from their experiences and cultivate the ability of self-governance and self-organisation, adapting to the social changes including the change of policies and ordinary people's demands. Nevertheless, based on my widely observation and discussion with practitioners, I noticed when the governments witnessed the success of the experimental cases and promoted the participatory approach in other areas, the work mode reverted back to the original approach of heavy government control, which did not encourage public engagement that much. This is because the 'top-down' work plan has strict requirements and rigid signposts. The interviewee highlighted that:

Public participation needs flexibility. When projects are organised by governments, there are too many auditions and time nodes we must complete. During the experimental cases period, if we find a project cannot continue after workshops, we can just stop it. However, once the project is

promoted by governments, they will push you to finish staged goals on time, which may influence the outcome of public engagement.

(Planner 1-1)

Summary

Adaptability, or adaptive capacity, in the context of regenerating old communities in urban China, implies the ability of multiple stakeholders to learn from practices, the awareness to take natural and cultural thresholds into consideration, and the capacity to adapt to changing national governance requirements. Faced with challenges such as environment deterioration, fading culture, government financial scarcity, and people's growing life requirements, there is a need for adaptive capacity that covers multiple stakeholders. This section argues that micro-regeneration is a way to begin adaptability building. Physical environment renewal is visible and can alter people's awareness in an imperceptible and long-term way. More importantly, community micro-regeneration is a dynamic process that needs the linkage between people, spaces, things and policies. Space regeneration plays a role in facilitating the integration between people and surrounding elements, by using participatory design as the tool. Furthermore, confronted with the shift of policies regarding social governance, which highlights the importance of self-governance, micro-regeneration provides the opportunity for grassroots to build self-governance capacity. As several interviewees emphasised, sustainable and resilient micro-regeneration is never pure physical space improvement, but it concerns governance, skill training, awareness transformation, and other social aspects. In this vein, community resilience needs multiple agencies from individuals, third parties, and social resources. Therefore, I argue that adaptability in the context of urban China means stakeholders and systems' ability to learn from experience and keep threshold by considering context synthetically, and organise and change flexibly.

6.6.3 Collaboration with Chinese features

As emphasised in previous chapters, 'co-production, co-governance and benefit-sharing' is a momentous strategy proposed by the central government to confront social change and urban development. In the context of a shortage of government resources (including human resources and financial resources) and people's growing requirements for daily life (both physical and mental), there is a need to explore collaboration at the community level, where operability is strong.

Collaborative mechanism - integration between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up'

The discussion on adaptability has provided a powerful way to understand how a community's innovative response to change can be supported. Here, I highlight that the process of adaptability improvement can be conducted in partnership between communities and the governments. In this case, the collaborative mechanism, which emphasises cooperation between governments and communities, has been viewed as an adaptive approach confronted with the urgency and difficulty of conserving historical districts, especially residential areas. Interviewees reported that the implementation of micro-regeneration projects is an integration between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up'. For 'top-down', it highlights the policies, missions and strategies published by the higher-level government. While for 'bottom-up', although there is no unified definition, in general, it emphasises the delivery and realisation of local communities and organisations' requirements. Here, the essence of 'bottom-up' is how to voice the grassroots level's needs and allow them to be realised. The integration reflects the government's adaptation to requirements of improving work efficiency and satisfying grassroots' needs:

'Bottom-up' is autonomy and initiative. 'Top-down' things has limitations, and government cannot control everything. At the same time, residents have their own requirements and needs. So, what the government needs to do is to respond to these requirements and provide support. We need to create a good connection between top-down missions and bottom-up needs.

(Government official 1-1)

From the perspective mentioned above, the integration of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' is a sort of co-production in the Chinese version. On the one hand, the project is still state-led, meaning the strategy obeys the policies of higher-level governments, such as implementing public participation in urban regeneration and people-centred urban development. Furthermore, local authorities play the role of the funder in cases and facilitate the initiation of projects. On the other hand, residents and local organisations can join the decision-making process and construction through public engagement. After complementation, residents take the responsibility to take care for maintenance of completed projects, with professional support. They have changed their role as someone waiting for the service to active participants who try to realise improvements by themselves, becoming managers and supervisors in projects. In this process, the government and designers no longer view themselves as holding a traditional

dominant position, but fully explore and guide the committed and capable individuals within the resident population, encouraging more residents to participate in the autonomy and sustainable development of the community garden and even the historical city. This mechanism meets the requirements of ‘co-production, co-governance and benefit-sharing’ from the central government and enhances the inner power of a community to tackle future issues:

We call our projects the outcomes of the combination of top-down and bottom-up. Top-down means the government itself has the willingness to promote urban regeneration projects, for example, the mission of ‘blank-leaving and green-adding’ (liu-bai-zeng-lv in Chinese). As for bottom-up, it means all these micro-regeneration projects are not forced, and they are the outcomes of long-time incubation... Micro Garden series project, for example, starts from some participatory activities including transforming old stuff into potted plants, spontaneous garden exhibitions, etc. Witnessing the effect of these activities, residents, local authorities, and planners all found the value and meaning of micro gardens. So finally, the local authority helped to promote and implement the project.

(Planner 1-1)

Furthermore, the establishment of the *Governance and Innovation Platform of the DSN Area* (see Figure 5.7) is the result of the evolution of the integration between “top-down” and “bottom-up” from the perspective of mechanism, aiming to enhance the community’s ability to conduct collaboration and adapt to changes. The platform is guided by the principles of combining public engagement in urban planning and community revitalisation, integrating multiple resources, and assembling the social power of heritage preservation. Regarding innovation, it considers how to engage more social resources and technologies into public management and humanistic governance. As analysed before, the reasons for taking physical space micro-regeneration practices as the entry point are threefold: firstly, the semi-public space in the neighbourhoods is of vital interest to people; secondly, in old communities and historical residential areas, the governance of semi-public spaces (such as courtyards) is lacking; thirdly, the scale of micro-regeneration is controllable, and the themes of projects revolve around residents’ demands. In this context, the *Governance and Innovation Platform of the DSN Area* helps to tease out policies from the higher-level government and understand the local

requirements with the help from the RC. After finding the connections between ‘top’ and ‘down’, it promotes the incubation of innovative micro-regeneration projects and integrates/allocates resources to turn ideas into actionable projects. As the platform work report described:

In terms of project incubation, it aims to assist the sub-district to experiment with various innovative works with minimum cost. At the same time, it helps the projects that lack planning expenditure to be involved in the funding application channel. The platform needs to summarise the ideas and suggestions from the sub-district office, Residents’ Committee, local organisations and residents. Subsequently, we should compare the gathered information with policies from the higher-level government to estimate which ones could be incubated into real projects.

In summary, the integration between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ means the combination of public engagement in urban planning with governmental power, including policies and multiple resources. It aims not only to integrate resources from the various levels of government but also to foster the endogenous strength in communities and assemble multiple social powers to preserve the heritage sustainably.

Collaborative governance

Collaborative governance has been viewed as an effective approach for long-term and sustainable management of micro-regeneration practice outcomes. In the past, the governance of public spaces has relied on the government. Therefore, the change in residents’ awareness for collaborative governance calls for gradual learning and cultivation. Based on interviews and new reports, I have found that both the local authority and the RC encourage public involvement and strive to foster collaborative governance by not only allowing citizens to join, but also equipping them with knowledge and skills. On the one hand, the RC encourages residents to participate in design and information exchange workshops on a voluntary basis to attract and engage them. In the Micro Garden 2.0, residents’ autonomy was given full play thanks to the RC and design team. Residents reciprocally motivated one another throughout the pre-application phase, which led to mutual support and collaborative governance when the building was completed. The RC and design team, on the other hand, scouted able people and developed a gardener group during this process through interactive activities.

In residents' self-organising activities, able individuals play a critical role. For example, the X community located in the northeast of the CYM sub-district, plans to create a communal garden on the leftover public area. Prior to the participatory design stage of this project, a capable individual and a gardener group were selected to assume responsibility for maintaining the demonstrated garden in the building of the demonstration courtyard, also located in the X community. When the design team started to organise workshops to collect needs and suggestions for the design of the communal garden, the able person and gardener group actively call on additional neighbours to join and voice thoughts. It improved the efficiency of collaborative design and debate, as well as forging consensus on the governing structure.

More importantly, collaborative governance entails support from specialists and local government. It has been criticised that resilience thinking puts too much onus on ordinary people (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2012). In collaborative governance, local authorities backup project management and community governance by providing financial and knowledge support after construction. However, sustainable collaborative governance demands long-term iteration of practices. After the Covid-19 epidemic erupted in 2020, the governance of the *Keyu* community was interrupted due to quarantine, and only two governance group members remain. The exact reasons for most members' leaving is not known, but it can be witnessed that unexpected long-term interruptions did influence the collaborative relationships. Therefore, although collaborative governance can benefit the resilient development of a community by facilitating collaboration and mutual help, the maintenance of these collaborative relationship still needs further endeavour.

We received lectures in terms of planting and gardening after the project. The RC also provides us with this room to store tools. When we found that we cannot manage certain circumstances or encounter a scarcity of human resources, the RC always help us to contact designers and hire volunteers. Now, only two of us are taking care of this garden after the epidemic. Others may have quit because of their health condition or others. We do not know exactly.

(Residents 1(2)-18)

Summary

Collaboration as an important attribute of resilience, which generally means a system with multiple opportunities and incentives for broad stakeholder participation. In the context of Chinese communities, this research emphasises the collaboration between government and local, which is important for promoting extensive participation and sustainability. The reasons are in twofold: first, while the higher-level government in China has great power and resources, especially regarding policies, financial resources and human resources, they cannot cover all aspects of community affairs; second, as discussed in Chapter 3, ordinary people may lack the motivation and confidence to take action without support from the government. Therefore, the integration between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches could use effectively multiple resources and incentives from the authorities and encourage creative initiations generated from the grassroots level and broaden stakeholder participation. Subsequently, collaborative governance that helps equips residents with knowledge and insurance from the local government, could contribute to the sustainable development of old communities over time.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has sought to understand community resilience in the context of micro-regeneration in Beijing, focusing on the attributes of capital building, adaptability and collaboration. Data from in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and observation of projects in HCPAD and *Keyu* community were analysed with reference to ideas presented in the literature review. Summarised from the data, indicators were identified with the aim of investigating how micro-regeneration projects enhance community resilience and to interpret resilient and sustainable old community development when confronted with social changes in urban China. Specifically, they are 1) social networks, generalised trust and place attachment within social capital buildings, 2) social learning, synergy among environment, space and people-centred principles, self-organisation within adaptability, 3) collaborative mechanisms and collaborative governance within collaboration. The analysis demonstrates that although environmental resilience is not the main objective of micro-regeneration, the low- consumption strategy, eco-friendly tools and the reuse of old materials do benefit the natural environment. As for the social aspect, what has become clear throughout this chapter is that the role and influence of government on sustainable community development in China cannot be ignored. Governments could have a positive impact on co-production and co-governance by empowering knowledge, resources and decision-making; the role of planners is transforming from designer in the office

to communicator, coordinator or organiser; and physical space regeneration projects are the entry point for building resilience by improving the mutual relationships between people themselves or between people and the environment, providing opportunities for social learning and increasing attention to synergies between different factors.

Chapter 7. Bottom-up initiatives in Shanghai

7.1 Introduction

This chapter shifts the focus to Shanghai to continue the research. Like Chapter 6, this chapter tries to answer questions regarding the words/indicators used in framing community resilience and the ways that identified indicators enable community resilience in the context of micro-regeneration. The chapter starts by identifying territorial issues through a review of general profile data and the urban area's development history. The following section elaborates on the related planning policies in Shanghai. Although the urban development orientations of different megacities in China exhibit high hegemonies, different municipal governments and urban development bureaus can provide different supporting policies and take diverse actions. The chapter then maps the stories of selected projects in detail. Compared with the Beijing case, the initiation of the case in Shanghai is more bottom-up but still needs support and approval from the government. After this, analysis of interviews and observations will be developed, focusing on three dimensions of resilience: resourcefulness, connectivity, and capital building. Resourcefulness is chosen as the case in Shanghai reveals that the availability of multiple resources is vital to enhancing community sustainability, regardless of whether they are human or project resources. Connectivity is then summarised as the second attribute since the case demonstrates that building human and nonhuman connections on the ground could benefit the development of communities over time by linking place-based resources and infrastructures. The analysis of capital building is a supplement to the Beijing case. In this chapter, I highlight the role of micro-regeneration and participatory design in *guanxi* building, both between humans themselves and between the human and the environment. By analysing these attributes, the practices can be researched through the lens of resilience, and the theory lens can be tweaked by grounded data analysis in turn.

7.2 Shanghai: the pioneer of urban development

Shanghai is one of the municipalities under direct administration of the Central Government of China and the core of the world-class city cluster in the Yangtze River Delta area, with a construction history of more than 700 years (Figure 7.1). It is also an international centre of economy, finance, trade, shipping, scientific and technological innovation, a cultural metropolis,

and a national historical city (Shanghai Master Plan 2017-2035). Shanghai was established as a county because of its port, and the city prospered due to business. The opening of Shanghai's port in 1843 became the starting point of the city's modernisation. The urban area of Shanghai occupies 6340.50 square kilometres and has a population of 24.88 million according to 2020 statistics (Shanghai Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Shanghai has 16 districts, and the population densities are various, similar to Beijing. Shanghai is characterised by openness and cultural fusion. According to *The Shanghai Master Plan 2017-2035* (hereinafter referred to as 'Shanghai 2035'), it is described as "Being a charming and inclusive city with the unique 'East meets West' culture around each corner, Shanghai offers diversified options for the free development of its citizens" (p.4). The objective of urban development in Shanghai is to build an excellent global city¹³. In accordance with the official statistics by the Shanghai bureau of statistics in 2020, the GDP of Shanghai annually was 3870.058 billion RMB (464.79 billion GBP), an increase of 7% compared to 2018. The budgetary expenditure for urban and village community affairs was 141.9 billion RMB (17.1 billion GBP) in 2020, accounting for 17% of the general budgetary expenditure.

¹³ Based on The Shanghai Master Plan (2016-2035), Shanghai is an international centre of economy, finance, trade, shipping, scientific and technologic innovation and a cultural metropolis as well as a national historical city. Shanghai, it is stated in the Plan, will be an excellent global city and a modern socialist international metropolis with world influence.



Figure 7.1 Location of Shanghai (Author, 2023)

Shanghai is one of the cities lavishly endowed with historical and cultural heritage in modern and contemporary China. State Council officially announced Shanghai as a nationally famous

Historical and Cultural City in 1986. Heritage communities in Shanghai are of two types: *lilong* communities and working-class neighbourhoods. *Lilong* communities, also known as 'lane houses', are two- or three-story structures resembling Western townhouses. As one of the earliest residential forms, *lilong*-style buildings also indicate the beginning of modern Chinese real estate, which has a significant status in the development of urban residences in Shanghai. Working-class neighbourhoods are social housing estates built for the increasing number of workers after 1949. Although they do not have a long-built history, post-war public housing has gradually received recognition for its significant role in the mid-20th century as the memory of post-war reconstruction, and working-class neighbourhoods are symbolic of Communist China on both political and ideological grounds. Confronted with the tension between urban development and heritage preservation, the *Xintiandi* project in Shanghai became the turning point for urban regeneration. The project introduced an adaptive reuse strategy, transforming old, rundown residences into a shopping district and also evoking the value of residential heritage. In the past two decades, Shanghai has continuously explored ways to conduct heritage preservation, while facing the challenge of maintaining the minimum quality of the existing historical housing to meet modern standards of living.

Based on 'Shanghai 2035' that was organised and prepared by Shanghai Municipal People's Government and approved by the State Council, Shanghai aims to build a megacity into a place full of positive energy and vitality, fulfilling its mission to lead national economic development and partake in international competition. As the pioneer of urban development in China, the plan emphasises the following principles:

1. Innovative development, further highlighting the essential requirements of people-centred and endogenous development and linking reform to technology and culture as a three-wheel vehicle.
2. Open development, further highlighting Shanghai's status as a hub facing the world and serving the entire country.
3. Coordinated development, further highlighting the spatial pattern of regional collaboration and urban-rural integration, coordinating space, scale and industry and incorporating planning, construction and management.
4. Shared development, further highlighting the implementation mechanism of multi-participation and collaborative governance, coordinating the government, society and the public.

5. Green development, further highlighting the model of bottom-line control and low-carbon resilience, integrating production, living conditions and ecological development. Summarised from the Shanghai planning features, we can see that urban development here has stepped into an era of ecological civilisation that puts environmental friendliness and a humanistic approach first, giving priority to innovation and creation as well as inclusion.

7.3 Policies relating to community regeneration

Similar to Beijing, Shanghai is also a precedent in terms of urban development and regeneration, especially stressing the role of citizens within the regeneration process. There is a systematic policy system regarding urban regeneration, in which community regeneration is an important component.

The core policy regarding urban regeneration is the *Regulations of Shanghai Urban Regeneration (2021.77)*. The regulation evolved from the *Measures for the Implementation of Urban regeneration in Shanghai (2015.20)*, which marked a new stage of urban regeneration. Since the promulgation of the 2015 version document, urban regeneration had become more emphasised on the principles of public engagement, stakeholders' collaboration and classification implementation. The 2021 version regulation reserves these principles and makes further improvements. In terms of community regeneration in regulation, there are two key points. Firstly, Article 3 proposes the principle of urban regeneration. It is necessary to adhere to the simultaneous implementation of 'retention, reconstruction and demolition', and give priority to retention and protection (Article 3). At the same time, try not to use the approach of 'demolition and construction' to promote urban renewal, which will help to retain Shanghai's unique characteristics of 'combining Chinese and Western' and '*lilong* community'. In this way, urban regeneration in Shanghai tries to preserve the existing urban texture and historical features, remove the areas of dereliction and save the essence, and better integrate modern and traditional features. Secondly, the regulations ingeniously propose a way of urban regeneration, that is, from district organic regeneration to sporadic regeneration to micro regeneration. Here, district organic regeneration is the coordinating subject-led¹⁴ regeneration at the district level. Sporadic regeneration means the property owners of individual buildings

¹⁴ Coordinating subject (*tong-chou zhu-ti* in Chinese) means the implementation subjects who are in charge of the work of urban regeneration, mainly referring to the state-owned enterprises or market-oriented enterprises with the capacity to conduct urban regeneration.

can conditionally initiate updates if it meets the requirements of district regeneration. This kind of regeneration allows changes such as floor area ratio adjustments and height limit adjustments, in which the change range is relatively large. Then micro-regeneration, which is the main focus of this research, is firstly clarified in a legal document. Article 28 claims that the building functions and quality of the living environment shall be improved through micro-regeneration of the built environment, including buildings and public spaces. The essence of this regeneration approach is to preserve the features of Shanghai and the hustle and bustle of Shanghai-style life.

Under the core policy, there are several documents concerning community regeneration planning. For example, *Opinions on Enhancing Community Comprehensive Governance in Shanghai* (2015) highlights the transformation from top-down management to bottom-up and integrated urban governance, stressing public engagement and residents' self-governance. In *Guidance on Fulfilling People's City Concept and Enhancing Participatory Community Planning* (2020), the participatory approach in conducting community planning has been generalised to the whole city. The objective of enacting this policy is to effectively promote the integration of community planning with community self-governance and co-governance, facilitate the automatic and spontaneous participation of various community entities in community environmental regeneration and space governance, and improve the community's public environment and quality of living.

Apart from the policies mentioned above, the *Shanghai Master Plan 2016-2035* proposes a significant concept regarding community development -the *15-Minute Community Life Circle*. This concept makes the 15-Minute Community Life Circle a basic unit of social governance and a basis for common community resource allocation. Shanghai is the first city that comes up with the 15-Minute Community Life Circle concept. The context for this proposal is threefold: firstly, the urban development concept is 'innovation, coordination, green, open and sharing' in the current era; secondly, there is a shift from urban *management* to urban *governance*, and urban planning and construction shall play a role in community governance; finally, the transformation of people's living style in the post-industry era has diversified residents' life requirements. In 2016, Shanghai Urban Planning and Land Resource Administration Bureau promulgated *Shanghai Planning Guidance of 15-Minute Community Life Circle*, which establishes a framework regarding people's basic living needs such as transportation, services, leisure and habitat. 'Shanghai 2035' mainly focuses on communities as spatial units of basic urban social life in the networked era, and the building of a life circle within 15 minutes walking distance to provide

appropriate housing for residents, create a more pleasant environment of living, facilitate more convenient transportation and bestow residents with a higher sense of belonging and identity. In 2021, the MONR promulgated *Guidance of Community Life Circle Planning* at the national level. The essence of community life circle planning is exploring effective methods to utilise and update space resources within and around communities and realise the transformation to stock-based planning. All policies mentioned above highlight collaboration between multiple stakeholders including local governments, residents, local-based organisations and specialists.

Moreover, '*Shanghai 2035*' highlights the importance of advanced and sustainable use of old residential houses. It recommends continuously improving housing conditions, service facilities and living environments in old communities. It also emphasises the need to enhance the repair and maintenance of various houses to fulfil the sustainable use of old residential houses, with the organic renewal of urban communities and systematic inheritance of community cultural. Related policies are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Policies regarding community regeneration in Shanghai (Author, 2023)

| Policy | Overviews | Time |
|---|--|------|
| Shanghai No.1 research topic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen the reform of the sub-district office system, improve the residential area governance system, organise and guide social forces to participate in community governance, and manage community workers | 2014 |
| Opinions on Enhancing Community Comprehensive Governance in Shanghai | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation from single top-down government management to the collaborative urban governance between government and grassroots. | 2015 |
| Shanghai Planning Guidance of 15-Minute Community Life Circle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an innovative, humanistic and sustainable eco-city. • Follow the development idea of 'innovation, coordination, green, open and sharing'. • Provide convenience for community residents within 15 minutes of walking distance. | 2016 |
| Shanghai Master Plan 2016-2035 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanghai in 2035 will be a city where buildings are enlightening, streets are strolling-friendly and parks are enjoyable, while the citizens have the reputation of being law-abiding, credible and well-mannered. Shanghai, a city endowed with tenderness. | 2018 |
| Guidance on Fulfilling People's City Concept and Enhancing Participatory Community Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the process of jointly solving community problems, the residents are encouraged to internalise the awareness of contracts and rules, cultivate the public spirit of the community, and establish public order in the community. Promote all kinds of subjects engage in actions and collaborative construction, and effectively enhance the sense of community and the feeling of home. | 2020 |

| | | |
|--|--|------|
| Guidance of Community Life Circle Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a suitable daily walking range, it is a basic unit that meets various needs of urban and rural residents in the whole life cycle of work and life, and integrates the multiple functions of 'workable, livable, travel-friendly, old-friendly and education-friendly community', leading the future-oriented, healthy and low-carbon lifestyle. | 2021 |
| Regulations of Shanghai Urban Regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve the unique characteristics of Shanghai <i>lilong</i> community. • Conduct systematic urban regeneration practices. | 2021 |

7.4 Case of the *Xinhualu* Sub-district

As discussed in Chapter. 5, two micro-regeneration projects located in *Xinhualu* sub-district will be analysed here. These two projects are embedded in the Urban Design Festival programme, which was a locally initiated and multiple stakeholders co-produced community regeneration practice. This section starts with an analysis of the actors involved and then provides details of the project implementation.

7.4.1 Actors involved and their integration

Context and policy analysis shows that collaboration and participatory approach are still the main themes of micro-regeneration in Shanghai. These two approaches carry out a vital role in the master plan, that is, establishing a planning implementation mechanism involving multiple parties. This section demonstrates the key actors involved and their performances in Urban Design Festival programme (Figure 7.2).

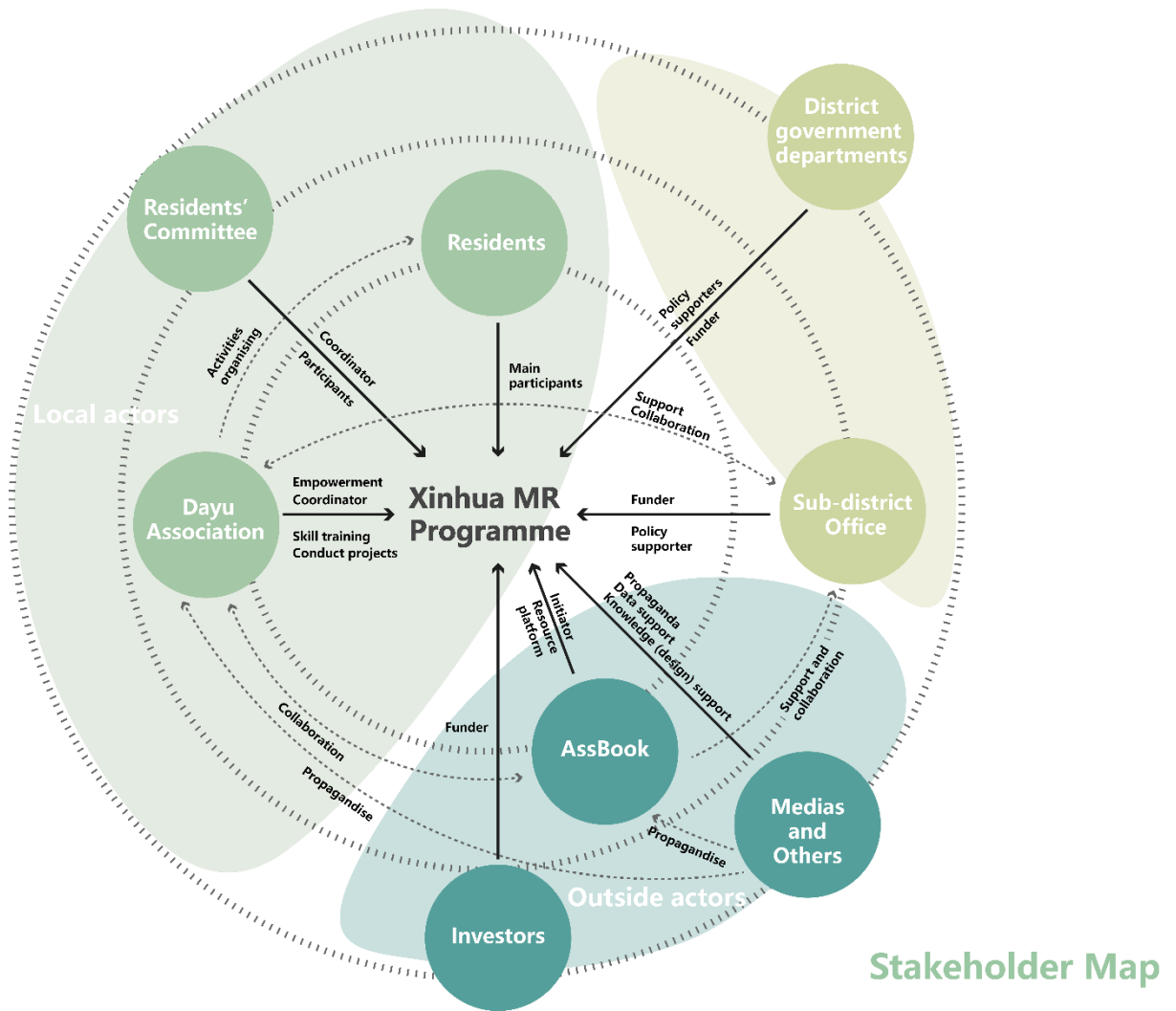


Figure 7.2 Stakeholders and their interaction (Author, 2023)

Initiator and executors

Two selected projects in Shanghai are embedded in the 2018 Urban Design Festival. The Urban Design Festival is a bottom-up event initiated by AssBook, a social media platform with an architectural context. AssBook links governments, enterprises, design groups, residents and NGOs, and has existing connections with many designers who provide resources for the organisation of projects. Moreover, as a media in the architecture field, it has experience in working with governments, making it easier for them to build connections and receive support. As the organiser of the event, AssBook is responsible for finding sponsors and content contributors, such as promoters and specialists.

AssBook working alongside the *Dayu* Community Empowerment Association (referred to as *Dayu* below) were the executors of the festival. AssBook was responsible for organising everything during the festival, including recruiting designers, discussing design schemes, creating and publishing local journals, seeking funding and promoting the event over time. As discussed in the project context, the participatory approach is a key factor in micro-regeneration. Therefore, the festival invited an NGO - *Dayu* - working in the domain of participatory community regeneration. The role of *Dayu* is quite explicit, that is of planning and implementing participatory activities, such as workshops, open days, visiting and local journal co-production. *Dayu* is a community-based organisation established by five architects and urban designers living in *Xinhualu* sub-district. As local residents, the cofounders of *Dayu* wish to introduce participatory approaches to conduct space regeneration and, at the same time, improve the resilience of their communities, leading to more reciprocal actions, and the enhancement of a sense of ownership and belonging, as well as the awareness of built heritage conservation. Focusing on the relationship between neighbourhood regeneration and community empowerment, *Dayu* views itself as an advocate and conflict mediator to intercede in historically tense citizen-administrator relationships. After the festival and the departure of AssBook, *Dayu* became a significant node to link multiple stakeholders and a resource platform, initiating and organising more micro-regeneration projects.

Governments - sub-district office and district bureaus

In this case, although governments were not initiators, the implementation of projects in public spaces cannot proceed without their approval and support. The term 'governments', in this case, refers to three entities: *Xinhualu* Sub-district Office, Shanghai Changning District Commission of Commerce (abbr: SCCC) and the Shanghai Changning Urban Regeneration Office. Each of them has a different role to play. SCCC helps to coordinate and promote government assistance, playing the role of promoter. Before the 2018 Urban Design Festival, AssBook had established connections with officials in SCCC through other projects, which helped to facilitate approval of the festival event. Shanghai Changning Urban Regeneration Office is responsible for supervising and implementing urban regeneration. Here, the Regeneration Office facilitated connections between the project organiser and related government departments as well as regeneration policies. Additionally, the Regeneration Office also provided some funding in terms of symposiums arranged during the festival. *Xinhualu* Sub-district Office supports administrative licensing, project implementation, and coordination with other government departments. During fieldwork, I found that the sub-district office had connections with some local designers,

however, the office cannot initiate one single small-scale space regeneration project because it is inundated with daily work and has scattered requirements from different parts of the local authority. Therefore, the festival event was also an opportunity for the *Xinhualu* Sub-district Office to fulfil its obligations in terms of promoting micro-regeneration projects and the 15-Minute Community Life Circle.

Residents' Committees and residents

Residents' Committees, as residents' self-organisations supervised by the sub-district office, are responsible for coordinating with residents when conducting participatory design activities. Some of them have tight connections with *Dayu* due to the physical proximity and collaboration experience, and acknowledge the requirements of the local residents, which can facilitate co-production procedure within projects. Residents are the main participants of various workshops and construction activities. Since the projects aim to build a 15-Minute Community Life Circle that services local people, residents' opinions and suggestions play an important role in decision-making. Activities such as workshops and open days allow residents to voice their ideas and requirements, they also boost the relationship between designers, *Dayu* and residents.

Investors

Unlike previous government-led urban regeneration projects that were fully funded by government, the Urban Design Festival was only partially funded by local government. The remainder of the funds came from investors. Vanke, one of the biggest domestic real estate developers, was the event's main sponsor and played a crucial role in the regeneration process. Vanke had been working on an urban regeneration project nearby that converted a 100-year-old Columbia Country Club into commercial and office use. Meanwhile, by supporting small-scale regeneration in historical areas, Vanke saw advantages in fulfilling corporate social responsibility in neighbourhoods. From planning, designing to construction, Vanke participated in and guided several projects in the festival. Along with Vanke, PEUGEOT was also an investor in the project but did not participate in too much work. AssBook and local governments also provided partial funding, and the ratio of investment from different parties was 60% (Vanke), 20% (Peugeot), 10% (AssBook) and 10% (local governments).

Media and other supporters

Media played an important role throughout the Urban Design Festival in publicising the process and outcomes of workshops, discussions, design schemes, implementation, and other activities. It is crucial for a bottom-up project to receive more attention from both the masses and practitioners; therefore, the festival invited three media outlets from different fields. In Visible Cities (IVC) is an online community that shares data with the public. In this programme, it mapped the routes, population and points of interest, which became the database for the following research. Urban China is an academic media that recorded and observed the whole process, publishing reviews on its platform to practitioners. Then Sandwich Co. Ltd helped with the creation of a local journal (Xinhua Logue); the participants in local journal production included residents, NGOs, local businesses, and RC, which had a broader influence than academic media.

7.4.2 Projects overview

Neighbourhood Club in Xin Feng Cun

The Neighbourhood Club is located in *Xin Feng Cun* neighbourhood, Lane 669, *Xinhualu* sub-district (Figure 7.3). It is one of the micro-regeneration projects embedded in the sub-district office's regeneration plan, in response to the citywide initiative to improve public spaces. *Xin Feng Cun* is a working-class neighbourhood with six buildings and 250 households. There is a high ratio of elderly residents, with those aged over 60 years accounts for 50%. As an ageing community located in a historical district, *Xin Feng Cun* lacks open space for residents to gather or hold other activities. However, there are some underused spaces which have the potential to be transformed into communal areas.

For example, at the entrance of the community, there is a small common room that measures approximately 1.1 metres in width and 10 metres in length. It used to be a telephone booth and mail room, providing public telephone service. However, with the popularisation of home phones, the space was left unused and part of it was used to stack up express packages. Since there was no activity room in the neighbourhood, some residents brought their own chairs to the room, sitting and conversing together. When the weather was good, residents would sit on a bench by the door. Gradually, the '1 metre indoor + 1 metre outdoor' area had become the communication and activity centre of the community. However, the space was too shabby and

enclosed to be used effectively and it was dangerous staying in the outdoor area because it was close to the community gate, where vehicles enter and exit at will.

A member of the Dayu lives here, and he was always willing to renovate the common room when passing through the community gate. Therefore, when AssBook initiated the Urban Design Festival event, he contacted the director of RC and endeavoured to incorporate the space renewal into the regeneration plan. In this way, the neighbourhood club project was launched. The neighbourhood club was a participatory design project that involved residents, RC, Vanke and NGOs. Approaches such as open day and workshops were introduced to gather residents' opinions as well as revise the design according to feedback.

This project offered a useful open and communal space for the crowded old community. It connected the indoor and outdoor spaces by using a big sliding glass door and bay-window with seats (Figure 7.4). Considering the safety of people who would be using the outdoor space of the club, the community gate was moved 1 metre away from the road. The construction of physical space is the medium that knits the community network; after the project's completion, activities such as community history exhibitions were held around the club space, and a *Wechat*¹⁵ group was created which became the channel for residents to discuss and communicate.

¹⁵ A widely used social media for chatting and story sharing in China, similar to WhatsApp.

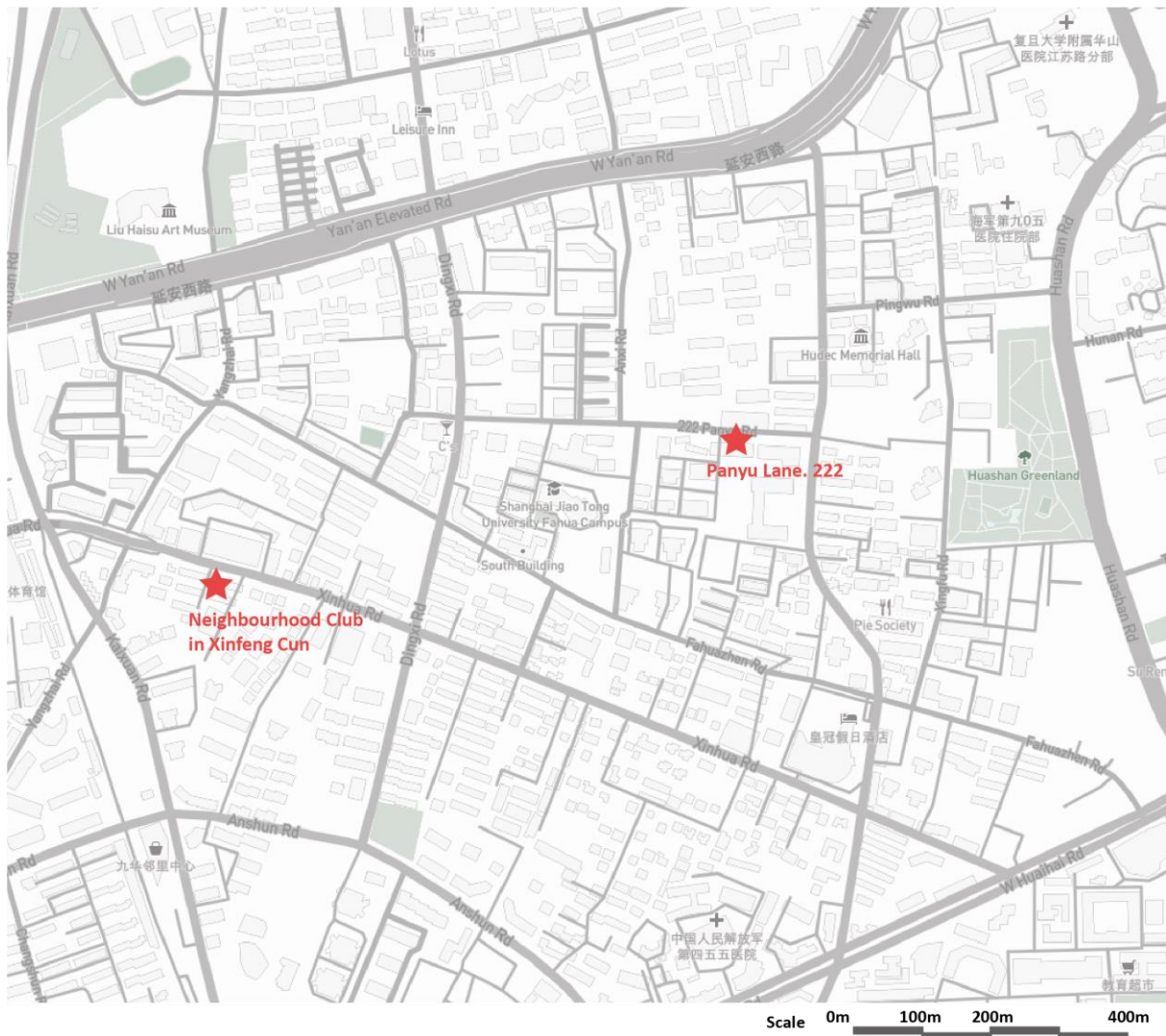


Figure 7.3 Locations of Neighbourhood Club in Xin Feng Cun and Panyu Lane. 222 (Author, 2023)



Figure 7.4 Neighbourhood Club in Xin Feng Cun (left-before, right-after) (Dayu, 2021)

Panyu Lane. 222

Panyu Lane. 222, also known as 'pink lane', was another project within the Urban Design Festival (location see Figure 7.3). Similar to the Neighbourhood club project, the regeneration idea was initiated by a designer in Dayu, Mrs Wu, who lives nearby. The lane was the only route that she could take to leave the community. She found it was quite difficult to pass, especially with a baby stroller. The width of the lane was five metres and was lined with tiny shops. The boundary between the roadway and sidewalk was unclear, with many E-bikes parked on the roadway and stalls occupying the sidewalk. Therefore, she contacted the RC to explore ways of conducting a renewal project. However, it was hard to initiate a 'bottom-up' project due to the complex situation of the lane and power limitation. The lane was managed by the sub-district office but was related to three RCs, and there was a plan to regulate shops.

Despite the failure of the 'bottom-up' initiation, there was an Urban Design Competition organised by the government in 2017, and the *Panyu* community was designated as the competition site. Making use of this opportunity, Mrs Wu collaborated with her partner to conduct a holistic survey of the *Panyu* community and establishing a Wechat group in which the members were local residents. Afterwards, the design team organised several workshops to allow multiple stakeholders to co-design the community, laying the foundation for the following physical regeneration project.

In 2018, *Panyu Lane. 222* was chosen as a site for the Urban Design Festival. The reasons for its selection were threefold: the designer hoped to improve the lane's condition, the sub-district office wished to align the space to correspond with the municipal government's regeneration plan, Vanke, as the developer of a nearby regeneration project, hoped to help beautify the lane. The project's concept was the 'walking experiment' which involved removing the elevation difference between the sidewalk and roadway and adding infrastructure for social activities and children (Figure 7.4). The project aimed to provide a better walking experience and activity space for residents, but governance issues persisted after its completion.



Figure 7.5 Panyu Lane 222 (left one -before regeneration, right one-after regeneration)
(Dayu, 2021)

7.4.3 Co-production process

These two single projects were initiated by the designers, who adopted participatory and co-productive approaches for the project implementation. Actors involved in each project are discussed in section 7.4.1. The collaborative relationship emerged spontaneously, especially the *Dayu* creating a 'catfish effect'¹⁶ in heritage communities by mobilising and empowering residents to participate in public space regeneration projects, sharing friendly and creative ideas relating to the future of the community and, eventually, influencing funding.

Both projects started with collaboration among the design team, RCs, and representative residents. With help from the RC and several residents, design teams conducted surveys, including gathering basic information, asking about people's requirements, and identifying site issues. The main designers and assistants from the Vanke then summarised key issues and requirements which needed further discussion. Subsequently, with the organisation by *Dayu*, workshops and open days, which offered opportunities for the residents to make their voice heard and build connections and better information exchange between designers. In open days, participatory design approaches included places satisfaction mapping, vision voting, and design schemes voting. Here, the open day activity in *Xin Feng Cun* attracted almost one-third of the community families to join, and the one in *Panyu Lane 222* unpacked the tension regarding space rights, such as the sidewalk space occupation issue. After the open day, several rounds of

¹⁶ The catfish effect refers to the motivating effects of strong competition on weaker individuals.

discussion took place among various stakeholders to revise the design schemes, and the governments supervised the design process. The construction was implemented by professional teams, while the design teams and residents decorated the site together.

However, the influence of open day activities and workshops is limited, especially in *Panyu Lane 222*, as there were still many stakeholders, such as some elderly people and shop owners who did not participate in the co-production and voice their opinions. Besides, the open day cannot unearth the buried conflicts and contradictions that have accumulated over many years. Tensions exist between commercial tenants and local government, local residents and migrants, as well as commercial tenants and local residents. Therefore, the implementation of the project was not smooth and some infrastructure had to be moved due to disagreements and even destruction by some residents' or shop owners'. The co-production process in this project did not mediate multiple stakeholders' interests successfully, resulting in the abandonment of some original design plans.

Apart from the activities focusing on the sites, there were several general activities and events organised by the festival organiser which attracted and empowered not only the elderly residents, but also the young and middle-aged residents. For instance, the 'neighbourhood walk' activity allowed young migrants to understand the community where they live and build connections with their neighbours; the community-based workshops helped local residents understand the history of the community and promoted a sense of belonging. In the end, the outcomes of these two projects received high reputation and recognition, as they met the users' requirements and facilitated community empowerment and sustainable development.

7.4.4 Post-construction

After the construction, both Neighbourhood Club and *Panyu Lane. 222* have become hubs for community activities and connections. For the neighbourhood club in *Xin Feng Cun*, it has become a place for elderly people to rest. Inside the club, there were shared bookshelves, community guest books and an exchange corner. In October 2019, *Dayu* held a community history exhibition in the neighbourhood club, which brought together long-time residents to share memories and information about the place. The exhibition drew a lot of attention, and the functional space has become a medium for public activities and promoting social interaction. *Panyu Lane.222* has brought publicity back to the community, as the public space, once occupied by shops and restaurants, has been returned to the public. Infrastructure such as benches and

children's play equipment provides space for local residents and has transformed the negative environment into a socialising space. Additionally, the level difference between road and sidewalk has been removed and replaced by car arresters to protect pedestrians and make the area more accessible for people with wheelchairs and baby carriages. In January 2019, the first Xinhua Community Festival was held here, which brought together more residents and nearby neighbours to explore the pleasures of living in the area.

However, there were issues regarding governance and management, especially in *Panyu Lane*. 222. The construction of *Panyu Lane*. 222 project was finished in November 2018, and although it provided a better place for many people, the space was destroyed in the beginning of 2019 by the district-level government-appointed construction teams who implemented sewer modification and 'specialty neighbourhood'. The lane became a garbage site, and the car arresters were dismantled. This circumstance was caused by the lack of a holistic plan and sufficient information. As the designer said: "If we knew about the following government projects, we could coordinate the process and schedule of the project." Despite the original destruction of the lane and after the sewer and specialty neighbourhood projects were finish, the RC organised the self-governance of the lane with the guidance of the sub-district office, establishing a self-governance team who managed the lane ever since.

Apart from the physical change of the environment, another vital influence of the projects is that *Dayu* Empowerment Association set down roots in *the Xinhualu* sub-district and became the key node for implementing micro-regeneration projects as well as building networks. Since 2019, *Dayu* has organised Community Festivals every year, bringing the commercial tenants, residents and local governments together. It has even enabled ordinary people to establish several associations, such as a mutual benefit association, a commercial tenants association, and a mothers' group. *Dayu* also empowers local people to publish the local magazine, *Xinhua Logue* (Figure 7.6). As a community-based NGO, *Dayu* maintains a good connection with the RC and the sub-district office, which allows it to obtain more opportunities to participate in micro-regeneration projects supported by the government. From 2019 to 2021, *Dayu* joined nearly ten micro-regeneration projects in the *Xinhualu* sub-district, providing participatory design organising services. More importantly, *Dayu* explored the mechanism of 'multi-stakeholder governance' which has been scaled out to other districts of Shanghai and even other cities in China.



Figure 7.6 Local magazine - *Xinhua Logue* (Dayu, 2022)

The diagrams (Figures 7.7 and 7.8) below demonstrate the process and timeline of the two selected projects.



Figure 7.7 Timeline of Neighbourhood Club in *Xin Feng Cun* (Author, 2023)



Figure 7.8 Timeline of *Panyu Lane. 222* (Author, 2023)

7.5 Attributes analysis – resourcefulness, connectivity and capital building

In this section, I examine three attributes: resourcefulness, connection and social capital building to explore how these practices enhance community resilience by expanding the resource pool, connecting both social and physical resources, and enhancing *guanxi* building.

7.5.1 Resourcefulness

In general, resourcefulness means the availability of resources such as materials and financial resources, skills and knowledge, and the recognition of cultural resources (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013). In this research, I found that resourcefulness in the community regeneration realm relies on not only the availability of physical resources (such as spaces) and short-term project resources, but also on human resources, media resources, and financial resources. The analysis is developed based on participatory observation and in-depth interviews, bearing in mind the processes and influence of micro-regeneration practices.

Availability of short-term project resources

One characteristic of urban planning in China is its emphasis on long-term planning. Policy reviews indicate that the planning for a city or district is typically over a five, or even ten-year period. To achieve the sustainability and resilience goals mentioned in policies, actions such as dividing the long-term goals into short-term projects are effective ways. Short-term projects mean projects that can be finished within one year, or even a shorter time period. The initiators can be the government or grassroots organisations, sponsors could be government or social parties, and the projects could be physical space regeneration or cultural events. The merits of the availability of short-term projects resource are twofold. Firstly, sustainability or resilience is not something that communities possess, but rather, it is the act of facilitating sustainable or resilient development. Therefore, it is the vision that guides the actions of communities as well as government, aiming to avoid the lack of community revitalisation caused by job performance orientation. Secondly, short-term projects such as the Neighbourhood Club and *Panyu Lane*. 222 Regeneration mentioned above support the connection between various stakeholders and promote more local actors to join the local-based network. In other words, long-term planning needs to find a way to benefit from short-term actions. Thereby, establishing a short-term projects resource library under the guidance of higher-level policies could help split the ambition

into daily life and actions and anchor the impact on the ground. As a founder and designer of Dayu said:

Long-term vision and short-term projects are not in conflict with each other. Specifically, if every micro-regeneration project could support the networking of different actors and engage more local people, abundant and continuous actions could lead to a change in local culture and even people's awareness.

It is important to leave a trace of short-term projects. Physical micro-regeneration projects are good ways to accumulate influence and resonate with the resilience goal.

(Designer/Founder 2-1)

On the other hand, the availability of short-term project resources could benefit the effective utilisation of external resources, such as financial and policy resources. In the case of the Urban Design Festival, because *Dayu* obtained the resources for several space regeneration projects, they could match the external resource from Vanke to Neighbourhood Club and *Panyu Lane*. 222 projects, helping to promote the successful implementation of the projects. In Chapter 6, I argued that micro-regeneration projects supported by the government are usually limited by time period. Sponsors or funders, no matter whether they are government or enterprises, wish to witness the outcomes and impact of the projects as soon as possible. However, due to the constraints of administrative procedures, the implementation of micro-regeneration projects is often anticlimactic. Therefore, building a short-term project resource pool allows the gradual exploration and initiation of potential micro-regeneration actions. Then, when external resources are available, initiators or organisers could connect projects with resources effectively. As a researcher mentioned in a workshop that I attended in fieldwork:

Every short-term project task from the higher-level government has time and financial limitations. In Shanghai, we have some short-term events regarding community development every year. How to utilise the resources and withstand the pressure is vital for the sustainable development of the communities.

It is difficult to organise a project in a short period of time. If we have a resource library that is built based on residents' needs gradually, we might be able to mobilise local citizens easier, and more importantly, build a local human resource pool and network.

(Researcher 2-1)

There were also challenges arising. Due to the complicated built environment, diverse population composition, and special requirements for the protection of historic buildings, different historical communities exhibit significant differences in their resource needs. This presents challenges in the allocation of resources during community renewal, especially when different resources are managed by different government departments. In addition, certain issues in community renewal may require planners to integrate and coordinate the demands of multiple departments, which also poses challenges for decision-making and communication mechanisms. The complex departmental structure, to some extent, reduces the effectiveness of resource coordination.

Availability of human resources

As argued in the last section, it can be challenging to have good organisation and management when initiating a new short-term project. Building a pool of human resources can be an effective way to solve this issue. For instance, after the completion of Urban Design Festival, Dayu was able to attract many residents and young people to join the following activities: the Dayu Canteen, community journal creation, community festival co-production, amongst others. During the 2021 Shanghai Urban Space Art Season (referred as SUSAS 2021), many local-based activities such as 'One m² Plan' and 'Living for Life Exhibition' were initiated and performed by local people, with the guidance and organisation of Dayu. One of the reasons for the success of these various and wonderful urban-related short-term projects is the gathering of young people as a resource during and after the Urban Design Festival. As one participant of the actions said:

People themselves are an important resource. Why are there so many successful activities in Xinhualu subdistrict? It is because there are young people with agency living here. They love the atmosphere here and their jobs or work are related to culture or urban spaces, more or less. Their awareness

is consistent with the community's development vision - sustainability.

Therefore, wonderful micro-regeneration projects have been brewed.

(Resident 2-1)

Centred around Dayu, there is a resource network in *Xinhualu* sub-district. As a local-based organisation with architectural background, Dayu gathered multiple resources. By mapping out the area, Dayu has identified available spaces that could be used for future regeneration or other actions. By organising Urban Design Festival, Dayu has connected with a number of designers who can join future urban development projects. By initiating the Community festival, Dayu has also got to know local businesses and helped them to build a local business association. During the lockdown following the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak in 2020, the local business association provided reciprocal assistance, reflecting the community's resilience when confronted with risks. Furthermore, a volunteer team and key opinion leaders were recognised, who promoted the implementation of diverse projects. As the director of AssBook said:

Urban regeneration needs multiple powers. In the system of urban regeneration, we need collaboration among people in different professions. Some are in charge of organisation, coordination or empowerment, while some are in charge of advocacy or audition. Only in this way can the city or community create a better context for possible initiatives in the future and maintain the vitality of the city.

(Founder/Director 2-2)

A local-based NGO-centred resource pool has its benefits, especially in China. Due to the administrative system, heads and leaders of governments in China change frequently, usually every two years in Shanghai. Thereby, government-centred resources could be unstable (this has also been highlighted by interviewee in Beijing case). A local-based NGO-centred resource pool could be anchored to the place and is redundant and flexible to be used. However, it still has vulnerabilities. If the NGO leaves the district, the resource pool might also be broken as well. This has been evidenced by Dayu when the team was invited to other districts to organise micro-regeneration projects. Although the team promoted to collect human resources during the projects, the resource pool and the projects were not maintained well when Dayu left after their completion.

We still prefer to do projects in the Xinhualu sub-district. We are based here and are familiar with the local requirements, the conflicts, the people and the authorities. Community revitalisation cannot be completed quickly. It needs time to knit the resource network.

(Designer/Founder 2-1)

Availability of media and economic resources

The cases in Shanghai reflect the importance of media resources for community development, especially cyber resources. The sociologist Manuel Castells (2012) believes that the information society has produced a new form of social organisation and constructed a “new global public sphere”. In the practice of community revitalisation, online communities have become a significant empowerment tool and communication platform, being an effective pathway for public participation and crucial media for resource distribution. Features (i.e., flexibility and freedom) offered by the Internet allow participants to engage in public affairs at any time, interact with strangers, and move between different discussions quickly. In the case of *Panyu Lane. 222*, the designer initiated an online discussion by creating a WeChat group that attracted dozens of interested residents. The Internet builds an online public space, and its feature of mobility breaks through spatial and regional limitations, allowing participants to share opinions and stories whenever and whatever possible, enhancing the degree of participation, especially among young people. Moreover, the internet reduces the cost of public engagement and promotes offline actions. Online discussions regarding *Panyu Lane. 222* regeneration facilitated offline workshops. Participants who maintained a continuous interest in the project were not satisfied with the distance of the virtual world, which led to face-to-face meetings and further accumulated human resources. After finishing the project, the WeChat group was named *Xinhualu Neighbours Group* and attracted over 500 people to join, becoming a platform for local residents to consult, exchange unused items, organise hobby groups, and co-produce community markets. During the Covid-19 period, local commercial tenants shared information online and self-organised to send masks to local residents, realising the interaction between online and offline mutual assistance.

Online public space is more inclusive and is an important tool for Dayu to involve more people engaging in community revitalisation. People can resonate with each other's values through online communities, while online media provides multiple avenues for self-organise and expression, which may enhance the sense of belonging. During and after the Urban Design

Festival, Dayu ran an official account through WeChat to disseminate information, which had several sections. For example, the 'Community Revitalisation Canteen' was for experience sharing and lecture recordings, and 'Xinhua Making' was for local information sharing and releasing activities. By constructing a culture of real virtuality, Dayu was able to promote the building of place value and involve more stakeholders to pay attention and think about community revitalisation. A member of the *Neighbours Group* mentioned in interview that:

You can choose to reply to messages or not in WeChat groups. It helps to reduce pressure and encourages the involvement of more people... I am subscribed to Dayu's official account and join activities that I am interested in from time to time. It encourages me to think about our community and the publicness of spaces.

(Participant 2-2)

Economic resources are also crucial in the implementation of micro-regeneration. The involvement of social investment from Vanke and PEUGEOT contributed to the implementation of the micro-regeneration project. Local authorities often lack resources to support small-scale projects without specific appropriation from higher-level government. However, small-scale projects that happen around residents can really influence their interests and attitudes toward the neighbourhood. Therefore, the involvement of social investment provides an alternative way to achieve community regeneration goals in times of government financial stringency. Moreover, it provides opportunities to designers to practice public participation, understand the 'folk' knowledge, and build connections with their 'guests'.

In normal government-led urban regeneration projects, it is nearly impossible for designers to have face-to-face interaction with users of spaces before design.

(Designer 2-3)

It avoided conflicts in advance. In top-down projects, designs are usually the 'exhibition' of designers, and we do not know if users need them. Sometimes

the grandeur of an elite designer can be a burden to some people from the start.

(Designer 2-4)

Summary

Urban regeneration can encounter various challenges and stresses, therefore, resilient community needs to be resourceful and prepare in advance for both challenges and opportunities. In general, resourcefulness implies that people and institutions are able to find different ways to achieve goals during shocks or when under stress. In this research, I found that the availability of multiple resources is critical for long-term resilience building. The availability of short-term projects benefits the response to higher-level plans and policies, and utilises external resources and opportunities. Local-based NGOs, RCs, and sub-district offices especially need this resource since they can quickly and easily understand policy trends, thereby better connecting reserved projects with resources. Adequate project reserves can promote the continuous occurrence of micro-regeneration. Continuous micro-regeneration projects can stimulate local residents to follow community development and benefit the gathering of human resources. Human resources are vital to successful project initiatives. Finally and importantly, in the current era, media resources cannot be ignored, especially cyber resources. Online interest groups make it possible to involve more stakeholders, disseminate information easier and encourage self-organisation. Online communities have become the crucial empowerment tool and platform for community development, and an influential pathway for effective resource mobilisation and distribution. These three resources are not isolated from each other but present a triangular relationship of mutual support and promotion. The potential challenge is how to facilitate the implementation of short-term projects initiated by residents in the absence of external resources, as failure to do so could potentially undermine their enthusiasm for community development and impede the accumulation of human resources. Another barrier could be the information safety of cyber resources. The open nature of online resources may actually impact people's willingness to express themselves, as they may fear information leaks and conflicts arising from their statements.

7.5.2 Connectivity

Connectivity as a resilience attribute means the degree to which the nodes of a network are directly connected with each other, and the relationships between people and organisations. In the field of urban studies, connectivity could be explored from two perspectives - social

connectivity and physical connectivity. Social connectivity, in this research, can be articulated from the perspective of a place-based and interdependent network, while physical connectivity, in the case of Shanghai, could be understood in the context of the 15-Minute Community Life Circle Building.

Social connectivity: place-based network

During the fieldwork, practitioners emphasised the term ‘place-based’ in both interviews and workshops. ‘Place-based’ (*zai-di-de* 在地 in Chinese) is an adjective that describes the institutions, people and relationships that are located, generated, or anchored in certain places. The place-based network is considered a critical element for sustainable community development.

A place-based network can link resources adequately, facilitate the growth of resource networks, and accumulate social capital. *Dayu*, as a *place-based* NGO, played an important *intermediate* role. For a community’s long-term development, a place-based association may be able to understand the real needs of the community and insist on unified values. Therefore, the association could attract and link useful resources when it outputs the value to other parties. Since the founders of *Dayu* are local residents with their own networks, both inside and outside the community, they facilitate the expansion of resource networks when they are gathered (Figure 7.9) and become the intermediate to link various stakeholders, promoting collaboration and co-production. This network continues to grow along as members join and people become more familiar with resources when implementing projects.

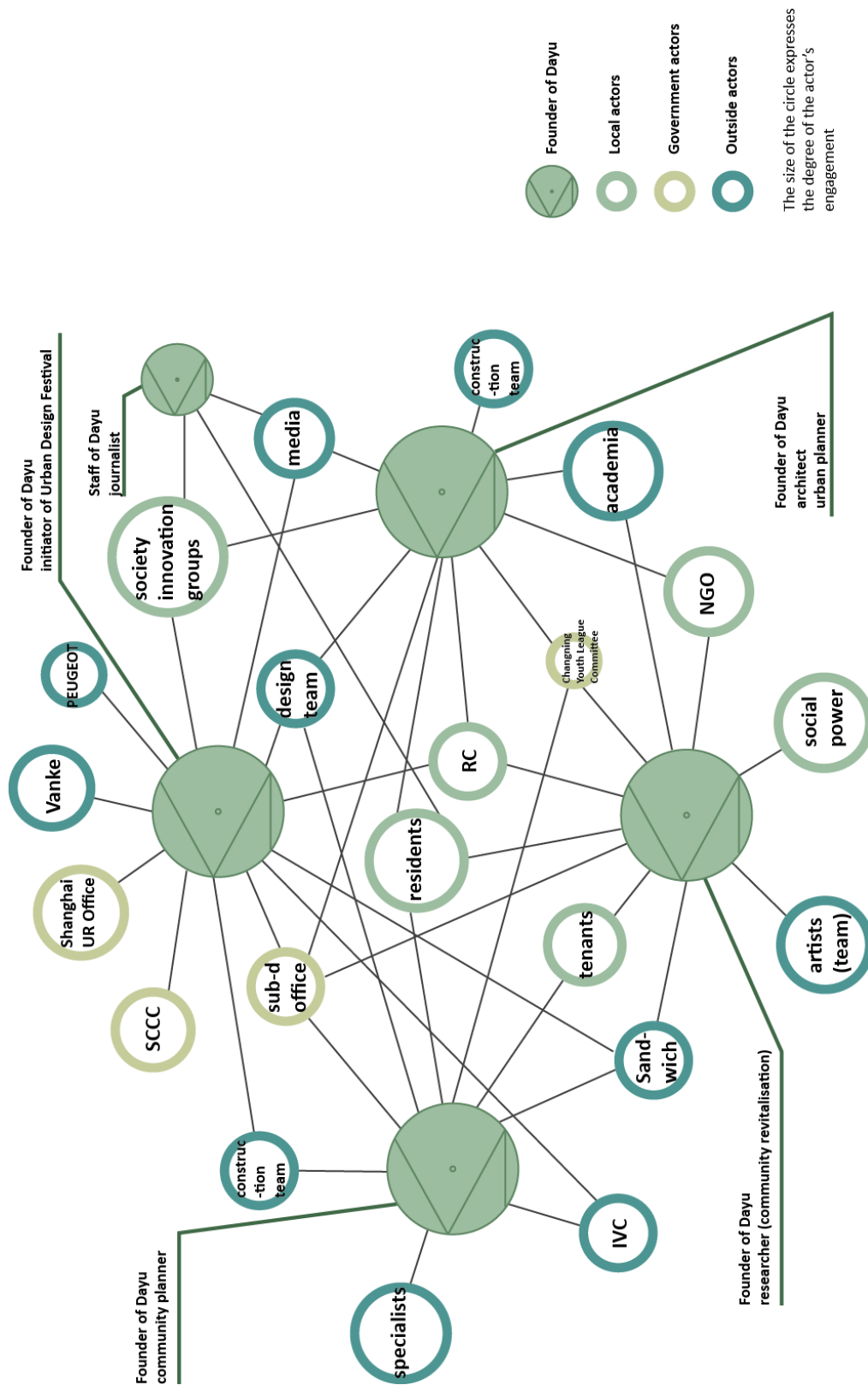


Figure 7.9 Place-based network (Author, 2023, based on Zheng and Wu, 2020)

Community is a complex system which requires constant cultivation. If a local organisation merely focuses on completing projects and does not seek in-depth ways to realise sustainability, the provided carrier (i.e., regenerated public spaces) may not be used by residents, and completed projects may struggle to gain the participation and recognition of the community. As a result, the endogenous capacity of the community will be difficult to build, and it will be challenging for a local NGO to fulfil its role as a *catalyst*. *Dayu* has insisted on organising a Community Festival for five years, during which an increasing number of residents engaged in community revitalisation, and the government promoted community micro-regeneration more proactively, which is a result of continuous place-based stimulation. According to a founder of *Dayu*:

In the first Festival, there was little response from neighbours. In subsequent festivals, more and more people joined, and some new mechanisms were generated, such as the tenants association. It was impossible in the first year since only a few people knew us. So, only by keeping continuing in one community can we accumulate social capital continuously.

(Founder/Designer 2-1)

Participants of the Festival also reported that place-based events allow the generation of social capital:

I have attended the festival for two years. It is an excellent opportunity for us to step out of our own limited network and get to know more neighbours and interesting people. Sometimes, our neighbours also hold small-scale activities to keep in touch with each other.

(Resident 2-2)

The place-based network demonstrates its resilience in the face of unexpected risks. In 2020, when the pandemic broke out, *Dayu* utilised its existing connection to initiate 'CAN PLAN' (Community Anti-coronavirus Network Plan) that connected people, which they called 'islands'. The initiation of this plan was based on the network established during several micro-regeneration projects and the Community Festival. It linked more people affected by the

pandemic lockdown, built several groups based on their skills and capacity, and facilitated members to support each other (Figure 7.10). For example, the plan collected residents' difficulties and reported them to local authorities; it also created toolkits for mothers who had to balance childcare and work (Figure 7.11). Here, place-based networks give the potential to cope with vulnerabilities when encountering emergencies by generating reciprocal networks. In accordance with interviewees:

Xinhualu community has the foundation of community revitalisation since we finished several micro-regeneration projects, by using a participatory approach. Therefore, it was easier for this community to establish a reciprocal platform when confronted with the pandemic. Communities that went through community revitalisation had the resilience to withstand the shock of the epidemic. While those without this kind of experience had to rely heavily on top-down outside resources.

(Founder 2-1)

If a community has a certain foundation of community building and a network of people-to-people relationships, then such a community is better able to play a role in the face of major challenges. It was difficult to generate endogenous coping capabilities during the epidemic for communities that had been deserted or who consistently relied on administrative subsidies.

(Researcher 2-2)

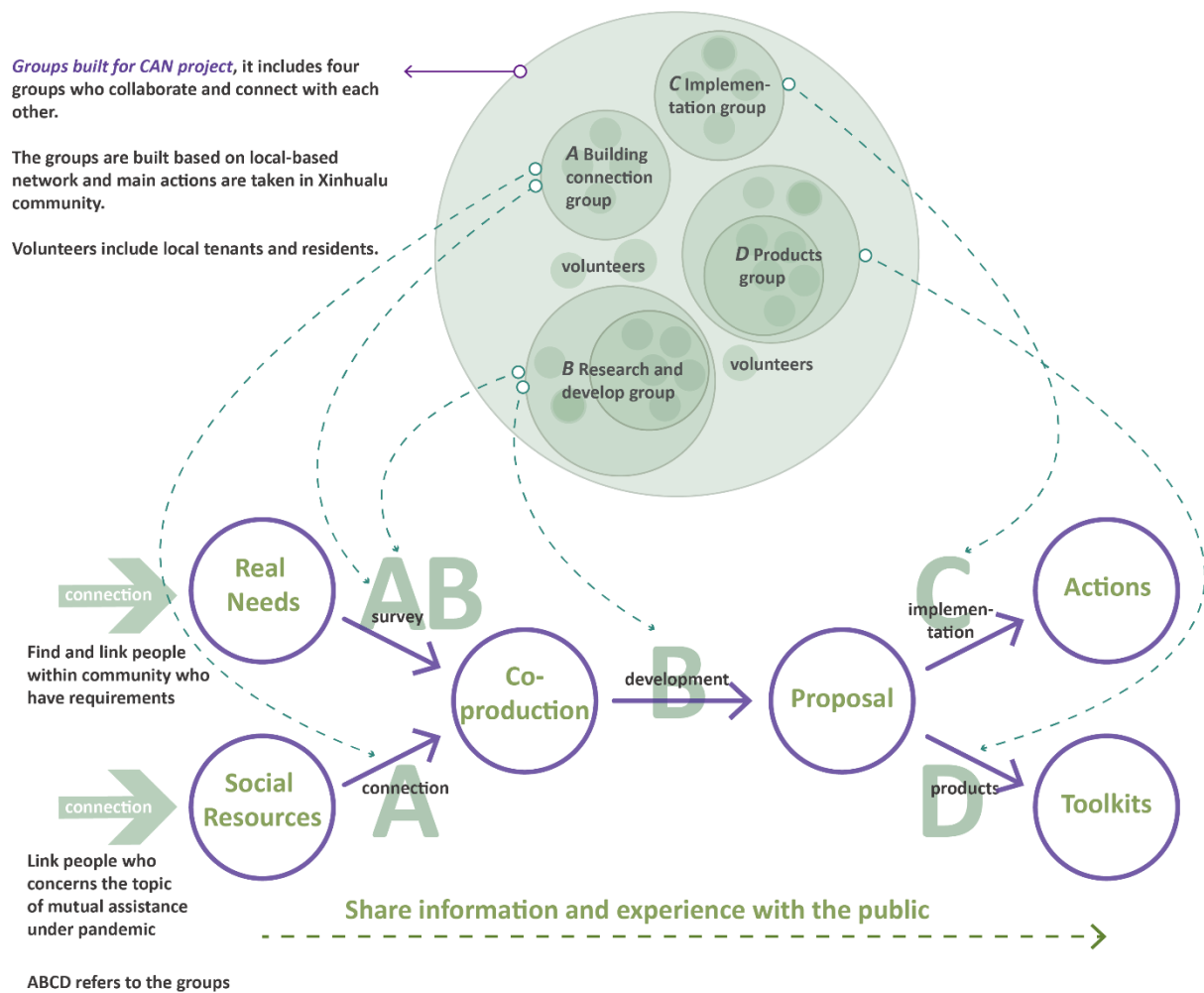


Figure 7.10 The connection within CAN PLAN (Author, 2023, based on Dayu, 2021)



Figure 7.11 Toolkits for mothers during lock-down (Dayu, 2021)

Physical connectivity: 15-Minute Community Life Circle

Physical connectivity refers to the infrastructure that links communities together. In the context of the people-centred urban development concept and the improvement of people's living requirements, it is important to improve the living convenience and respond to the deterioration of the old community environment.

Micro-regeneration is a way to add infrastructure to achieve the goal of the 15-minute Community Life Circle. In historical districts, especially residential areas, open and public spaces can be too rare to satisfy residents' activity requirements. More importantly, in historical conservation areas, demolition is forbidden, and the land usage type cannot be changed. Therefore, micro-regeneration explores residual or underused space resources and transforms them into active public spaces. Neighbourhood Club and *Panyu Lane. 222* are the prototypes in this context. The Neighbourhood Club repurposed an underused telephone room into a common room that provides shelter space for residents within walking distance. *Panyu Lane. 222* also freed up occupied space and offered open space and infrastructures not only to proximate housing, but also neighbouring communities (Figure 7.12).



Figure 7.12 Freeing up open space for communities (Author, 2023)

A number of micro-regeneration projects have been implemented to create a 15-Minute Community Life Circle for local people. Projects were developed with the concept of a workable, liveable, travel-friendly, elderly-friendly, and education-friendly community. The diagram below demonstrates micro-regeneration projects concerning public space, community endowment, and business and children-friendly spaces in the *Xinhualu* sub-district (Figure 7.13). It aims to allow residents to access their daily needs (i.e., housing, food, education, culture and leisure) within walking distance, enhancing residents' sense of belonging, and, to some extent, reducing carbon emissions.

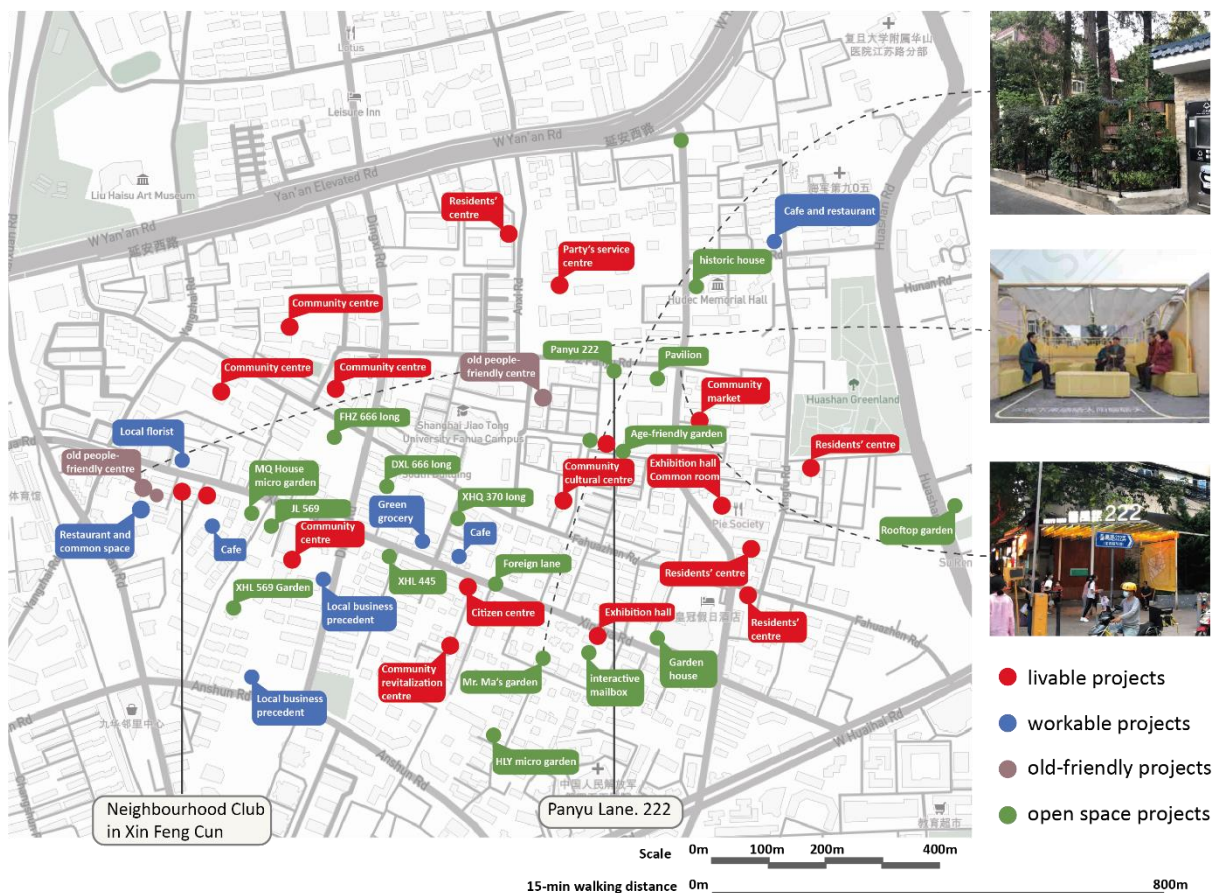


Figure 7.13 Micro-regeneration projects in *Xinhualu* sub-district (Author, 2023)

Summary

Connectivity, in terms of community micro-regeneration, considers both social and physical connection in this research. Compared to the explanation of connectivity within resilience in general and other research, this study highlights the importance of ‘place-based’ networks and the 15-Minute Community Life Circle. The place-based network could gather and anchor local resources to communities as much as possible. With long-term place-based actions, the place-based network facilitates the permeation of awareness, for example, regarding heritage conservation and participatory design, to ordinary people. This, in turn, benefits sustainable development and collective action in the future. Moreover, a place-based network could gather resources rapidly in the face of emergencies, which may further allow respondents to find appropriate solutions. As for 15-Minute Community Life Circle, micro-regeneration is not the major implementation approach. However, within historical districts where vacant land is limited, micro-regeneration yields the possibility of releasing underused spaces and realise the formulation of the 15-Minute Community Life Circle, benefiting residents’ daily life.

7.5.3 Capital building

In Chapter 6, I have discussed social capital building from social networks, general trust, and place attachment, focusing on the collective actions and relationships among ordinary people, government and designers. Some interviewees mentioned that community micro-regeneration is the entry point for benefiting relationships. In this case analysis, the role of micro-regeneration and participatory design is emphasised as a supplement to the Beijing case.

Social capital, especially relational social capital (asserted as *guanxi* in Chinese), refers to connections, often between individuals, which provide or imply the exchange of favours. In general, *guanxi* concerns “the state of two or more entities being related, whether animate or inanimate, concrete or abstract, or human or nonhuman” (Zhang et al., 2019, p. 11). In this research, social capital regards mainly the relationship between humans, but it also encompasses non-humans factors, such as the relationship between people and community spaces. In the case of Beijing, interviewees reported that the trust and reciprocity between residents, as well as between ordinary people and governments, promote collective actions and the initiation of new projects, which further benefit the sustainability of community development. This has also been evidenced in the case of Shanghai, where an increasing number of community-based projects have been initiated and completed alongside the tight *guanxi* built among multiple stakeholders.

In addition, in the case of Shanghai, interviewees emphasised that *guanxi* building is the objective of micro-regeneration. Community revitalisation is a practical way to generate relationships. For *Dayu*, the values of micro-regeneration are twofold: firstly, it improves the hardware - public space and infrastructure - in communities, and secondly, micro-regeneration projects serve as a medium for linking people. These two aspects work in a closed-loop, that is, urban micro-regeneration promotes the rebuilding of harmonious social *guanxi* within the change of economy and society, and then the social *guanxi* facilitates the vitality and sustainability of cities and society. The founders of *Dayu* also highlighted the essence of design in society, which means bringing welfare on the level of social relationships:

Design does not necessarily have to be space or high-tech; its essence should be social. The process of micro-regeneration creates not only new community spaces, further facilitate the birth of new social relations.

(Founder/Designer 2-1)

The uniqueness of physical micro-regeneration has also been emphasised, which includes establishing the value of *guanxi*. Participatory design offers a way to connect various stakeholders, and workshops or events (such as open days and festivals), and also provide more opportunities for people to interact. Subsequently, the construction of physical design projects allows the *guanxi* generated during the participatory design to be anchored on the ground. Following, mass organisations (i.e., hobby groups, reciprocal groups) or governance and maintenance teams might be drawn from the construction project, such as the *WeChat* reciprocal group in *Panyu Lane. 222* project. In this way, the relationship between people can be prolonged. As highlighted by a founder of *Dayu*:

*Micro-regeneration projects effectively improve local people's daily experience. More importantly, there is a co-productive opportunity between new and old households, residents and tenants, as well as people from different generations. In these projects, they hold the same identity and common vision, coming together and getting to know each other. From my point of view, generating *guanxi* is the most valuable outcome.*

(Founder/Designer 2-2)

Community revitalisation takes the opportunity of transforming public facilities and community environment, allowing residents to participate in public affairs, promoting community exchanges, and realising the relationship between people, from alienation to integration.

(Researcher 2-1)

Furthermore, *guanxi* also exists between people and public affairs and between people and community spaces. Participatory design approaches in micro-regeneration encourages inhabitants to engage in community co-production, cultivating their ownership and sense of responsibility, endeavouring to realise the transformation of relationships between people and public affairs from passive to active. The opportunity and capability for citizens to engage in community affairs, accumulate a real sense of gain, and stimulate sustainable and indigenous initiatives through experience, to some extent, impacts the sustainability of community development. Regarding the relationship between people and space, micro-regeneration in the community highlights the social nature of community space by encouraging participation and supporting actions. As emphasised by an interviewee, 'It is not the environment that impacts behaviour, but the reconstruction of social relations that defines the place'.

However, we cannot ignore the difficulty of maintaining continuous interaction between residents and other parties. 'Without repeated actions and events, residents will feel that the matter of community development has nothing to do with them', as reported by an interviewee. This situation brings my argument back to the importance of social learning, the availability of short-term projects, and place-based networks discussed before. These equip ordinary people with skills and knowledge and make it possible for them to take action over time.

Besides the positive influence mentioned above, tensions also exist within projects. This was especially seen between different stakeholders in *Panyu Lane. 222* project. Firstly, there was a tense relationship between the local small business owners and the government. As mentioned in section 7.4, *Dayu* used the open day as a tool to collect opinions, where participants could choose their preferred infrastructure or scene from display panels. The long bench turned out to be the favourite one. Due to financial limitations, the designer decided to use brick-built benches at the end. However, the first bench was taken down by a business owner because the

sub-district office sealed off his storefront, and the brick-built bench seemed to block any hope of him reopening the business (Figure 7.14). In response to this situation, the government turned a blind eye in order to avoid escalating conflicts. Secondly, there was tension between locals and non-locals. Small business owners in *Panyu Lane* are mostly non-locals but have been there for many years. Regarding the matter of placing benches, ‘non-locals’ are the most frequently heard term among designers. As reported by the RC staff many locals have expressed discriminatory comments such as: “We definitely cannot put benches here. Otherwise, they will become a place where these non-locals gather every day to drink and chat!”; “The non-locals are low quality and it’s difficult to reason with them”. Discriminatory comments like these impeded effective communication between designers and residents.



Figure 7.14 The destroyed bench (Dayu, 2020)

These problems that emerged only after the construction reflected an important issue in community building or design, which is: Who should designers/planners listen to? In old communities, there are countless stakeholders, and everyone stands from their own perspective, wanting to gain greater benefits, making the design choices a difficult problem. Bench, which got most voting on open day, turned into the most complained-about issue among RC and designers. The relevance of the participants seems to provide an answer to this contradiction. The participants in the open day are not strongly related to the project (in this project, strongly

related stakeholders should be the small business owners and the recent residents). The party member representatives and enthusiastic residents who were summoned by RC cannot represent the diverse population, especially the group of 'outsider' business owners. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the existing positive and negative *guanxi* on-site and the hidden governance mechanism is important to organisers and designers.

Summary

Micro-regeneration is the entry point and approach to enhance *guanxi*, no matter between humans or nonhumans - public affairs and community space in this research. It allows participants to witness the 'interaction becoming visible reality' and advance sustainable connections. More importantly, as I will discuss in next chapter further, the process of micro-regeneration lends social meaning to spaces, shifting space to a place. Moreover, hidden conflicts need to be explored deeply in advance especially considering the diversity within each community, aiming to avoid escalation and pave the way for future governance.

7.6 Summary

This chapter studies community resilience in the context of micro-regeneration in Shanghai from aspects of resourcefulness, connectivity and capital building. By presenting data from in-depth interviews, observations and secondary data from reports using ideas presented in the literature review and background research, it aims to provide a thorough understanding of the field. Here, indicators involving availability of short-term project resources, human resources as well as media resources within resourcefulness; place-based network and 15-Minute Community Life Circle from social and physical aspects relatively within connectivity have been identified. Moreover, the argument that micro-regeneration is the entry point for capital building has been highlighted and developed further. Compared with general recognition of resilience attributes in urban planning field, community resilience in the context of community planning in urban China emphasises preparation of multiple resources and pays attention to new resource type - cyber resource in this case. In terms of connectivity, 'place-based' connection has been identified specifically. It has been stressed by interviewees that a place-based network seems to be stronger facing changes. As for capital building, I highlight the importance of *guanxi* building no matter between humans or nonhumans and make prominent the impact of space regeneration, viewing participatory micro-scale space renewal as the moment to reshape relationships. It further brings forth the argument about the production of space in terms of community planning strategy transformation in China, which I will discuss in detail in next

chapter. Nevertheless, hidden conflicts could be time bombs for the project implementation and new questions such as preservation and continuation of resources and time coordination between different projects especially those initiated by different parties are rising along with the cases.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings two case studies together to discuss the explanation of community resilience. The first part of this chapter focuses on the debates surrounding the resilience attribute of the transformation and highlights the shift in subjectivity within community development practices, the empowerment and agency, the scaling influence on planning policy, and the production of space in terms of micro-regeneration projects on the social aspects. It emphasises the ‘bouncing forward’ changes in people’s awareness, the policy, and even the mechanism, which takes the requirement and urgency of stock-based planning as an opportunity to pursue innovation and evolution. The second part of this chapter interrogates the interactions between all six attributes of resilience discussed previously and explores the alteration of each attribute’s definition in the context of urban China, particularly at the community development level. This is achieved by making a comparison between the new framework and the original one in the literature review chapter.

8.2 Transformation - How micro-regeneration experiments with a radical shift

As defined in Chapter 2, transformation, as an important aspect of resilience, entails a more radical path to bouncing forward and refers to system shifts, which usually occur when the current regime or system is no longer desirable. Pinho et al. (2013) define transformability in *Resilience Thinking in Urban Planning* as the implementation of policies, plans, programmes, and projects contributing to the change of territory and to its capacity to generate a new system should the original become no longer viable. Keeping these descriptions in mind and bringing two cases together, I find that the importance of micro-regeneration attempts in planning lies in that they provide a transformative way and a new mechanism to involve more voices in imagining and creating better (higher quality of life and people-oriented) communities and even cities. They also promote a deeper democracy in that multiple stakeholders can engage in the community building, rather than only being witnesses. Here, a better city implies a place where more people can connect, see and feel themselves; a better city is a collection of *guanxi* where

the people are the measure of urban regeneration; a better city is a place where everyone can live with more dignity and freedom; and a better city could also support the 'bottom-up' growth of the city with guidance. After three empirical studies, I would like to bring transformation to the core of the discussion. In this vein, this section will be developed from four perspectives: the transformation of subjectivity, capacity and agency building, the scaling-up influence on planning policy, and the production of space.

8.2.1 Transformation of Subjectivity

In both the Beijing and Shanghai cases, the importance of subjectivity (*zhu-ti-xing* 主体性 in Chinese) has been emphasised in terms of the sustainable development of communities over time. In this research, subjectivity can be understood as individual/group empowerment, emphasising empowering the residents and/or NGOs along with their active awareness of change. Cretney (2014) mentioned that resilience highlights the significance of individualism and personal responsibility by highlighting neoliberalism. Nevertheless, in the Chinese urban context, the transformation of subjectivity does not mean emphasising individualism. Instead, it highlights the positive and active role of residents, who should be the main body of community planning. Community gardens and public open spaces are important urban commons in communities. The co-production process is a significant urban commoning process that improves subject's capacity and awareness through collectively creating, using, and managing urban commons, which further contributes to urban resilience (Brown et al., 2012; Petrescu et al., 2016). Therefore, I use the transformation of subjectivity here to argue the changing consciousness and awareness of the grassroots (residents and local businesses in this context) to understand their positive contribution to sustainable community development and progressive social change.

Micro-regeneration, as an experimental tool to explore community resilient development, aims to support residents and/or community-based organisations to be the main actors in community planning. As discussed in Chapter 3, although research on community planning in China pays attention to public participation and social integration, the practical mechanism is still hierarchical and conducts community development in a top-down manner. This spatial regeneration regime has several drawbacks, such as a lack of effective communication and residents' low sense of belonging. In order to mitigate these issues, the community revitalisation approach adopted in the three cases redresses the mismatch between the subjects and the process. Residents and local organisations that have lived in a community for some time, or were

born there have been involved and empowered as the main actors of community regeneration. It is a relatively radical shift compared to the long-term and conventional top-down and elite planning in China. This change gives grassroots-level stakeholders a valid role to engage in community affairs.

It also relates to Lefebvre's (1996) 'right to the city' theory mentioned in Chapter 2, which is concerned with promoting more just and equitable urban development by giving citizens greater control over the planning and decision-making process. In this context, the transformation of planning subjectivity at the community level emphasises the right of a group of people - the ordinary citizens in urban China - to access, live in, engage with, use, and shape the city "in accordance with our heart's desire" (Mao, 2017). During micro-regeneration, groups of residents are able to shape their living environment, especially the shared urban commons that belong to everyone, as per their real needs by collaborating with other parties (planners, RC, local governments and NGOs in this research). They have the means to imagine and create an 'urban world' nearby, which also helps to achieve social justice to some extent. As an interviewed practitioner in Beijing's case highlighted:

Why can physical micro-regeneration projects achieve social and spatial justice to some extent? It is because this kind of project is not the personal show of planners. It is a co-productive outcome of multiple stakeholders, including, especially citizens. Therefore, the justice of a city comes from extensive public engagement.

- Planner (1-3)

However, simply transforming subjectivity is not enough to achieve a radical shift and enhance community resilience. On one hand, conflicts between local authorities and residents still exist, where the shift of local residents' role in community planning has not been implemented in many cases and planning institutions hold the speaking rights. On the other hand, it depends heavily on the residents' capacities to know how to play their roles. This leads to my next section, which discusses empowerment and agency.

8.2.2 Capacity-building and agency

In this section, I consider the relationship between capacity-building and agency, examining how capacity-building can encourage residents and third parties to take action, particularly in the

context of micro-regeneration. As I discussed in both Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 Beijing's cases, Chinese residents are accustomed to waiting for government assistance to deal with the problems or requirements in their daily life, such as improving their living environment, which is the focus of this research. Therefore, capacity-building has been identified as an important prerequisite for agency mobilisation and neighbourhood regeneration (Banks and Shenton, 2001). It also serves social development (Craig, 2007), as well as health and education (Beckley et al., 2008). Capacity-building involves several domains, including community participation, leadership, organisational structure (collaboration in this research), project management, and resource mobilisation (the ability of a community to mobilise resources both from within and beyond itself) (Labonte and Laverack, 2001). Selected cases in this research demonstrate various aspects of capacity-building. For instance, participatory approaches such as workshops and open days have been used in some cases. The integration between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches demonstrate organisational change, and resource identification aims to build a resource library.

The higher expectation of micro-regeneration is to mobilise the wider public to care about urban development and governance by equipping them with knowledge and participatory skills. Indeed, capacity-building is often seen as expecting people lacking in resources to "pull themselves up by their collective bootstraps" (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2004, p. 59). Chaskin (2001, p.295) suggests leveraging existing assets and resources within a community to "solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community". Capacity-building can also shift responsibility from the government to the community or civil society. However, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the objectives of participatory micro-regeneration in China are not to transfer the onus of community development to ordinary people, but to mobilise them and improve their awareness of social responsibility. This position aligns with the requirement for multiple agencies in resilience building (Baibarac and Petrescu, 2017). Agency refers to the ability to act based on rationality and self-awareness (Ahearn, 2001), and people's ongoing interaction with different social fields (Bourdieu, 1984). Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 963) further place the agency in the flow of time, which is simultaneously "informed by the past (in its habitual aspect) and "oriented towards the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and towards the present (as the ability to make judgments and choices to deal with emergent situations)". In other words, they discuss agency as consisting of three components: iteration (to the past), projectivity (to the future), and practical evaluation (to the present) (Xiao, 2016, p. 37).

This study has found that the transformations that micro-regeneration practices undergo to meet the requirements of stock-based planning, as well as environmental and social changes, are primarily shaped by the practical evaluative and projective dimensions of agency proposed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998).

The practical evaluation strategies refer to the efforts made by residents' and third parties'¹⁷ to engage in the implementation of micro-regeneration projects in response to the challenges arising from built environment deterioration and evolving situations. Such instances include the residents' participation in organising and constructing garden projects, the support of post-construction governance teams, and the coordinative roles of NGOs in projects. In the discussed cases, residents guided and organised by planners or organisers have been given opportunities to witness and experience participatory planning processes, such as workshops and open days. This allows them to make decisions on whether to join the following construction and governance phases or not. As such, the agency is not the ability to be generated from zero, but the one to be mobilised.

Then, by shifting to future orientation, the agency highlights not only the residents' and third parties' willingness to participate in community development and public affairs, but also their ability to initiate new projects. Furthermore, local governments should be aware of and support such initiatives. From a long-term perspective, residents and third parties can move beyond constraints to project development solutions that may foster opportunities to restructure the sustainable community development strategy. These possibilities are illustrated in discussions regarding Dayu's projective strategies of initiating and building a community revitalisation centre in the *Xinhualu* subdistrict to generate more grassroots proposals for community development. Moreover, we can observe governments' shifting attitudes towards bottom-up initiatives, providing more space for grassroots initiatives to facilitate new and alternative solutions. These efforts would help to break up the contradiction where governments input much effort but cannot meet people's real needs in the present. Nevertheless, the performance of local government depends on the leader's personal agency to a great extent. Capacity-building is not

¹⁷ It implies those participants except for authorities and residents, especially referring to NGOs. In this research, the SHHPS in the Beijing case and Dayu in the Shanghai case are the representatives of third parties.

only an endeavour to be put on the grassroots level, but also on authorities who hold a great deal of power and resources.

In the end, it is not sufficient to enhance community resilience merely by providing local level initiatives with capacities and stimulating their agency. Positive community development requires mechanisms and policy insurance, especially in China, where state control is heavy-handed. Such policies and mechanism would open a channel to deliver residents' voices and further facilitate deeper democracy. This leads to the next part of the discussion regarding the scaling-up influence of micro-regeneration - policy shift.

8.2.3 Scaling up - the responsible planner policy

Recent urban planning discussions on scaling participation have argued the impact of three types: scaling out, scaling up, and scaling deep (Horn et al., 2018; De Carli and Frediani, 2021). This section focuses on the scaling-up influence, that implies the "greater impact lies in changing institutions, policy, and law" (Riddell and Moore, 2015, p. 3). As discussed in section 6.6.2, the responsible planner system has been tested and implemented in many cities. In tandem with the system, the 'responsible planner' policy has also been enacted.

The implementation of the responsible planner policy implies the transformation of community planning work from conventional technical work to extensive governance behaviour, in line with the requirements of advancing the modernisation of China's system and capacity for governance of the central government. This policy introduces shifts in two aspects: on the one hand, the role of planners has changed from traditional technical workers to managers, communicators, and coordinators within planning processes. It requires planners to encourage negotiation between different groups, to pay attention to justice among various stakeholders, and to emphasise communication, empowerment, and capacity-building progress (Tang, 2021, 2020). On the other hand, responsible planners have the power to influence the arrangement of governance right within the grassroots-level planning progress. They play a special role in grassroots governance, enjoying the right of intervention in the construction of micro urban spaces and establish close ties with traditional governance elites, which allows them to initiate public participation in planning under certain conditions. The work of responsible planners can be viewed as a process that allocates the rights of participation, formulation, and decision-making of planning from the

state to society, which aligns with one aspect of political decentralisation¹⁸ in China following its opening up (Tang, 2021; Yu, 2018).

Moreover, the key objective of implementing the responsible planner system is not to promote physical space renewal. Instead, it lies in the evaluation of whether the intervention of responsible planners alters the power structure within the grassroots construction movement and facilitates the reconstruction of *guanxi* between elite decision-making and residents' self-governance. In terms of power reconstruction, it involves two dimensions. The first one is about the empowerment of subdistrict offices, which implies that local governments gain more power and responsibilities. It is also the impetus for the establishment of the responsible planner system. The second dimension regards the empowerment of various non-government roles, such as communities, residents, and NGOs, where responsible planners provide impetus. In three cases, I found that empowerment is a kind of practice movement and an open and democratic process, where planners comprehend conflicts, preferences, and interest demands through community-based investigation. The responsible planners are expected to provide an external force that can help the multi-subject eliminate communication barriers, change their social environment, and tap into their potential, with the goal of cultivating and improving their ability and skills and further obtaining more resources and means to participate in, influence, and control social life. As the co-founder of Dayu said:

Dayu, as the responsible planner team in this [Xinhualu] neighbourhood, plays the role as gardener. We were loosening the soil (this is a metaphor. It means mitigate the tension between different stakeholders) especially for the first two years, allowing the place-based tension (guanxi) to be eased. We endeavoured to allow stakeholders in communities, such as government and residents, residents themselves, local businesses, and government, to recognise the possibility of mutual communication and negotiation.

- Planner (2-1)

¹⁸ Keping Yu (2018) deems the massive political decentralisation in China after the reform and opening-up from three aspects: decentralisation from central to local, from government to enterprise, and from the state to the society.

The responsible planner policy provides a pathway for changing the grassroots planning governance system and power structure. The diagram (Figure 8.1) below illustrates the differences in power dynamics before and after the policy's enactment. As discussed in Chapter 4, prior to the policy, the municipal government, the district government, and the sub-district office formed a vertical administrative relationship under the bureaucratic system. The work of the residents' committees was still to promote the implementation of administrative affairs and information transmission at the bottom of society, perpetuating the vertical hierarchical relationship. More importantly, planners and NGOs' power of intervention in governance and decision-making was weak, with planners delivering services to the government and 'speaking truth to power' (向权力讲述真理 in Chinese, which means to confront or challenge those in positions of authority with the truth). After the policy's implementation, observation shows that more stakeholders engaged in the grassroots planning governance, leading to a more balanced and multi-directional interaction.

Upon analysing the case study, it becomes apparent that the implementation of the responsible planner system is significantly impacted by the level of empowerment. Literally, responsible planners can introduce communities and residents into planning and governance by initiating public participation and implementing open decision-making, thereby influencing and changing the power distribution pattern in urban space construction. However, differences in governance cognition and action capacity between various sub-district offices and responsible planners can affect the power weight obtained by subjects other than the government through empowerment, and change the working mode and method of community regeneration at the grassroots level. Notably, the term 'grassroots' typically refers to the Communist Party's efforts to mobilise and organise individuals and groups at the local level to support the party's policies and objectives. Within this context, the relationship between the responsible planner and the traditional grassroots governance elite, including officials in sub-district offices and RC, is a critical factor in determining the transformation of grassroots planning and governance. Specifically, the extent to which responsible planners are empowered by the sub-district office is a key consideration in this relationship.

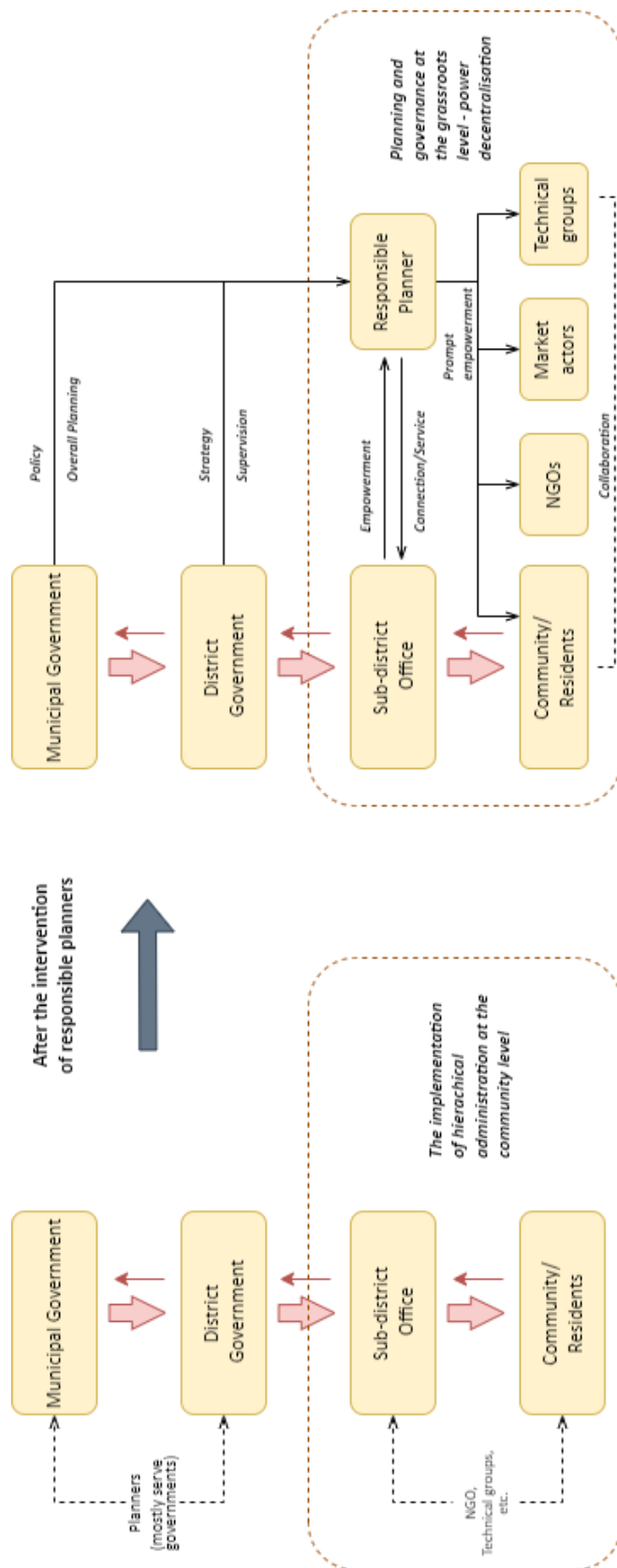


Figure 8.1 Power pattern before and after the intervention of responsible planner (Author, 2023 altered from Tang, 2021)

8.2.4 The production of space

It has been argued that the current community micro-regeneration and community revitalisation projects transfer the focus from physical space to social dynamics (Liu and Deng, 2016; Liu and Shen, 2018, 2020). These initiatives aim to realise social goals (such as justice, health and poverty reduction), through the production of space. This transformation from 'producing space' to 'the production of space' in the context of community development corresponds to the shift in emphasis on urban development from incremental planning to stock-based planning, as discussed in Chapter 4. Here, Henri Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space was introduced to explain this transformation, since it provides the pathway to investigate the integration between society and space. According to Lefebvre, space does not passively accommodate various social relations, but is a mode of social production, which plays a decisive role in the continuation of social reproduction. Therefore, space is both produced by society and produces society in turn.

The practices in this research pursue the production of space from three perspectives: physical public space, social public space, and network public space. Physical public space is the carrier of community revitalisation. For example, In 2018, the Urban Festival announced activities (i.e., open days and workshops) in public spaces and future regeneration sites to encourage public engagement. People of different ages encountered on the site, leading to more discussions and interactions than before. The Neighbourhood Club case became a place to gather information. The ageing-friendly design here provides more chances for elderly people to meet, and the 'guest book' here becomes a channel to collect residents' opinions. In 2022, Dayu realised its ambition to build a Community Revitalisation Centre (Figure 8.2) in *Xinhualu* subdistrict, which was regenerated from an underused old building in the community. When I revisited the site in November 2022, I found that the Community Revitalisation Centre's space had become the 'engine' that promotes the development of many activities, such as 'care for the disabled', 'shared kitchen' and 'classroom for community building'. The shared kitchen activity was initiated by a resident who realised the convenient accessibility of public space and neighbours' interest in learning to cook. These solid activities encouraged more stakeholders to actively engage in public discussion, cultivated community movements, and built tangible media for social intercourse.

Social public space is produced by identifying enlightened people, developing *guanxi*, and building co-governance and negotiation mechanisms. By involving residents and encouraging

their subjectivity and responsibility, micro-regeneration aims to shift the relationship between ordinary people and public affairs from passive to active. It is the starting point for promoting community communication and realising the shift in the relationship between people from alienation to integration. Its goal is to build a tightly connected social community where people feel a sense of belonging and identity. In the context of this research, the creation of social public space cannot be achieved without the production of physical public spaces. As discussed previously, physical public space provides the carrier to generate and develop relationships. A well-utilised physical space can enhance community harmony and residents' sense of belonging.

Network public space is a new and virtual physical public space in the current era. The importance of internet resources was discussed in the section on resourcefulness. In the Shanghai case, WeChat groups and other social media are used, allowing individuals and groups to connect and engage in public discussion and debate regardless of physical distance or geographical location. Discussions and activities taking place online reflect different groups' attention to community development and lead to a diverse range of perspectives and voices being represented in public discourse. From the perspective of the production of space, network public space is produced through continuous online interaction between different stakeholders. The online dialogues increase the focus on the public's opinion about community regeneration and influence the direction of the construction of physical public space. Furthermore, the creation of network public space is a tool and means to involve more people, particularly younger generations, and stimulate their agency. It helps to overcome the stalemate where offline community activities or discussions often involve more elderly participants and lack participation from younger generations.



Figure 8.2 Activities in and in front of the Community Revitalisation Centre (Dayu, 2022)

Regarding resilience, the production of space in this context implies visions of future society, highlighting that the current innovative production of space is the foundation of future vision. In other words, the prospect of human society moves towards various possibilities, such as multi-scale and differential production of space based on body experience, artistic creation, and urban revolution (Liu and Lu, 2021). According to Lefebvre (1991), each mode of production has its own unique space, and the change from one mode of production to another inevitably requires a

new spatial production. In this vein, micro-regeneration presents a novel practical approach which accommodates the inclusion of new and more social networks (*guanxi*) in the spaces, and generates innovative environments. This collaborative productive means also aligns with Lefebvre's criticism of technological bureaucracy where residents and users were excluded from having a say in their living environment, which were solely decided and managed by the state and technocrats. Spaces created by micro-regeneration serve as a map of local social relations. They also play the role of media that accommodates various interactions and communication between the public, society, or culture, providing a platform for diverse voices to be heard. In a nutshell, micro-regeneration with a collaborative productive approach focuses on discovering a possible vision for the future based on current social and historical progress, with the aim of creating a better urban society and urban China.

Nevertheless, the production of space in the context of micro-regeneration steps into the trap of public participation whose effectiveness is not necessarily satisfactory. The issue of time constraints has been discussed in both Chapters 6 and 7. Well-developed and influential public engagement requires ample time to involve residents and build their capacities. However, governments, as funders and approvers, impose strict time limitations and expect quick outcomes. Another problem regards the correlation of participants. In the case of *Panyu Lane. 222*, Shanghai, the scene of prosperity during open days concealed contradictions. Although the number of participants was high, a large proportion were passers-by with weak ties to the space. Conversely, people with strong ties to the site, for instance, the vendors and residents living in the building adjacent to the street and overlooking the project site, did not deeply engage in the activities. This leads to the issue that the opinions and requirements received during open days cannot reflect the real demands of the highly related people. Therefore, there is a need for, at least provisionally, rules and regulations to guide practices, avoiding superficial formalism or the self-moved dilemma.

8.2.5 Summary

Given the requirements of stock-based planning and the existence of a significant number of shadow citizens, improving the quality of the built environment, urban services, and citizens' right to the city is the crucial point in the aftermath of China's rapid urbanisation. Practitioners have also questioned whether the design is serving 5% of people who are paying for the project, and who should design for the following 95% of people (interviewee 2-1). Here, micro-regeneration strategies and a responsible planner system seem to offer a solution and facilitate

the transformation of planning mechanisms. Together with space of flows (the internet public space) and space of places, public spaces created by micro-regeneration constitute a sustainable city embedded with an inclusive culture. The innovation of 'the production of space' in China supports new social relations (*guanxi*) and enriches new urban functions, aiming to shape the representational spaces that the citizens can enjoy. Indeed, micro-regeneration facilitates resilient transformation by taking social changes as opportunities and further changing the planning mechanism and stakeholders' 'hearts and minds', aiming to pursue sustainable development and improvement to the following challenges.

8.3 Interaction between different attributes of resilience

This section examines the interconnections between the six attributes of resilience reviewed in chapter 2, namely adaptive capacity, collaboration, social capital building, resourcefulness, connectivity, and transformation. In this section, I examine the intersections of these attributes, bringing together the key empirical findings from Chapters 6 and 7, and the preceding sections in this chapter that examined resilience factors separately. I develop the illustration around the first main research question, and adjust the framework of understanding community resilience based on the empirical findings.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the research sought to answer the following:

1. How can the community resilience discourse be resituated in the context of heritage community micro-regeneration in China?

- What are the attributes and indicators in interpreting community resilience on the ground of community micro-regeneration?
- What are the existing strategies/policies making steps towards the objective of resilient community regeneration?
- What are the specific words/concepts used in China to frame the terminology of 'community resilience'?

The previous three chapters addressed the three sub-questions by presenting the case study findings and highlighting the outcomes and reflections. Therefore, this section emphasises the changes in attributes compared with the preceding reviewed definitions and the links between them.

8.3.1 How to resituate community resilience terminology with specific concepts?

Community resilience in the context of historical community regeneration is a hybrid of proactive resilience and restorative resilience. As discussed in Chapter 2, resilience has been applied as a guideline in designing urban planning policies, emphasising the adaptive capacities of communities to withstand hazards. This usage of resilience is termed by Vale (2014) as ‘proactive resilience’, which refers to the anticipatory approach (such as upfront investment) to planning systems that encompass social spaces. The following section revisits adaptive capacity, collaboration, social capital building and resourcefulness and connectivity one by one, aiming to discuss the specific understanding of resilience attributes from both proactive and restorative perspectives within the research context.

8.3.1.1 Adaptive capacity - proactive synergy and social learning

Compared with the definition of adaptive capacity in Chapter 2, the case study findings highlight the synergy of environmental context and people-centred principles and social learning of planners. Confronted with the urgency of heritage community conservation, adaptive capacity in the context of urban China highlights the importance of noticing thresholds in both physical and social aspects. In this regard, the environmental context is the baseline for conservation, where the resilient development of heritage communities cannot do without traditional and Indigenous culture. Additionally, the people-centred principle, as a specific concept highlighted by the Chinese government, pays attention to human needs and promoting negotiation as well as sustainability as the developmental pathways. By enhancing community adaptability at the operational level, the people-centred principle facilitates the improvement of the performance of public services and management. Findings of social learning support the previous review, showing that people can consciously incorporate learning from their experiences into their interactions with their social and physical surroundings. However, the social learning of planners needs to be emphasised, as they should begin to move beyond technological bureaucracy and allow their power and knowledge to penetrate the communities. They are required to learn how to work as coordinators and bridges between residents and local authorities, aiming to promote communities’ sustainable development and enhance residents’ capacities in the face of unexpected changes. In this vein, adaptive capacities discussed in this research align with the concept of proactive resilience, which entails preparing for changes in advance.

8.3.1.2 Collaboration - proactive integration between different pathways

Collaboration in this context also reflects proactive resilience. Unlike the policies of resilience in the Western context, which seem to put the onus of development on citizens themselves, collaboration in the Chinese context, with a specific concept - integration between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' - strives to achieve a virtuous circle between government and grassroots. As discussed in Chapter 3, Chinese society has undergone a long history of centralisation of authority, where people had no say in changes in their surroundings. In terms of the urban planning realm, Chinese urban planning has been characterised as a top-down system due to a strong government-dominated ideology that leaves little room for public participation in urban planning and the redevelopment decision-making process. Economic-led development under state entrepreneurialism and the socialist legacy are considered causes of this. However, top-down hierarchical governance can lead to deadlock situations when stakeholders cannot come to a consensus (Zhai and Ng, 2013). In this context, participative approaches began to emerge, especially in urban regeneration practices (Chen and Qu, 2019). The fieldwork reflected that residents have not been equipped with the capacities or agency to initiate or organise practices by themselves, which are referred to as pure bottom-up attempts. Meanwhile, various policies enacted by the government still guide the developmental orientation, and most resources are concentrated in the hands of the government. Therefore, the integration between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up', with strong Chinese characteristics, can be the pathway for sustainable community development in the future. This approach enhances social inclusion and capacity building without suffering the risk of losing direction. It is indeed a proactive way since both government and denizens are trained to work together to withstand challenges regarding built environment improvement and urban governance, where there is no precedent in the last several decades.

8.3.1.3 Social capital building - restorative action to reciprocity

Restorative resilience implies the action taken *after* a disaster or disruptive downturn (Vale, 2014). The situation in historical residential areas speaks to this narrative. As discussed in chapters 4,6 and 7, heritage communities are suffering deterioration in the aftermath of rapid urbanisation. Issues faced by these communities include physical decay of space and alienation of relationships between neighbours. Here, restoring people's mutual relationship - *guanxi*, specifically in Chinese - is emphasised in social capital building. The reason for determining *guanxi* building as a factor of restorative resilience is that communities with tight *guanxi* between neighbours are not a new phenomenon in China. As discussed in the preceding

chapters, Chinese society used to be an ‘acquaintance society’ (Fei, 1947), where people were involved in a huge and complex social network. Micro-regeneration in this research helps to connect atomised individuals in modern China into a community-based social network, where denizens can gather and assist each other in facing unprecedented changes. According to a researcher interviewed for this study, ‘micro-regeneration practices facilitate the community’s *return* from a stranger society to a semi-acquaintance society, where people are willing to help each other and join public affairs. It is the improvement of *civic spirit*’. In this sense, the attribute of social capital building is consistent with reactive resilience, which tries to restore status.

8.3.1.4 resourcefulness and connectivity

Regarding resourcefulness and connectivity, although there are no specific concepts or words to frame and understand ‘community resilience’, the findings for these two factors indeed agree with the existing articulations. More importantly, the understanding of these two attributes is rooted in empirical research in the context of micro-regeneration, and their use reflects the features of practices. Taking a broader view, the background of this research is a reflection of resourcefulness. Resource redistribution in the real world is unequal. There are concerns that resilience, as a strategy for cities, can “produce outcomes that further entrench vulnerabilities and socioeconomic impoverishment” (Ziervogel et al., 2017, p. 126 cited in Trogal et al., 2018) since spaces with low economic value seem to be struggled to attract resources. In this context, micro-regeneration gives special attention to historically ignored neighbourhoods, albeit to their relatively low economic value. It is an action to facilitate more sustainable and equal development in urban China. Narrowing down to the performance of resourcefulness in the studied cases, in general, it follows the notion that addresses the essentiality to “identify, make available and redistribute resources of space, knowledge and power across local actors and communities to improve resilience” (Petrescu et al., 2016, p. 718). The difference is that cases in this research view potential projects and media (especially the internet) as valuable resources, which create a bridge between local needs and outside resources and provide a pathway for empowerment. Then for ‘connectivity’, the findings stress the importance of both physical and social connectivity, which agree with Tasan-Kok et al.’s (2012) interrogation about connectivity - a network’s degree of direct connection between nodes and a network’s relationship to people and organisations. Physical connection is demonstrated through the 15-Minute Community Life Circle, which focuses on the coverage of infrastructure, such as green spaces and elderly-friendly places, and highlights the convenience and redundancy of public service facilities. The findings also highlight the importance of a *place-based* network in that a network rooted in the

community can effectively link resources in times of need. The network can also grow stronger and develop more directly linked nodes by exploring and cultivating hidden resources (such as enlightened people and local business), based on its long-term place-based experience, while foreign coming actors/organisers may not be competent in it. In summary, although there is no specific concept to frame community resilience from the perspective of resourcefulness and connectivity, the performance of micro-regeneration in China still demonstrates its characteristics through actions such as resource identification and network building.

8.3.2 Interactions among attributes

Although I have discussed attributes of resilience separately in preceding chapters and sections, this study finds that the attributes are interconnected. I argue that the factor of transformation is the foundation of community resilience in the context of stock-based planning in China. It links with every other attribute, while the others are related to each other. Figure 8.3 shows the shifts of the beginning parallel structure of resilience attributes as discussed in Chapter 2 and the relationships of all 6 selected attributes. The fundamental change of this structure is the position of transformation.

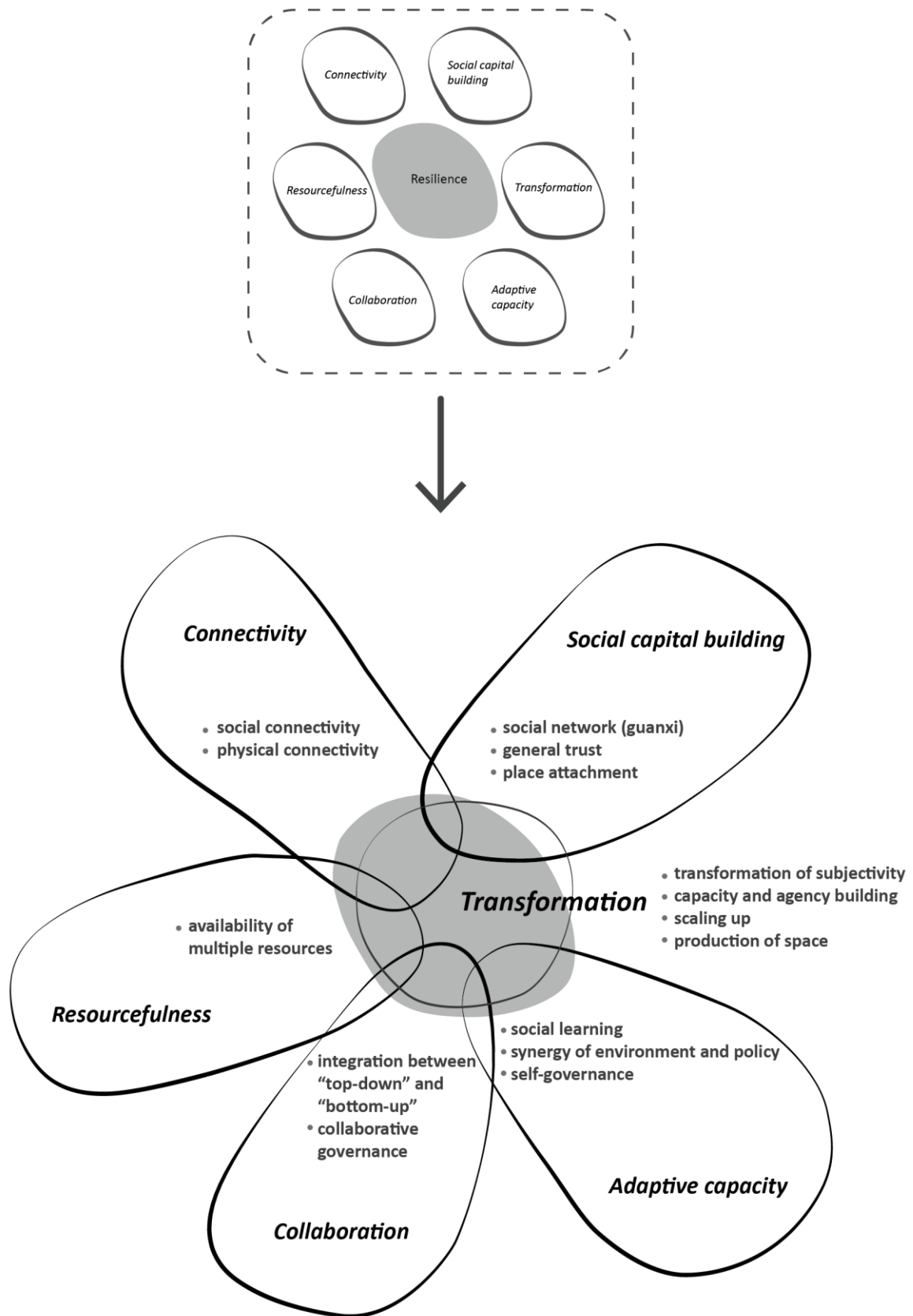


Figure 8.3 Relationship between factors of resilience (Author, 2023)

8.3.2.1 Resilience as transformation

This research argues that community resilient development mainly lies in transformation in the context of micro-regeneration in urban China. How does transformation become the foundation of all aforementioned resilience attributes? In fact, the performance of the social capital building, resourcefulness, collaboration, connectivity, and adaptive capacity in the context of urban transformation in China points to the thinking, system, or policy shifts to some extent.

The view of resilience *as transformation*, from the perspective of adaptive capacity, highlights the dynamics of communities and human-environment interactions and recognises numerous promising approaches within them (Maguire and Cartwright, 2008). As Folke (2006) declared that the social resilience approach is a way of understanding dynamic systems of interaction between people and the environment. The pathway '*synergy among environmental context, space and people-centred principles*' that I discussed within adaptive capacity respects communities' dynamic character as well as the interaction between humans and the ecosystem. It prioritises the thresholds of both ecosystem and culture and considers people's 'right to the city' into account, where economic development seems to lose its privilege. Next, by viewing resilience as transformation, it draws attention to a community's adaptability, rather than its vulnerability, which allows it to develop and innovate in light of change (Maguire and Cartwright, 2008). Here, the experience of change is able to be used adaptively to reach a higher state of functioning. Specifically, social learning transforms not only ordinary people's awareness of public affairs but also policy makers' and planners' consciousness of the 'production of space', which fundamentally changes the attitude and policies of urban regeneration.

From the perspective of social capital building and social connection, the reshaping of *guanxi* among individuals and the improvement of general trust between grassroots and authorities manifests the transformative power of micro-regeneration projects. The tight social connection can bring people together and, more importantly, encourage and motivate residents to contribute their wisdom and skills in facing shocks. In other words, *guanxi* could influence, to some extent, grassroots agencies towards community development. Besides, the informal social relationship between residents and the RC or residents themselves could benefit the transformation of subjectivity, because *guanxi* among individuals provides an informal way to spread ideas and motivate public engagement.

From the perspective of collaboration, the understanding of collaboration with Chinese characters implies a breakthrough in the community development mechanism which pursues 'bouncing forward' shifts. The original community development mechanism, with a strong government-dominated ideology, no longer meets people's increasing requirements in their life. A more democratic way is needed to allow voices to be heard, which can mitigate existing struggles while introducing new approaches as well. Collaboration, thus, is a response to the necessity of system shift.

Furthermore, resourcefulness is deeply influenced by agency. The notion of resourcefulness proposed by MacKinnon and Derickson (2013) highlights the significance of transformation procedures (Stollmann, 2016). Stollmann's (2016) research inspired the case studies which reflect an important idea in state-led co-production: a desire for transformation accompanied by openness and a more equitable allocation of power. Although 'state-led' still implies strong government control, a more transparent policy/institutional structure and fairer power distribution can stimulate residents' and local organisations' engagement agency. Here, agency has been viewed as a significant aspect of transformation (see section 8.2.2). Transparency of resources and power relations impacts residents' and NGOs' agency in project engagement and initiation, as it allows grassroots communities to understand the possibility of successfully taking action. In the case of Shanghai, whether the initiation of short-term projects or identifying extensive human resources, local residents' willingness to engage is crucial. The fairer the power redistribution, the greater the people's willingness to engage in discussions and better relationships, as well as trust between residents and authorities. A resourcefulness approach relies on increased local autonomy in terms of releasing local knowledge, skills, and resources, utilising Indigenous and folk knowledge, and recognising cultures (Robinson and Carson, 2016). This helps residents understand their energy and influence in changing their surroundings. Therefore, state-led co-production, by empowering residents to make decisions regarding the utilisation of Indigenous cultures and other resources, benefits residents' exercise of agency and fosters fairer resource allocation.

8.3.2.2 Interconnections between other attributes

Social capital building enhances connectivity, especially social connectivity, by reinforcing social networks and mutual relationships (*guanxi*). For example, as discussed in Chapter 6, micro-regeneration practices increase informal and formal mass organisations within or even beyond communities, and improve the generalised trust between government, planners and residents.

Here, mass organisations offer opportunities to generate a place-based network by involving local participants who can engage in projects or events over the long term. Meanwhile, the improved generalised trust encourages more participants and interactions. In this vein, social capital building and social connectivity are mutually reinforcing, where the capability to prepare for the future through social capital investment can advance the degree of social links.

Tight and abundant social connectivity is the insurance to ensure the availability of multiple resources. A place-based network can introduce more people interested in community affairs to get involved through the nodes' personal connections with the community. These people may become supporters, organisers, coordinators and communicators for community development in the future. People are more willing to utilise their personal resources and connections when they have close and trustworthy connections within a network, environment, organisation, or community. Additionally, each person or organisation in the network serves as a node to connect with more outside resources and help the newly added nodes to build connections with others. As a result, the network can grow larger, offering opportunities to improve diversity or redundancy, which implies the degree of functionally different and similar components, respectively. This approach improves resourcefulness since it provides alternatives if one resource is not available. Individuals and institutions can quickly find different ways to achieve their goals or to meet their needs during times of shock or stress (ARUP, 2014).

Moreover, collaboration facilitates the recognition of the community's resources and adaptive capacities. For collaboration in the Chinese context, I highlight the cooperation between government and local stakeholders (i.e., residents and NGOs). Residents and place-based NGOs are more familiar with the situations in communities and more importantly, are more 'sensitive' to the available resources. As for the government, it promotes resource recognition from two aspects: firstly, the policies enacted by them can lead the communities' work, and the RCs as the implementor of policies could encourage residents' behaviour; secondly, the governments enhance grassroots confidence to identify opportunities in their surrounding environment and even initiate projects. As I delineated several times previously, China's urban development up to now has been hierarchical and is conducted in a top-down way. Thereby, the government's guidance and support are still vital in gathering and redistributing resources. A more democratic collaboration between top and the bottom could stimulate resource exploration and recognition. However, we must acknowledge and address the inequalities in resource distribution. MacKinnon and Derickson (2013, p.13) emphasise in their insightful work that "rather than

functioning as an internal characteristic of a community, resourcefulness is a material property and a relational term that seeks to problematise the often profound inequalities in the distribution of resources by the state that further disadvantage low-income communities.” Although the performance of resourcefulness in this research has turned to historically neglected low-economic value areas, there are still inequalities within the broader sites. To be more specific, some blocks may lack fundamental living infrastructure, while the adjacent block may be benefitting from environmental beautification projects with the government’s support.

Collaboration, within the specific context of this research, has been considered as the result of social learning, which reinforces the adaptive capacity of the community and even the system as a whole. The integration mechanism between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches is not created overnight; it is a gradual process that requires ongoing experimentation and refinement. In this sense, collaboration represents an adaptive response to the new demands of community development and revitalisation within the framework of stock-based planning and degraded historic areas. The collaborative mechanism limits the scope of government power and responsibilities while empowering ordinary citizens in community development matters. Case studies reveal that conflicts still arise, including restrictions on projects originating from government policies. Thus, the collaborative mechanism must strive to find balance, requiring continuous social learning and feedback.

8.4 Summary

This chapter examines the transformative impact of community micro-regeneration and the interactions between six attributes. Regarding the transformation attribute, the discussion is developed across four aspects. Firstly, the role of residents and third parties has evolved from passive witnesses to deeply involved actors, which can be summarised as the transformation of subjectivity (*zhu-ti-xing* in Chinese). This shift is a response to the undesirable hierarchical planning regime and also underscores the right to the city. Secondly, the micro-regeneration process equips residents with multiple skills, aiming to empower their agency. Here, agency refers not only to residents' or third parties' aspiration to engage in community affairs, but also their capacity and willingness to initiate projects independently. Thirdly, the heavy-handed control in China cannot be ignored. The transformation from this perspective concerns the policy shift that leads to the planning regime shifting from the higher level. The new responsible planner policy requires planners to promote collaboration between multiple stakeholders, facilitate citizen empowerment, and supervise planning implementation. It helps to reconstruct

the *guanxi* (relationship) between so-called elites and grassroots, which benefits social governance at the neighbourhood and city levels. Finally, a significant transformation refers to the planning focus - from a purely physical environment to social affairs. This shift reflects Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, which asserts that space produces society. It also situates micro-regeneration in a future discourse that prepares for and adapts to various possibilities in the coming era.

Regarding the interrelations between attributes, specific concepts and terms such as *guanxi*, integration between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches, and 'people-centred' principles were recognised to articulate the resilience discourse. Secondly, the resilience attributes were found to be interrelated with each other rather than performed separately. Specifically, factors such as adaptive capacity, resourcefulness, and collaboration imply system or policy shifts to a certain extent in this research context, responding to the four aspects of transformation aforementioned. Community resilience is never a static or rigid state. Instead, it involves proactive and restorative behaviour, seeking to protect the historical memory and heritage in Chinese historic areas while actively adapting to and withstanding future changes and challenges.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The aim of my research was to explore the processes and outcomes of micro-regeneration in historical communities in China, focusing on community resilience as a response to the political strategy of sustainable development. In addition, the study aimed to investigate the interpretation of resilience discourse in the context of urban regeneration and Eastern society, endeavouring to bridge the gap in existing research that rarely considers the social and political dimensions (Hornborg, 2009), or 'bottom-up' practical attitudes (Vale, 2014) which are also issues in Chinese academia and industry (Yan and Lu, 2017).

The introduction suggested that micro-regeneration, as a political-economic incentive for local development in the background of urban development and planning transformation, serves as a lens through which to investigate the implementation of decentralised governance at the local level. Chapter 1 briefly introduced resilient and sustainable urban development orientation in Chinese policy and discusses the research rationale the integration of micro-regeneration and community resilience theory. Chapter 2 provided a detailed review of resilience theory relating to urban studies, generating the analytical framework for the following case study. The framework includes six attributes: adaptive capacity, social capital building, collaboration, resourcefulness, connectivity, and transformation. This chapter also discusses in detail the research gap in China, particularly regarding the selected attributes, further supporting the rationale of introducing resilience theory.

Chapters 3 and 4 extensively discussed the administrative system, planning system, and urban planning transformation. A significant characteristic of the Chinese administrative system is its hierarchical structure. However, the central government and the Communist Party are gradually decentralising their control over social and environmental development. This implies that lower-level government is gaining more autonomy in terms of community development and governance. Moreover, local government has been regarded as the coordinator or mediator between the state and society, where the sub-district office and RC constitute the *She-qu* system and take this responsibility. Here, the sub-district office is the lowest level of government-

delegated organisation, responsible for tasks such as supervising local organisations and delivering policies and opinions between higher-level government and the public. The identity of RC is ambivalent. Legally, it is a self-governing organisation, but in reality, it undertakes missions assigned by the local government, such as assisting community development, solving social conflicts, and other political tasks assigned by higher-level governments. Empirical studies show that the RC have played an important role in coordinating the implementation of projects by using their private relationships and social ties. They have also undertaken missions related to hutong community conservation (Beijing), old community regeneration (Shanghai), and policy promulgation issued by the sub-district offices.

The review of the planning system illustrates that the administrative ordinances promulgated by the State Council are crucial for urban development orientation, meanwhile local regulations and policies can be enacted by municipal governments and congresses, giving them the power to influence urban planning at a local level. This explains why this research conducted case studies in different cities and examined local policies in the empirical study chapters. In line with sustainable development goals, the State Council has issued policies to promote innovation in problem-solving, participation of multiple stakeholders, and open sharing of information. Given the significant social changes and requirements of social governance, public engagement within urban planning has also been emphasised in both national laws and local regulations. To address historical district conservation, within the branch of statutory planning, there are Municipal Master (or District) Plans. These guide the direction of the city's development, while historical and cultural city (or district) conservation plans offer detailed information and strategies for preservation or regeneration. The hierarchical urban planning system in China means that urban regeneration is subject to supervision by the laws and related authorities. Therefore, the co-production, which is discussed later, cannot proceed without governments leadership. Moreover, co-production is also an urban development idea highlighted by the CPC, which implies that the implementation of co-production on the ground could receive more support and resources from the local governments.

The discussion on urban planning transformation aims to partially answer the question: what are the context and existing strategies implying a resilient urban/community regeneration orientation? Here, the research focuses on the transition of planning from incremental planning, which is designed for growth, to stock-based planning, which emphasises environmental quality improvement. Social governance enhancement has also been a vital task of stock-based

planning. Here, 'social' implies the 'social process of life' (Karl Marx, 1959 cited in Li, 2016). It can be found that in documents published by CPC or State Council, restrictive phases such as 'emphasising improving people's social livelihood' are used to explain the connotations of social construction, aiming to help understand 'social' and avoid generalisation (Li, 2016). Social governance emphasises dealing with complex social issues and conflicts through collaboration, deliberation, co-production, and benefit sharing. This represents a significant departure from simple ideas of management and being managed, controlling and being controlled. In this new paradigm, urban regeneration has emerged as a crucial component of stock-based planning, which aims to tackle requirements and challenges from both physical and social perspectives. Furthermore, urban regeneration and social governance at the community level have been viewed as the foundational practical unit. *She-qu*, as the basic social unit, is the starting point of social governance (Li, 2016). Therefore, micro-regeneration in communities which adopt co-production and public engagement as the means to promote renewal in old or historical residential neighbourhoods is gradually becoming a noteworthy approach to achieve physical environment improvement and social governance innovation. From this perspective, micro-regeneration can be a valuable way to enhance resilient and sustainable community development.

The empirical chapters (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) explored and investigated how to understand community resilience in urban China, especially with some specific words or concepts. Furthermore, the empirical chapters also examined how community micro-regeneration processes enhance community resilience. Following the empirical arguments, this chapter provides a synthesis of the findings and their wider implications, beginning with the summary of the key elements of the empirical findings (Questions 1 and 2) from the next section. It then discusses the wider implications of these findings as they might contribute to the application of micro-regeneration in a wider scope. Finally, this thesis will end with a summary of its contributions, limitations, and an agenda for future research.

9.2 Findings

This section is organised by answering the research questions presented in Chapter 1. Each part begins with a box that briefly summarises the key findings and then goes into a detailed discussion.

Question 1: How can the community resilience discourse be resituated in the context of heritage community micro-regeneration in China?

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>The framework to understand community resilience in urban China (attributes selection)</p> | <p>Adaptive capacity and Transformation: They hold significant positions in resilience research and are aligned with specific aims in urban planning practices in China.</p> <p>Collaboration: It resonates with social governance strategy.</p> <p>Social capital building: It has unique position in China's society.</p> <p>Connectivity and Resourcefulness: They are consistent with micro-regeneration objectives.</p> |
| <p>Identifying resilience-oriented urban and community development strategies</p> | <p>Urban Planning's transformation from incremental planning to stock-based planning, paying attention to micro-level approaches and practices.</p> <p>The enactment of Social Governance Innovation strategy in the context of the enhancement of public's self-awareness and awareness of their rights protection, and the rise of enthusiasm and awareness for public participation in urban decision-making and planning.</p> <p>Detailed policy clauses have been summarised in Tabel 9-1.</p> |
| <p>Specific words in framing community resilience in the context of urban regeneration in China</p> | <p>Social capital, known as 'guanxi' (关系) in Chinese, refers to the restoration of relationship networks and the embedded resources within them specifically in the context of this research. These networks comprise trust, reciprocity, and a sense of belonging and community cohesion. Guanxi networks also provide a channel for stakeholders to voice their opinions and concerns.</p> <p>Being people-centered, known as 'yi-ren-wei-ben' (以人为本) in Chinese, entails respecting people's needs and fostering synergy between people and the environment. It empowers people to become active participants and even supervisors in urban development and cultural preservation efforts, with a strong emphasis on justice and supporting vulnerable groups.</p> |

The discussion around this question was based on the policies and strategies which were enacted and adopted in multi-layer governments, as well as the performance of micro-regeneration praxis itself.

The selection of resilience attributes for this research is based on governance and urban regeneration characteristics in urban China. Adaptive capacity and transformation were first chosen to be involved in the framework because, on the one hand, these two factors seem to be the most significant attributes when interrogating the resilience performance of a system, regardless of whether in Western research or in China. Additionally, focusing on the basic definition of the factors themselves, these factors are important aspects for building adaptive capacity, as they have the faculty to learn from, and store lessons from past disruptions and experiences, and the ability to prepare for and adapt to uncertainty and change,. Transformation, on the other hand entails a more radical path than adaptation and refers to system shifts that

occur when the current system is no longer desirable, and offer the space, in urban planning praxis, to investigate the experience learned by practitioners and the changes that happened related to policies, programmes, projects, and even ideas aimed at innovating and creating a new system in the transformative era.

Collaboration was selected mainly because it aligns with the social governance strategy of *co-production, co-governance, and benefit sharing* that President Xi emphasised in the *19th Party Congress of the Communist Party of China* in 2017. Here, the social governance strategy in Chinese characters emphasises three aspects: 1) cooperation between multi-layer governments, which I have discussed in Chapter 3, and the cultivation of non-governmental power (such as NGOs and businesses), especially at the community level; 2) improving the system of openness in handling affairs, innovating the form of public opinion collection, consultation, and feedback, expanding channels for various groups at the grassroots level to participate in local governance in an orderly manner, and ensuring that people manage local public affairs and public welfare undertakings in accordance with the law; and 3) governance that is based on the actual needs of people and mitigation of the gap in resource between different areas. This strategy leads to a more recent goal - common prosperity - put forward by CPC, which further deepens the benefit sharing and calls for collaboration among multiple stakeholders. Therefore, collaboration is an appropriate element that deserves investigation in urban China.

Social capital building was selected because of its unique position in Chinese society. On the one hand, relationships between individuals or institutions play an important role in Chinese society, whether dealing with current affairs or initiating new attempts. This is underpinned by Confucianism's idea that individuals are not isolated entities but independent parts of a hierarchical social system (Zhang et al., 2019). On the other hand, since the collaboration was highlighted in both policies and practices, the interaction between different individuals or institutions could influence the performance of social capital. Thereby, social capital deserves to be interrogated through the lens of micro-regeneration praxis, especially in an Eastern context. Then, connectivity and resourcefulness were selected because of the features of micro-regeneration practices. Micro-regeneration emphasises the communication and coordination between different actors, the relationship between the site and the wider environment, and limited resource allocation. In this vein, connectivity and resourcefulness provide the window to explore the impact of micro-regeneration programmes in different cities.

This research then identified sustainability/resilience-oriented urban and community development strategies by reviewing policies published by multi-layer governments. This is important since I have highlighted several times in preceding chapters that urban planning in China is still embedded in a heavy-handed hierarchical system, where policies from the higher-level government are quite influential. Aiming to answer the question related to policy context implying resilient development in this research, it is important to find out on what grounds urban planning in urban China adopts the micro-regeneration approach in urban development practice (see Chapter 4). To conclude this chapter, the answers to this question could be summarised as the following two main aspects:

Firstly, it relates to the transformation in urban planning in China from incremental planning to stock-based planning. Urban development is shifting from space expansion to optimising and restructuring stock-based spaces, in response to complex urban problems such as shortage of space resources, poor imbalances between public and private interests, and irreversible damage to the urban context. Following rapid development since opening-up in 1978, considering the situation of urban development in China, the State Council approved the *Patchwork Urbanism and Ecological Rehabilitation Policy* in 2016. The policy has two implications: ecological rehabilitation to ecological areas within cities, as well as urban regeneration in the constructed urban area. The transformation is also a response to the vision of 'Cities for All' which was put forward in *towards a New Urban Agenda* in UN-Habitat III in 2016 (Yuan et al., 2021). The aforementioned context implies that urban regeneration has stepped into a new stage - from mass demolition and construction to environmental quality improvement.

Guided by macro-level policies, communities at the micro-level have become the arena to conduct regeneration, especially in historical residential areas and old neighbourhoods in city centre areas built several decades ago. Old urban neighbourhoods have become the crux of urban regeneration because of a lack of economic incentives (Xu et al., 2017). These neighbourhoods usually have many problems such as ageing infrastructure, dilapidated buildings, poor traffic management, prominent parking conflicts, inadequate community environments, and a lack of property management, which influence citizens' daily life. Furthermore, with the adoption of the stock-based planning concept, urban regeneration now

emphasises citizens' lifestyle, space quality, community space reconstitution and community vitality stimulation (Pan, 2020).

Secondly, another important aspect relates to the discourse of social governance innovation in China, which promotes the pursuit of sustainable community development. The concept of social governance innovation was proposed by President Xi in the *Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China* in 2013. He emphasised that the focus of social governance should focus on urban and rural communities, which further promotes community development and planning, making it a research hotspot within social governance research. Community is the most important part of urban structure and the basic unit of urban evolution. It is also a place where people gather and contains the regional living environment and the multi-dimensional elements of life, history, industry, and culture attached to it. In the context of the current social transformation in China, the community plays a crucial constructive role in the reconstruction of social relations, the transformation and reshaping of social structure, as well as the transformation of social organisation and communication mode. More importantly, apart from the policy orientation, social governance innovation comes along with the enhancement of the public's awareness of engaging in planning and decision-making (Yuan et al., 2021). This implies that denizens are trying to find ways and means to improve the living environment and atmosphere through their own endeavours and care more about the interaction with local authorities.

The property rights of the historical communities and *dan-wei* communities in Chinese cities are both state-owned, which means the communities themselves lack the physical and financial resources to conduct regeneration directly. Therefore, most urban communities in China adopt a 'top-down' governance model where the government supports the construction of urban community development planning through planning guidance, decentralisation, and provision of funds. Community regeneration and governance goals are then achieved through the operation of small autonomous organisations. However, this 'top-down' administrative management mode shows an increasingly weak situation in the process of management decision-making due to limitations such as the dislocation of interests and the lack of local characteristics. Meanwhile, as previously mentioned, in the context of pluralism of economic and social subjects, the public's self-awareness and awareness of rights protection are gradually enhanced, as a result of which, enthusiasm and awareness of public participation in urban decision-making and planning are gradually increasing. Therefore, community planning in China

should closely combine the ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ modes, leveraging their respective advantages, and jointly realise the vision of sustainable development of community planning (Xu et al., 2017).

The micro-regeneration strategy, thus, was developed on the grounds of planning transformation and requirements for social governance innovation. The goal of community micro-regeneration is twofold: firstly, to make effective use of the community space closely related to the daily lives of residents at the micro scale based on local and individual demands, in order to improve the quality of the community environment and lives of the people through more refined means. Secondly, by restoring and reshaping the interaction within the neighbourhood that meets individual needs and is friendly to the community, the residents themselves can become involved in the regeneration and transformation process, fostering a sense of community identity and stimulating and rejuvenating the vitality of the community (Pan, 2020). At a deeper level, community micro-regeneration, by focusing on people, aims to recover the urbanised and individual atomised residential neighbourhoods back to communities, via self-organisation and self-governance. This enables residents to negotiate orderly, engage in public affairs, and shoulder the responsibility of implementation (Tsinghua University, 2019, p. 24). This approach is in line with the nature of resilient development, which aims to recover a good status (harmonious mutual relationship between people in this research), and seeks mechanism/strategy shifts to achieve improvement or sustainability. Based on the discussion in previous chapters, policies that support micro-regeneration and community sustainable development were summarised in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1. Policies related to MR and community sustainable development (Author, 2023)

| Policy | Content | Category |
|---|---|--|
| Opinions on Enhancing Community Comprehensive Governance in Shanghai (2015) | Transforming from top-down management to bottom-up and integrated urban governance, stressing the public engagement and residents' self-governance. | Community governance |
| Patchwork Urbanism and Ecological Rehabilitation Policy (2016) | Urban regeneration projects need to respect a place's context and history and aim to improve the residents' sense of belonging and wellbeing. | Gradual regeneration, Context preservation |
| Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Urban Communities Governance (2017) | Urban communities are the basic unit for social governance. | Community governance |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Suggestions on strengthening sub-district work in the new era (2019) | We should transfer the concept of governance, innovate the governance model, shift from one-way top-down governance to multi-stakeholders' consultation and co-governance, strengthen social coordination, expand public participation, and promote community autonomy. | Public participation, Community governance |
| Guiding opinions on jointly creating activities of beautiful environment and happy life in the construction and renovation of urban and rural living environment (2019) | Urban and rural communities should be regarded as basic spatial units in the construction and improvement of living environments. Efforts should be made to improve supporting infrastructure and public service facilities in communities, building liveable community space environment, creating a lasting and stable sense of community belonging and identity, and enhancing community cohesion. | Community regeneration |
| Opinions on Further Promoting Regeneration of Old Residential Communities (2020) | Establish a mechanism for integrated utilization of stock resources. | Resources utilisation |
| Guidance on Fulfilling People's City Concept and Enhancing Participatory Community Planning (2020) | In the process of jointly solving community problems, the residents are encouraged to internalise the awareness of contracts and rules, cultivate the public spirit of the community, and establish public order in the community. Promote all kinds of subjects engage in actions and collaborative construction, and effectively enhance the sense of community and the feeling of home. | Public participation, Community regeneration |
| Notice on Preventing Major Demolition and Construction in the Implementation of Urban Renewal Actions (2021) | Small-scale, gradual organic renewal and micro-regeneration need to be promoted. | Gradual regeneration |
| Beijing City Urban Renewal Action Plan (2021-2025) | Micro-regeneration projects are advocated to explore new models, paths, and mechanisms for urban renewal. In response to megacity governance, the plan proposes to strengthen public participation and system building, realising collaboration, participation, and common interests. | Micro-regeneration, Co-production |
| Regulations of Shanghai Urban Regeneration (2021.77) | It is necessary to adhere to the simultaneous implementation of 'retention, reconstruction and demolition', and give priority to retention and protection. Try not to use the approach of 'demolition and construction' to promote urban renewal, which will help to retain Shanghai's unique characteristics of 'combining Chinese and Western' and 'lilong community'. | Retention and preservation, Organic urban regeneration |

Next, the answer to the sub question of specific words in framing community resilience in China is based on the evaluation of RTP (see section 2.4.3) throughout the process of interview and observation.

One important concept used to frame community resilience is *social capital*, referred to as *guanxi* in Chinese. The translation of *guanxi* into social capital is supported by Yue et al's. (2002) research on human relationships and Zhang et al's. (2012) review on social capital research in

China. Social capital implies the horizontal connections between individuals and organisations and an individual's ability to obtain resources within their social network. Social capital, or *guanxi* has significant meaning in China, especially in terms of community regeneration and governance. As I discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, China seems to be a *guanxi* society, where the relationship between people could benefit deeply from access to resources. At the community level, social capital can be viewed as a kind of commons that refers to a relationship network and embedded resources, comprising trust, reciprocal, support, and a sense of belonging and community cohesion (Fang et al., 2014), which is common and usual in Chinese society in the past (Fei, 1974). However, due to the rapid process of urbanisation and pervasive use of cyber technology, the demand for face-to-face interaction has declined, affecting the accumulation of social capital. Critics argue that people in Chinese society seem to be more egoistic and atomised (Tsinghua University, 2020). In this context, the reconstruction of *guanxi* between neighbours has been emphasised by the central government, and community regeneration offers a channel to enhance community cohesion and circulate social capital.

There are two specific aspects of *guanxi* have been revealed in case studies. The first one is that *guanxi* could be considered to possess attributes of resources. Empirical studies have shown that social capital is an important resource to promote both the overall development of the community and the individual development of residents. From the perspective of the community as a whole, good *guanxi* between neighbours and the resulting strong sense of belonging are the foundation of community governance. The accumulation of community social capital helps the RC organise and mobilise residents to participate in community affairs, restrain residents' behaviour, maintain community public interests, and promote community development. From an individual resident's standpoint, better *guanxi* between residents and local authorities, as well as between residents themselves, can assist residents in accessing resources from the government and facilitate project initiation, especially self-initiated or spontaneous micro-regeneration projects. Regarding community resilience, such *guanxi* holds the potential to promote mutual help, collaboration and self-organisation confronted when facing challenges, which has been evidenced in the Shanghai case when encountering the pandemic.

The second key point to be considered is that *guanxi* is not a static state, which, instead, represents an active and dynamic interactive process within the context of participatory micro-regeneration in China. *Guanxi* finds its roots in pre-existing or potential relationships. Two

individuals sharing the same foundational basis for *guanxi* does not necessarily have continuous interaction and communication. In this regard, social capital of community resilience can be seen through the lenses of communication and collaboration. Continuous communication among multiple stakeholders is instrumental in the cultivation of *guanxi*. Besides, it is important to note that *guanxi* does not exist beforehand, but evolves during the course of social interaction.

The *guanxi* network provides crucial channels of communication and connections, and grants stakeholders in urban regeneration a voice. However, it is essential to recognize that these channels are effective only when they facilitate the flow of information, exchange, and interaction; otherwise, *guanxi* will remain superficial and fail to aid in communication. A robust communication mechanism can further promote 'bottom-up' decision-making and interaction among multiple actors. Yet, the *guanxi* that forms during the micro-regeneration process is akin to informal interaction, largely based on personal relationships. This dynamism enhances the likelihood of information exchange, bottom-up decision-making, and reciprocity, thereby potentially simplifying project initiation, mobilisation of RCs, and community collaboration. Nevertheless, the ultimate determinant still lies with the higher-level government, which can either encourage or impede this process.

From the perspective of collaboration, successful collaboration to some extent hinges on *guanxi*, particularly the aspect of trust. The dynamic interactive process during community micro-regeneration can facilitate the development of *guanxi*, especially between grassroots entities and authorities. The government refrains from coercing or compelling the actions of residents. Instead, by introducing a co-productive micro-regeneration approach, the government gradually builds trust among residents, thereby effectively promoting efficient cooperation and the orderly progress of urban regeneration, reducing transaction costs, and mitigating action dilemmas stemming from information asymmetry by virtue of this positive *guanxi* (Che et al., 2017).

It is of great significance to acknowledge that the government has its own political motivations, including the maintenance of societal stability through the enhancement of personal and informal *guanxi* within neighbourhoods. Micro-regeneration might serve as a useful pathway, particularly in historical districts where conflicts can be rather intense. Although all issues may not be completely resolved by such an approach, this strategy still contributes to enhancing trust

to some extent and furthering the cause of sustainable community development by encouraging greater collaboration. Therefore, micro-regeneration constitutes a form of policy implementation (involving the modernisation of China's governance system and capacity, co-production, co-governance, and benefit-sharing) on the ground by the central government. However, the injustices having arisen during the project process, such as those related to resource allocation and participation rights, should not be ignored, which demands attention and action both from higher-level authorities and grassroots initiatives in the future.

Another concept used to frame community resilience is 'people-oriented' or 'people-centred' (*yi-ren-wei-ben* 以人为本 in Chinese). This can be observed within the analysis of adaptive capacity, collaboration, and social capital building. The 'people-centred' principle has been a vital strategy in pursuing sustainable co-production and urban development in China, and it has been argued that the key to sustainable development lies in *people*. The principle implies putting the maximisation of benefits for the people and the country as the starting and standing point of the CPC and central government's work. Recently, President Xi further developed it into an idea namely 'putting people first'. From the perspective of urban development or community development, the principle of 'people-centred' or 'putting people first' aligns with urban planning transformation, shifting from a focus on economic expansion and the scale of urbanisation to taking culture and ecology into account.

In the context of micro-regeneration, the 'people-centred' principle implies a synergy between people and the environment. Here, 'putting people first' does not mean that humanity is the master of nature. On the contrary, it allows people to be the supervisors and actors of urban development and cultural preservation. The traditional view of development, which takes GNP as the standard to measure development, has been criticised for explaining the nature of social-standard and national-standards (Li, 2003). Achieving sustainable and resilient development requires a change in the concept of social materialisation. Rather than sacrificing human development rights in the name of social development, we must view social development as a means of advancing human development. In other words, we must measure social development from the perspective of human development (Li, 2003). Based on this, resilience building requires the enhancement of people's abilities. By equipping residents with knowledge and skills, based on the observation of cases, community resilience emphasises cultivating grassroots

agency. The goal is to encourage residents to actively initiate, innovate, engage in and supervise the implementation of the natural environment restoration and cultural heritage conservation.

The principle of 'people-centred' development highlights the importance of justice regarding community resilience building. Within micro-regeneration, I observed a focus on caring for vulnerable groups, with efforts to empower the elderly and low-income individuals, who are often the most affected, especially in historical districts and old communities. Looking at the broader picture, the public is often in the 'vulnerable group' position during the process of urban regeneration. Most citizens are used to passively accepting the results of project planning and design, even if these results influence or even destroy their original living space and lifestyle. This phenomenon of putting the cart before the horse directly leads directly to social injustice and procedural injustice in the urban regeneration process (Yang, 2017). In this context, micro-regeneration offers an 'experimental' approach to promoting social justice on a smaller scale and at a more gradual pace. Furthermore, through a mechanism of integration between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches, policy guidance is strengthened, and public participation in practises is encouraged to achieve the coordination of government objectives and grassroots requirements, resulting in a shift from economic leadership to people-centred development.

It has been argued that public participation is crucial in assessing the feasibility and rationality of urban regeneration (Yang, 2017). However, it is worth noting that micro-regeneration should be viewed as an '*experimental*' approach. Empirical studies have revealed issues such as the injustice of participants involved, the lack of transparency in the project process, and governance issues over time. Moreover, in China's relatively heavy-handed governance and planning system, it is still quite important to change and transfer officials' ideas about people-centred strategy and participatory regeneration, since their decision-making power plays a significant role in the implementation of strategies.

In summary, the answer to this question provides a theoretical understanding of community resilience in the context of urban China, especially focusing on the social aspects at the community level. Although this research does not try to focus on social resilience, the performance and objective of micro-regeneration places great emphasis on the affective aspects. Specifically, micro-regeneration endeavours to provide a pathway for restoring the 'social glue' or '*guanxi*', as it is known in Chinese, with the aim of supporting co-production in terms of both

social and material projects. Guided by a people-centred principle, it also tries to empower ordinary people and enabled them to exercise their agency, with the goal of promoting resilient or sustainable community development by utilising more local power and resources on the ground. The framework (Figure 9.1) helps to understand community resilience, especially in the background of urban regeneration in China.

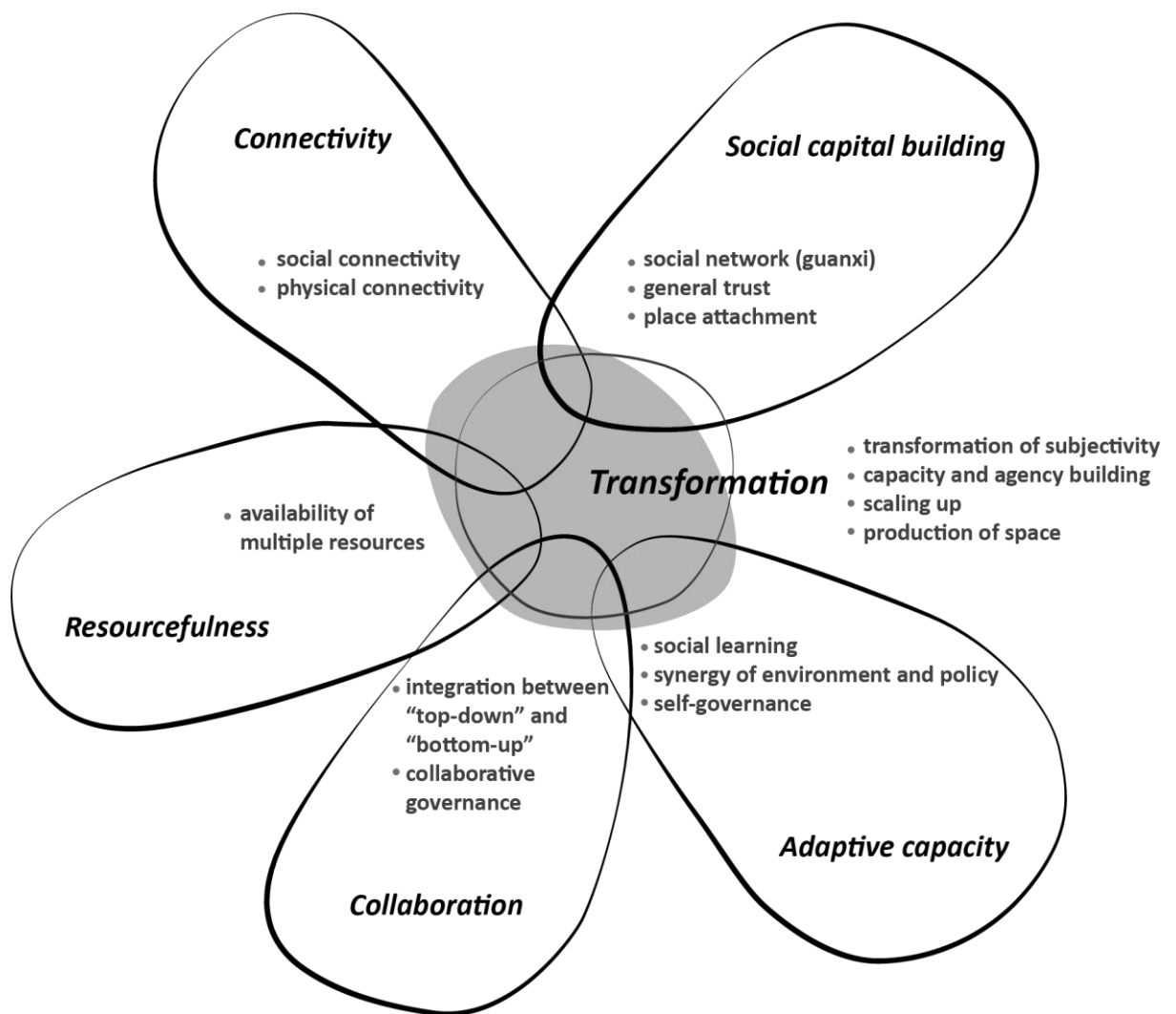


Figure 9.1 The framework to understand community resilience (Author, 2023)

Question 2: To what extent can micro-regeneration of heritage communities help to enhance community resilience?

| | |
|---|--|
| Influence of micro-regeneration planning regimes and practices on community resilience | <p>The tight social bonds between neighbours allow them to cope with challenges together, while social bonds between residents and local authorities benefit collaboration efforts..</p> <p>Indicators of adaptive capacity reflect the need for skills training for stakeholders and consideration for natural and cultural thresholds in urban development.</p> <p>The availability of resources is a key factor in achieving goals, but barriers may impede resource allocation and access.</p> <p>Place-based networks enable local resource interconnection, promoting collaborative efforts.</p> |
| Social value of micro-regeneration projects | <p>Promoting a sense of shared heritage among residents and fostering stakeholders' cultural identity and sense of place.</p> <p>Empowering residential communities and sustaining their position in historical districts.</p> <p>Promoting culturally and environmentally sensitive behavior among stakeholders.</p> <p>Fostering gradual engagement among people and further influencing a wider territorial scale.</p> |
| Transformation of planners' roles | <p>From technician to coordinator who bridges the ordinary people and the authorities, the organiser and consultant of public participation activities at the community level and the propagandist of planning policies at the local level.</p> <p>However, the empowerment of responsible planners and the implementation of responsible planner policy are deeply influenced by local governments.</p> |

After answering the preceding question, it became apparent that community resilience offers a lens through which to illustrate micro-regeneration strategy and vice versa. The indicators that I identified from case studies mostly enable resilience building in communities from both social and physical aspects. Specifically, social networks, generalised trust and place attachment comprise the most important indicators of social capital building. Here, the effect of the social networks, trust, and place attachment is to enhance community cohesion and stability, which aligns with the explanation of capital building proposed by Pinho et al. (2013). The close social bonds between neighbours enable them to come together to cope with environmental deterioration, and micro-regeneration offers a pathway to tease out the environmental issues and bring people together. By participating in the entire process of regeneration projects, residents became more familiar with their neighbours and more importantly, young people become aware of and engaged in caring for the environment in which they live, becoming enlightened participants in community regeneration. The increasing trust and place attachment knit the atomistic individuals in communities into a gradually growing network, which becomes

the most significant social capital to maintain stability and cohesion in the territory and withstand unexpected situations.

Adaptive capacity is illustrated by social learning, self-governance, and the synergy between environmental context, people-centred principles, and space. These three indicators are necessary for caring about natural and cultural thresholds in urban regeneration, which requires skill/knowledge in terms of project management and governance over time regardless of professional or background.

Resourcefulness involves having access to multiple resources. Resilient community development means that users in communities, such as residents, community-based organizations, RC, and sub-district offices, should be able to access alternative resources and different ways to achieve goals during a shock or when under stress. However, there are barriers which may impede resource allocation and access. For example, in community development affairs, the funding source remains singular, primarily coming from the municipal or district government; professional resources are also limited which results in some communities being unable to obtain professional support to develop cyber resources or mind resources from wider sources. These barriers may further lead to unbalanced development between different communities, sub-districts and districts.

Connectivity in the context of micro-regeneration highlights a place-based network and a 15-Minute Community Life Circle to prompt resilient development. A place-based network allows local resource interconnection, resource network growth and long-term place-based ability cultivation. A 15-Minute Community Life Circle emphasises the physical connection among the infrastructure around neighbourhoods estimated by walking time, aiming to increase residents' sense of belonging and hopefully reduce carbon emissions by decreasing car use. The aim is for more residents to care about the living environment, business and infrastructure within their neighbourhoods. In this vein, it can be viewed as a response to climate change at the community level.

Although the indicators identified above enhance resilient community building through policy-making and micro-regeneration practice, focusing on these indicators only can also constrain community regeneration. It has been reported that paying too much attention to the building

of social capital, instead, leads to the neglect of some residents' fundamental requirements. In the historical districts, such as the hutong areas especially, it could be said that some residents' only concerns are house repair and similar pressing living environment problems. They are not satisfied with facial 'beautifying movements' and criticise this kind of project as a waste of tax revenue. However, due to hutong's special feature of co-living, according to planners, making physical improvements only could be problematic such as getting the consent form from all households. Therefore, urban regeneration managers or coordinators, planners and RC prefer to use micro-regeneration as a tool to generate 'social glue' and reconstruct *guanxi* and trust between neighbours themselves as well as between residents and local authorities. There are conflicts of the balance between the relatively macro-level community regeneration and micro-regeneration, which require solutions from continuous experiments.

A growing body of evidence has demonstrated that tangible and intangible heritage both contribute to community resilience (Wiggins, 2018). In this research, in addition to the physical preservation and maintenance of heritage buildings, I applied effort to the social value of heritage community micro-regeneration guided by community resilience discourse. In micro-regeneration projects in historical districts, the project teams tend to investigate and document the history, customs or other features of the territory, for instance, the oral history recording and spontaneous micro-gardens recording in the *Shijia Hutong*, Beijing. This research finds that the documentation of community stories that might be lost provides a flexible and reliable source of data on buried early community images, which could promote a sense of shared heritage and then foster community resilience. Considering that residential historical districts might usually be ignored by developers or governments, as I discussed in Chapter 4, preserving the hutong history and narratives as one of their main sources of community capital can empower those residential communities and sustain their position in the historical districts. The research also found that attachment to intangible heritage can also support community resilience. Micro-regeneration which encourages residents to participate throughout the course of the projects encourages and promotes culturally and environmentally sensitive behaviour in following community regeneration practices. Moreover, developing policies to promote and preserve self-organised/governance activities and movements with local features, such as the community festival in *Xinhualu* sub-district, Shanghai, can foster stakeholders' cultural identity and sense of place and in turn enhance community resilience. Regarding policies, those that involve ordinary people or minorities in shared responsibilities and decision-making and have the full ownership of local institutions, such as *Shijia Hutong* Museum, are more likely to result

in effective policies for heritage preservation and enhancing community resilience. I found that in the 'our-courtyard' project in Beijing, the making of a Courtyard Convention allows residents to think about what kind of actions are better for community cohesion, a sense of belonging and heritage preservation. Furthermore, incorporating the spectrum of people's viewpoints and values, folk knowledge, and socio-cultural practices that are embodied in local community culture and heritage could be viewed as a more inclusive and collective pathway to challenge management and climate change resilience for historical communities. In addition, empathic and emotional engagement with place can create cultural meaning and facilitate more pro-environmental behaviours, multi-stakeholder collaboration and self-organised initiations. Here, micro-regeneration contributed to the social, political and psychological empowerment of residential historical communities by enhanced pride in being part of those neighbourhoods, new chances for members to associate and cooperate on shared actions such as community festivals and offering outlets for engagement in decision-making of community development.

Another finding of the social value of micro-regeneration – as a narrative tool - comes from my revisit to the case site in Shanghai in October 2022, rather than the fieldwork. After another year of development, Dayu built the Community Revitalisation Centre in *Xinhualu* sub-district, collaborating with the local government. This year, Dayu initiated a micro-regeneration programme named 'one square metre movement', focusing on the topic of community resilience. It allows people who live in or near the sub-district to initiate low-cost movements or activities to investigate how to understand community resilience in the context of the post-pandemic era or beyond this, in the context of a risk society. I participated in one project named 'community plate' organised by an NGO named 'The Way towards Tomorrow'. The project focuses on food issues such as food scarcity and health problems, and attracted dozens of participants from several districts in Shanghai beyond the neighbourhood's geographical limits. Through visiting, mapping, watching and discussing documentaries, I found that micro-regeneration projects can be used as a narrative vehicle to influence people's perceptions about the impact of food issues and even climate change on their living environment by encouraging them to advocate and support sustainable food endeavours (Figure 9-2). Although the power of micro-regeneration projects is limited, it has the potential to encourage more people to gradually engage and influence a wider scale territory. This resonates with a Chinese proverb: a single spark can start a prairie fire (星星之火，可以燎原 in Chinese).



Figure 9.2 Community Plate project (Author, 2023)

Finally, the empirical study of this research explores the transformation of the planners' role from technician to coordinator who bridges ordinary people and the government. This transformation is the result of the change in the planning context, that is, urban planning has shifted from incremental planning to stock-based planning (See Chapter 4), accompanied by transforming focus from physical space only to both physical and social spaces. In the context of the shift in the planning stage, urban planning and construction should be transformed from the one-way, solely responsible and strong management mode of the government to the mode of multiple participation, consultation and co-governance. In 2019, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development issued *guidelines on 'Common Creation' Activities in the Construction and improvement of Urban and rural Living Environments*, which emphasise the need to adopt a participatory planning method of 'collaborative decision-making, collaborative development, collaborative management of construction, collaborative evaluation of results and benefit-sharing'. Among them, the government, as the only decision-making subject in traditional planning, should be transformed into the initiator, guide and supporter of participatory planning, while the planner should be transformed from the traditional authoritative professional to the

organiser, coordinator and guide of planning, and play the role of connecting the government, the public, the community and community organisations and other various subjects. Specifically, on the one hand, planners (especially responsible planners) need to provide professional technical support and deliver interpretations to government officials regarding planning policies such as the requirements of upper-level planning documents, the process of planning work and the reference of good precedents. In this way, local governments and communities can benefit from more precise planning support and policy services, improve the suitability and effectiveness of local work, and provide solid technical support for local governments to deeply understand and carry out orderly planning implementation and urban renewal work. On the other hand, it has been believed that the local-based work and service delivered by responsible planners could provide real-time and objective feedback on the voices of the local governments and residents, propose solutions from a professional perspective, and help departments to timely understand the demands of the grassroots and improve the policy mechanism, so as to further improve the satisfaction, sense of gain and happiness of the people (Tao et al., 2021). When planners leave the office and enter the sites of the community, the on-site work is more difficult and the coordination process is more complicated. This does not mean that the importance of planners is reduced, but that their social responsibility is increased. It has been argued by practitioners and researchers that responsible planners do not get the 'responsibility' from the agreement signed with the planning management department but have the opportunity to use their own creativity from the new responsibility and new role (Feng et al., 2021; Zhang, 2021).

However, the responsible planner policy is still in its infancy and faces many challenges. One striking challenge is the constraint from the local government. Some directors of the local authorities have a vague understanding of the duties of responsible planners and do not offer sufficient resource support while others can exert excessive pressure and workload on planners, pushing them to do more additional tasks. In addition, some sub-district or community leaders do not understand or pay enough attention to the work of responsible planners, which leads to the lack of voice or power of planners in the process of project implementation and makes it difficult for them to fulfil a professional role. Responsible planners go deep into the grassroots level to take the initiative to investigate problems and put forward professional suggestions, but they are not able to get enough attention from local leaders or cannot perform duties due to the lack of policy and financial support. Moreover, planners need to be equipped with a wider

range of skills such as social work, construction management and even commercial operation to deal with the various complicated issues that occur in the process of urban regeneration.

9.3 Reflections on China's micro-regeneration

This paper examines the role and function of micro-regeneration in the wider urban planning context and finds that the project of micro-regeneration deserves more focus beyond the simple 'physical environment improvement'. This section summarises the implications of micro-regeneration in two ways: first, it plays a pioneering role in the implementation of 'cross-process public participation' and contributes to building a responsible planner system; second, it could be considered as a valuable approach to promote empowerment and build participatory capacity. This section ends with a formulation of possible recommendations for planners and policy makers.

9.3.1 Implications for micro-regeneration

9.3.1.1 Contributing to the shifts of planning system

As we can observe in the two cities, the co-productive processes in the Beijing and Shanghai micro-regeneration projects promoted the building of a general participatory community planning system and a system of responsible planners. The themes and content of micro-regeneration started with a single focus on environmental improvement and evolved into a set of comprehensive responses to various issues, encompassing physical, social and even political issues. The micro-regeneration agenda includes problem and conflict identification, open discussions, skills and knowledge sharing, participatory design, community building and the development of governance mechanisms. From an epistemological perspective, this content is highly informative as it not only served to build understanding, but also enabled the public to learn about the community regeneration process through participation in discussion, design and construction. Given the potential of historic neighbourhoods to provide an intricate social and political context for regeneration, it is argued that participatory micro-regeneration in historic communities is both problem-solving and agency-enhancing, instrumentalised by local governments because of its characteristics of gradualness and participation. In the discussion of resilience attributes in the context of micro-regeneration, the transformability factor is of importance, given its epistemological function. This function not only played an important role in terms of changing the mindset of local governments and citizens, giving more space for

residents to participate in community development and changing the attitude of residents to actively care about community affairs, but also played an important role in promoting the establishment of a participatory community planning system and responsible planner system, where planners receive official support to facilitate participatory planning on the ground. In addition, the ethical function helped stakeholders (governments, RCs, planners, NGOs and residents) to build trusting relationships, creating communicative arenas or platforms for stakeholders to voice their concerns. The trusting relationships also enabled participants to build mutual respect between the different parties. The micro-regeneration approach is therefore seen as an effective way to build resilience and sustainable community development and is gradually being extended to more cities in China.

9.3.1.2 Paving the way for self-governance

Micro-regeneration helps pave the way for later self-governance and services. In China, a country with central planning, civil society was strictly monitored and controlled for many years before the state began to officially invite social organisations to participate in social services provision in 2010 (Howell, 2012; Li et al., 2019). Prior to this, civil society initiatives were usually interrupted by the local government before they became significant, as this type of initiative was interpreted as an intention to expose the incompetence of the state. As a result, there seems to be a lack of momentum at the local level to pursue self-governance (Li et al., 2019). Besides the prosperity of the concept of ‘co-production, co-governance and benefit-sharing’, municipalities still face the legacy of strong control over citizen mobilisation, which has contributed to civil passivity. In this context, micro-regeneration offers an opportunity to bring people together, learn participatory or professional skills and for their voices to be heard. Activities such as open days, workshops and collaborative design invite residents to experience the process, content and knowledge in a real environment and not just on ‘paper’. The visibility of the physical micro-regeneration projects allows participants to see the results of their efforts. The process of engagement has an impact over time. As we can observe in both cases, the projects have the following scenarios. Regardless of whether the experience is transformed into a mechanism (Beijing) or whether the project continues and the scope of services is expanded (Shanghai), in both cases, residents can engage intensively and play their role by participating in the initiation, maintenance and governance of the projects. By shifting awareness and taking action, community micro-regeneration strategy provides pioneering value for more extensive public participation and governance.

9.3.2 Recommendations

9.3.2.1 Recommendations for planners

Beyond the project itself, interpretations of development have expanded from 'economic and physical development' to a more complicated and comprehensive perspective that includes 'social development, environmental sustainability, social justice and democratisation' (Sen, 2000; Heller and Rao, 2015). First, choosing an appropriate project or activity for micro-regeneration as a starting point means selecting the truly important projects and meeting the urgent needs of stakeholders, otherwise no positive chain reaction will be triggered for subsequent movements. Moreover, in the context of micro-regeneration, attention needs to be paid to "how to engage appropriate professionals, how to represent values, interests or concerns that matter, and not least, how to shape commitments to action" (Forester, 2018, p. 595). As shown in previous analysis, historical and old communities often have complex resident compositions, which presents challenges for planners in organizing projects and cultivating community involvement. Planners may need to consider different ways of organizing activities to listen to the ideas of different residents (such as business owners and ordinary residents in the Shanghai case), and design more activities based on this to stimulate their willingness to participate and enhance their participation abilities. Finally, micro-regeneration should commit to action, not just preliminary social (participatory) activities. In the cases of micro-regeneration in historic communities, whether the 'our-courtyard' project in Beijing or the No.222 *Panyu* Lane project in Shanghai, several micro-regeneration programmes were initiated because they were necessary and urgent to improve the environment. More importantly, they provided the opportunity to gather people who care about the neighbourhood, and this formed the basis for subsequent project initiatives.

9.3.2.2 Recommendations to policymakers

Reflections also highlight the imperfections in the current community regeneration system, beyond the researched individual cases. First, the phenomenon neglecting residents' real needs caused by an unreasonable system still exists. At the primary stage of many community regeneration projects, some governments have decided the framework or plan first rather than entrusting professional organisations with researching residents' requirements. That is, after making the decision of demolition or self-organised regeneration, developers and designers were then required to ask the residents for their views in order to fill the gap of the lack of core opinions. From this dimension, the investigation of the so-called residents' demands represents mere tinkering and is carried out based on not violating the established direction of major

reconstruction (Cui et al., 2021). Therefore, residents' opinions in this context are quite limited, and far from the realisation of the concept of 'people's city' (*ren-min-cheng-shi* 人民城市 in Chinese). Moreover, under the circumstances that the regeneration plan is established, the regeneration that does not meet the demands of the residents encounters great resistance during its development, often requiring designers or design institutes to communicate and coordinate. This late arrival of research and surveying leads to increased costs of project mediation, where designers/planners or researchers were usually asked to accept the pressure of communication and coordination. Secondly, there seems to be a trap of 'media politics' (ibid). At present, the government and developers actively or passively carry out surveys to establish the residents' opinions, which can indeed reduce the resistance to regeneration. Regardless of whether they really understand the real demands of the residents, in the process of regeneration or after the regeneration, developers try to package their behaviour, aiming to make the project viewed as just and fully meeting the demands of residents. Many local governments, such as sub-district offices and RCs, have also begun to take a similar approach. They feel that as long as they have the discourse power in the media, then the regeneration project is a successful act of benefiting the people. Nearly all the news on the selected cases in this thesis reported positively on the outcomes of the projects. However, based on my discussion in previous chapters, it is not difficult to see hidden conflicts and residents' complaints. 'Whoever has a louder voice is more able to stand up' has become a big misunderstanding in urban regeneration. Therefore, a more reasonable system/policy support is necessary to facilitate real 'bottom-up' initiatives.

The recommendation here is to allow the role of the community to be pre-positioned in the community regeneration system. The community here refers to residents, residents' representatives or household committees. When the community is mentioned as having an important role, it can at least logically illustrate that residents are one of the core stakeholders involved in urban regeneration. Third parties such as planners, NGOs and researchers should also play an important role in the process of community regeneration. However, we need to be cautious about overemphasizing the responsibility of designers and avoid forcing institutional accountability issues onto them. Recommendations for planners and policy-makers are summarised as follows.

| | |
|--|--|
| Recommendations for planners | <p>To kickstart community development, it is important to choose an appropriate micro-regeneration project as the entry point.</p> <p>It is crucial to involve the community and appropriate expertise, represent community values, interests, or concerns, and shape clear commitments to action in order to successfully develop a community project.</p> <p>It is important for projects to commit to concrete actions, rather than just focusing on preliminary social activities.</p> |
| Recommendations for policy-makers | <p>Policies are needed to support bottom-up initiatives that allow residents to propose solutions based on their real needs.</p> <p>Site research should be conducted before project initiation to ensure that it is not used merely to fill gaps in core resident opinions. Policies are needed to ensure the implementation of a reasonable procedure.</p> <p>The role of community should be pre-positioned in the community regeneration system.</p> |

9.4 Contributions of this research

This study offers a new perspective on community micro-regeneration in China by introducing resilience theory and analysing six attributes of resilience to provide a new understanding of the transformation occurring in China's municipal physical regeneration and social governance at the local level. It sought to identify the influence of regeneration practises over time and the transformation of Chinese local governance, leading to specific versions of co-production in the period of stock-based planning and understanding of community resilience in urban China. To this end, this study conducted three case studies in two cities on historical community micro-regeneration. By triangulating the literature, data and the insights obtained, the study explored a range of arguments related to community resilience with the aim of better understanding its dynamics and how it could pave the way for sustainable development of historic communities and better governance at the local level in China. This section presents the contributions of this study from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

The theoretical framework of community resilience, which is composed of six attributes (social capital building, adaptability, collaboration, resourcefulness, connectivity and transformation), proposes a unique version to understand urban regeneration practices in China from a more social perspective. This study reviews the mainstream understanding of resilience theory and community resilience and discusses the rationale behind the construction of the framework. The interrogation of this research agrees with the argument that resilience can be improved locally at the community level (Trogal et al., 2018). However, it is noted that the interpretation

of community resilience in urban China, especially from the social aspect, needs to be immersed in Chinese discourse by introducing concepts such as *guanxi*, *people-centred* and *local-based*. The concept of community resilience is also extended to an online environment. The case study from Shanghai shows that the internet provides resources for collaboration and creates a platform to survive quarantine during the pandemic. This study supports other research in evidencing the fact that micro-regeneration is receiving increasing attention and has significant implications for sustainable development. This is a matter that has become an important approach to drive governance modernisation in China.

Secondly, based on three empirical studies, this study provides insights for the debate on the notion of 'co-production' in the context of hierarchical planning in China. It focuses on the history of 'authority' and '*guanxi*' and the structural changes that underpin democratic institutions. The integration of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' offers a potential system structure to implement co-production at the community level. Therefore, this work has contributed to the understanding of Mitlin's (2008) argument about co-production as a political strategy to change state-society relations.

In looking at micro-regeneration through the lens of resilience, this research has used empirical studies to show that current participatory community regeneration has an impact on community sustainable development and community governance, as well as on the community's ability to withstand external challenges. However, the insights gained are limited, especially considering that the study is gradual and small-scale. Moreover, with the development of micro-regeneration system, there is a risk of reverting to sclerotic planning procedures that do not give freedoms and powers to either planners or residents in projects. The arguments in this thesis suggest that a better developed mechanism for implementing micro-regeneration is needed. This mechanism consists of a more flexible timetable or audition plan in the government dimension, a better system for responsible planners and a comprehensive public engagement toolkit. Resilient community development requires a well-functioning co-production mechanism from the grassroots of society that promotes capacity building, advocacy by the people, long-term support by professionals and empowerment of self-governance, rather than top-down initiation of programmes and vertical integration of stakeholders/parties by local authorities.

Finally, this study significantly enriches the body of knowledge on community resilience building by delving into the roles of Residents' Committee (RC) and responsible planners within the unique context of China. Prior analyses have clarified the pivotal role of co-production in the construction of community resilience, but the effective execution of co-production hinges on the coordination and organisation facilitated by RCs and responsible planners.

The RC, as a distinct grassroots entity within Chinese society, serves as a crucial bridge connecting local government and residents. On one hand, owing to their position, RCs are provided with the ability to gather input from ordinary citizens and mobilise participants through informal channels, while on the other, given that RC leaders and key personnel are appointed by the local government, RCs bear the responsibility of disseminating government policies to residents and community-based organisations. Overall, this research endeavours to leverage insights gained from the examination of the RC's role to provide valuable insights for urban planning in other countries, where similar organisations may prove instrumental in fostering community development.

Moreover, the discussion over the responsibilities of the responsible planner challenges prevailing stereotypes that depict planners as distant elites solely focusing on drafting blueprints. In the context of stock-based planning and the imperative of precision governance in China, planners are increasingly expected to actively engage on-site, so as not only to enhance physical spaces but also to contribute to the realm of social governance. Through the medium of micro-regeneration projects, planners aim to equip local organizations and residents with knowledge and skills regarding planning and design, foster stronger connections between residents and local government, and facilitate the development of local networks. Overall, the present study holds the potential to contribute significantly to the global dialogue on the role of planners in urban development, and offers valuable insights drawn from the Chinese experience.

9.5 Limitations of this study and future research agenda

Community regeneration and development is a grand topic for China, especially in the 'second half' of urbanisation. It concerns the dynamic and unending interaction between the government and civil society. As discussed in Chapter 4, community regeneration movements are underway in different cities, different types of neighbourhoods in various ways with multiple stakeholders being the initiators. This study only carried out empirical studies on two specific

types of neighbourhoods (traditional historical residential area and old urban community) in specific cities (Beijing and Shanghai). It cannot represent 'general' micro-regeneration practices because commercial apartment complexes account for a large proportion of residences in China and many of them are also undergoing community regeneration. Different from the projects researched in this thesis, community regeneration programmes in commercial apartment complexes are usually organised by developers, and represents a different type of movement. For example, *Yuanjing* Ltd. in Beijing, as an enterprise, is exploring the ways to conduct Public-Private-Partnership initiatives in the arena of community regeneration and management. It is an attempt to break the routine of the government being in charge of the funding and management of old communities. In Chengdu, a city located in the south-west of China, there is an attempt to establish a special foundation to support the broader community regeneration and revitalisation. Empirical research in more types of communities and in various contexts is important to understand the impact of community micro-regeneration. Nevertheless, this research is worth referencing in similar contexts or situations, as it offers a relatively in-depth understanding of the linkage between community resilience and community regeneration.

Considering the methodological limitations, a significant limitation of qualitative research lies in the research-induced bias. To reduce this bias, this research used a thematic coding and analytic scheme as a check balance. Moreover, there is also a potential risk regarding qualitative interviews, which might be criticised for a lack of neutrality on the part of the interviewees. Given this, the research adopted other data collection approaches, including policies/documents and participatory observation. The integration of additional data sources aids in triangulating the data and enhancing its reliability.

This study has offered an in-depth analysis of the performance of community resilience in the context of community micro-regeneration. In particular, it combined deductive and inductive research strategies in generating new ideas and identifying theoretical implications based on empirical case studies. Informed by the limitations discussed previously, more empirical research is needed at both micro- and meso-levels to identify the detailed issues and impact of community regeneration, which could further contribute to achievable strategies and policies referring to resilience, sustainability and greater democracy in a transforming era in China.

It has been argued in this thesis that urban regeneration at the community level is experiencing co-production and co-governance in its attempt to deepen the democratic process. However, it can be identified preliminarily that the state-led co-production mechanism aligns with some governance concepts, for example, the 'authoritarian deliberation' (He and Warren, 2011) to some extent. Authoritarian deliberation refers to the expanding adoption of deliberative procedures aiming to legalise and enhance authoritarian rule, and second, serve as a leading edge of democratisation (Cheng, 2015). It recognises the leadership of the party and the limited public deliberation on various social and political issues at the local level. Since this research focused much more on the resilience performance of micro-regeneration and the interpretation of the resilience concept in a specific context, it did not extensively examine the decision-making and deliberation process. Therefore, future research could be conducted to explore the extent to which the powerful bureaucratic elite promotes common interests and resolves conflicts. More importantly, ethnography research is encouraged to explore the impact of 'authoritarian deliberation' on ordinary citizens and the urban regeneration mechanism evolution over time. Finally, the traditional values and informal ways of authority in different settings could be probed through more comparative examinations.

Another issue discussed in this study is the role of the internet in contributing to public engagement. As the literature and this research have shown, the internet enhances opportunities for public interaction and policy discussion and expands the availability of multiple resources. At the end of my writing stage, I noticed that Dayu initiated an online event where participants could collect virtual badges by participating in discussions, seminars, workshops and reading groups online. Dayu aims to involve more people who are interested in community revitalisation and place making, and then looking for more enlightened people and expanding the resource network. In this vein, future research could be conducted to explore the development and issues of internet-based initiatives, for example, the risks of the domination of commercial activities and individualised forms of politics.

The comparative perspective in this research has sought to investigate the empirical evidence of the performance of micro-regeneration in different cities, thereby illuminating the understanding of community resilience in this context. To fully understand and improve the resilient and sustainable urban regeneration strategy, positioning it in a global context could be helpful. The global view may contribute to expanding the awareness of possibilities and reviewing a wider range of political alternatives (Almond, 2003). Therefore, exploring and

comparing the way and impact of local regeneration and local governance in China with that of other practices could enable a better understanding of China's specific approach to resilience at the local level and its role in the global resilience imperative.

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Appendices

Ethics Application Approval Letter



Downloaded: 22/04/2023
Approved: 04/01/2021

Tongfei Jin
Registration number: 190183383
School of Architecture
Programme: Architecture (PhD/Architecture FT) - ARCR133

Dear Tongfei

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring community resilience based on urban micro-regeneration in Beijing, China
APPLICATION: Reference Number 036616

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 04/01/2021 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 036616 (form submission date: 04/01/2021); (expected project end date: 01/10/2021).
- Participant information sheet 1083227 version 2 (31/12/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1085938 version 1 (31/12/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1085937 version 1 (31/12/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1085936 version 1 (31/12/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1085935 version 1 (31/12/2020).
- Participant consent form 1083228 version 1 (15/10/2020).
- Participant consent form 1085940 version 1 (31/12/2020).
- Participant consent form 1085939 version 1 (31/12/2020).

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Chengzhi Peng
Ethics Administrator
School of Architecture

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/research-services/ethics-integrity/policy>
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/policy/fs/1.671066/file/GRIPPpolicy.pdf>
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

Information Sheet (in English)



Participant Information Sheet

1. Research Project Title:

Exploring community resilience based on urban micro-regeneration in China.

2. Invitation paragraph

You are invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?

This co-productive research investigates community resilience in the context of the rapidly urbanising cities of Beijing, China. The research focuses on historic districts in Beijing's old city areas that are presently undergoing urban regeneration. Traditional residential neighbourhoods in Beijing's historic districts are rich in both tangible and intangible heritage. In recent years, the protection of both tangible and intangible heritage has been at the core of a range of urban 'micro-regeneration' projects that promote 'community resilience' as a goal and put forward participatory approaches as a means to achieve it. In this context, resilience is used as a key theoretical framework to deal with emerging urban challenges such as heritage deterioration and population ageing, which are outstanding problems in historic districts.

Community resilience is the focus of this study with the goal of demonstrating the role of local communities as a focus of intervention for implementing urban micro-regeneration while simultaneously improving communities' capacity to resist the further deterioration of tangible and intangible heritage. Therefore, this research seeks a greater understanding of the interrelationships between community resilience and urban regeneration by examining the views and experiences of local stakeholders, rather than by translating and testing Western theoretical frameworks.

4. Why have I been chosen?

The research is supposed to document the aims and outcomes of urban micro-regeneration projects initiated by different stakeholders in the context of Beijing; the practical views of residents involved in these projects; and the different meanings associated with community resilience. Therefore, as the participants of the cases I selected, you are invited to participate the data collection period of this research.

This research will invite key person in facilitators (including local government and other institution), resident committees, designers and residents. Therefore, there can be 8 to 10 people recruited in one case and there are two on-site cases in total.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. You do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact me via email: tjin2@sheffield.ac.uk or via Wechat.

*Please note that after 01/10/2021, your anonymised data which have been included within a large dataset cannot be removed whilst you can withdraw from future data collection.



*Please note that by choosing to participate in this research, this will not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

6. What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

You will be involved in the research for 9 months. You will be interviewed for 2 to 3 times during this period and each interview will last for an hour. The interview transcript will be analysed after the fieldwork and be used in the final thesis.

I will use interview and observation as my main research methods. For interview, you will be asked the questions regarding your experience and thinking about the micro-regeneration projects and if this kind of projects have positive or negative influence on your life. And there are questions in terms of your motivation to facilitate or take part in the projects. You will be interviewed online or at the public space in your community or company. All questions will enable open answers and you can decide to answer every question or not.

Observation will take place in open activities which cannot be harmful to you.

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

All the participation will be open and transparent and you will not be in risks.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will make some changes and influence to micro-regeneration projects and help the heritage preservation challenge which can affect your life in the future.

9. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications unless you have given your explicit consent for this. If you agree to us sharing the information you provide with other researchers (e.g. by making it available in a data archive) then your personal details will not be included unless you explicitly request this.

10. What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, I am required to inform you that the legal basis I am applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)).

As we will be collecting some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about your position), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is 'necessary for scientific or historical research purposes.

11. What will happen to the data collected?

I will be the only researcher who can have access to the collected data and I will do translation by myself to protect your personal details. Due to the nature of this research it is very likely that other researchers may find the data collected to be useful in answering future research questions. We will ask for your explicit consent for your data to be shared in this way..

Collected data will be stored and published in pseudonymised and anonymised. All data will be destroyed in 2026, five years after data collection.



12. Who is organising and funding the research?

No organisation or company fund this research.

13. Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

14. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by Sheffield School of Architecture.

15. What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?

If you have anything to complain, please contact with my supervisor Krzysztof Nawratek via k.nawratek@sheffield.ac.uk. If you are unsatisfied with the handled outcomes, please contact with the director Wen-shao Chang via w.chang@sheffield.ac.uk. For any complaints regarding your personal data using, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office via the link <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

16. Contact for further information

For any further information, please contact me via tjin2@sheffield.ac.uk. In case that I will be unavailable in sometimes, please contact my primary supervisor Krzysztof Nawratek via k.nawratek@sheffield.ac.uk.

Note: You will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Thank you for taking part in the project.

Information Sheet (in Chinese)

参与人员信息知情单（受访人员）

1. 研究题目

基于历史街区微更新的社区韧性研究。

2. 邀请

很荣幸邀请您参加本研究项目。在您决定是否参加之前，了解研究目的及研究内容极为重要。请您仔细阅读以下信息，并根据需要与他人讨论。若有任何模糊内容，或其他您希望了解到的内容，请与我联系。感谢您阅读此篇并决定是否参与研究调查。

3. 研究目的

这项合作研究旨在中国特大城市快速城市化的背景下探索社区韧性。这项研究的重点是北京及上海两地老城区的历史街区，目前这些地区正在进行城市更新。两地历史街区的传统居民区拥有丰富的物质和非物质遗产。近年来，对物质和非物质遗产的保护一直是一系列城市“微更新”项目的核心，这些项目以社区可持续发展和提升社区韧性为目标，并提出了参与性方法来实现这一目标。在这种情况下，韧性理论被用作应对新兴的城市挑战（如文化遗产消失和人口老龄化）的关键理论框架。

社区韧性作为本研究的重点，目的是证明本地社区在实施城市微再生的同时作为干预对象，以此来提高社区抵御有形和无形遗产进一步恶化的能力。因此，本研究通过分析当地利益相关者的观点和经验，而不是简单翻译和测试源自西方的韧性理论框架，寻求对社区韧性与城市更新之间的相互关系的更大理解。

4. 您为什么被选择参与该研究

本研究旨在记录不同利益相关者在北京旧城保护背景下和上海城市更新背景下发起的城市微更新项目的目标和成果、参与这些项目的居民的实际意见、以及社区韧性相关的不同含义。因此，您作为研究案例的参与者，受邀参与本次研究的数据采集。

本研究将邀请项目负责人、居委会、设计师和居民中的关键人物。因此，每个案例分别采访 10 人，总共有两个现场案例。

5. 您是否必须参与

是否参与采访取决于您自身想法和意见。如果您决定参加，您将得到这张信息表保存(您将被要求签署同意书)，您仍然可以在任何时候退出，并不需承担任何负面后果。如果您想退出研究，请通过电子邮件与我联系:tjin2@sheffield.ac 或通过微信 1046942639。

***请注意**，2021 年 10 月 01 日后，您的匿名数据已被包含在无法删除的已采集信息包内，但同时您可以从此日期后的数据收集退出。

***请注意**，签署本信息单并选择参加本次研究，并不会产生一个具有法律约束力的协议，也不会您在您和谢菲尔德大学之间建立雇佣关系。

6. 研究期间您将参与的活动

您将参与为期 9 个月的研究。在此期间，您将接受 2 - 3 次面试（仅针对项目组织人员），每次面试将持续一个小时。访谈记录将在实地调查后进行分析，并用于最后的论文。

我将使用访谈和观察作为主要研究方法。在采访中，您将被问及有关您的经历和对微更新项目的思考，以及此类项目对您的生活有积极或消极的影响。还有一些问题是关于你推动或参与项目的动机。你将在网上或你所在社区或公司的公共场所接受面试。所有的问题都是开放式答案，你可以决定是否回答每个问题。

观察将在开放的活动中进行，不会对你造成伤害。

7. 潜在风险

所有参与行为与研究目的用途等信息都是公开透明的，您不会被置于研究风险之中。

8. 参与项目的益处

虽然项目参与人不能获得直接利益，但我们希望这项工作能对微更新项目产生一些改变和影响，并帮助遗产保护挑战，这可能会影响你未来的生活。

9. 保密机制

在研究过程中，我们收集到的关于您的所有信息将被严格保密，只会提供给研究团队的成员（即研究者本人及导师）。除非得到您的明确同意，否则您的个人信息不会在任何报告或出版物中直接出现。如果您同意我们与其他研究人员共享您提供的信息(例如，通过数据存档提供这些信息)，那么除非您明确要求，否则您的个人详细信息将不会被包括在内。

10. 数据用途

我将是唯一可以接触到收集的数据的研究人员，我将自己翻译所有信息以保护您的个人隐私。由于本研究的性质，其他研究人员很可能会发现收集的数据对回答未来的研究问题是有用的。我们将在您明确同意以这种方式分享数据的情况下才会进行数据分享。

收集到的数据将以假名和匿名的方式存储和发布。所有数据将在收集数据 5 年后，即 2026 年销毁。

11. 数据收集及处理的法律依据

根据资料保护法例（英国），我为处理您的个人资料而申请的法律依据是“处理是执行公共利益任务所必需的”(第 6(1)(e)条)。

由于我们将收集一些在法律中被定义为较为敏感的数据(关于您职位的信息)，我们还需要让您知道，我们在法律上适用以下条件:使用您的数据是“科学或历史研究目的所必需的”。

12. 研究赞助

该研究未接受任何赞助，为自费博士研究课题。

13. 资料保存

谢菲尔德大学将作为本次研究的数据保存控制方。这意味着该大学有责任妥善保管您的信息。

14. 项目伦理审查

该项目已通过谢菲尔德大学的伦理审查程序，由谢菲尔德建筑学院管理。

15. 申诉程序

在项目资料收集过程中，如果您有任何不满，请通过 k.nawratek@sheffield.ac.uk 与我的导师 Krzysztof Nawratek 联系。如果您对处理结果不满意，请通过 w.chang@sheffield.ac.uk 与博士项目主管 Wen-shao Chang 联系。如您对个人资料使用有任何投诉，请通过 <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general> 与资讯专员办公室联络。

16. 联系方式

如需了解更多信息，请通过 tjin2@sheffield.ac.uk 联系我。若您无法与我本人取得联系，请通过 k.nawratek@sheffield.ac.uk 联系我的第一导师 Krzysztof Nawratek。

注:你将收到一份信息知情单张及一份已签署的同意书以备存。

非常感谢您的参与!

Consent Form (in English)



[Exploring community resilience based on urban micro-regeneration in Beijing, China] Consent Form

| <i>Please tick the appropriate boxes</i> | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Taking Part in the Project | | |
| I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 01/11/2020 or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include being interviewed, being recorded (audio), sharing documents and case information and taking part in workshops for discussion. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study before 01/11/2021; I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How my information will be used during and after the project | | |
| I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I give permission for the interview transcript that I provide to be deposited in the University of Sheffield Drive, so it can be used for future research and learning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers | | |
| I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of participant [printed]

Signature

Date

Name of Researcher [printed]

Signature

Date

Project contact details for further information:

Lead researcher: Tongfei Jin - tjin2@sheffield.ac.uk

For any complaint: Krzysztof Nawratek - k.nawratek@sheffield.ac.uk

The University's address: Sheffield School of Architecture, The University of Sheffield, Arts Tower

Western Bank, Sheffield, S10 2TN, UK

Note: the consent form will be saved two copies 1 paper copy for the participant, 1 copy for the research data file

The template of this consent form has been approved by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee and is available to view here: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/further-guidance/homepage>

Consent Form (in Chinese)



[基于北京历史街区微更新的社区韧性研究] 调研同意书

| 请在适当的方格内打勾 | 是 | 否 |
|---|---|---|
| 参与项目 | | |
| 我已经阅读并理解了始于 2021 年 1 月 11 日的项目信息表或项目研究人员已向我充分说明研究内容。(如果您对这个问题的回答是否定的, 请在您完全了解您参与这个项目内容前, 不要继续填写这份同意书) | | |
| 我有机会就这个项目进行提问。 | | |
| 我同意参加这个项目的资料收集部分。明白参与项目将包括接受采访、录音(音频)、分享文件和个案资料, 以及参加研讨会讨论。 | | |
| 我已了解选择作为志愿者参与这项研究, 并不会产生具有法律约束力的协议, 也无意与谢菲尔德大学建立雇佣关系。 | | |
| 我保证参与该项目是自愿的, 我可以在 2021 年 1 月 11 日之前退出研究。我无须解释我为何不想再参加, 如果我选择退出也不会有任何不良后果。 | | |
| 我所提供的信息将会被如何利用 | | |
| 我知悉我的个人信息, 如姓名、电话号码、地址和电子邮件地址等不会透露给项目以外的人。 | | |
| 我理解并同意我的话可能会在出版物、报告、网页和其他研究成果中被引用。同时我知悉, 除非我特别要求, 否则我的姓名等具体个人信息不会出现在发表内容中。 | | |
| 我明白并同意, 其他获授权研究人员只有同意按本表格要求对资料保密时, 才可查阅此等资料。 | | |
| 我明白并同意, 其他授权的研究人员可以在出版物、报告、网页和其他研究成果中使用我的数据, 前提是他们同意按本表格要求对信息进行保密。 | | |
| 我同意将我提供的采访等信息存放于谢菲尔德大学研究人员的学校账户云盘内, 以便将来进行研究和学习。 | | |
| 综上, 你提供的信息将被研究人员合法使用 | | |
| 我同意将我所持有的作为这个项目的部分材料的使用版权授权于谢菲尔德大学。 | | |

参与人员姓名 (打印): _____ 签名: _____ 日期: _____

研究人员姓名 (打印): _____ 签名: _____ 日期: _____

项目人员详细联络信息:

首席研究员: 金桐妃 - tjin2@sheffield.ac.uk

投诉联系人员: Krzysztof Nawratek - k.nawratek@sheffield.ac.uk

学校地址: Sheffield School of Architecture, The University of Sheffield, Arts Tower

Western Bank, Sheffield, S10 2TN, UK

注: 同意书一式两份, 一份供参与者使用, 一份供研究资料存档。

The template of this consent form has been approved by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee and is available to view here: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/further-guidance/homepage>

Interview questions summary (in English)

Part1 – Designers/team leaders

1. Could you please introduce the initiation of this project?
2. Could you please introduce the organising process of this project? (Including location/courtyard selection progress, the participant inclusivity, communication mode between stakeholders, the decision making process?)
3. What are the roles of different actors? Where does the funding come from?
4. How to guarantee to present participants' ideas and needs on the ground?
5. Could you please introduce the governance mode of the micro-garden after construction?
6. What are the social capitals delivered during this project?
7. What kind of resource network has been built after the project?
8. The impact of this project? (to both residents and your team)

Part2 – residents

1. Why did you join the micro-garden project? What did you wish to get from it?
2. Did you know well about the project procedure before the project starting?
3. Is there anything that impressed you during the project?
4. What kind of participatory activities satisfied you?
5. Do you satisfy with the outcome of this project?
6. What's your opinion about the governance of this garden?
7. What did you learn from this project?
8. What impact did the micro-garden project have on the neighbourhood and the use of this space?

Part3 - government

1. What is the attitude of local government to community garden projects? How do government support the project?
2. Based on your observation, what are the impact of community garden project on the relationship between neighbours, the use of space and residents' attitude to public affairs?
3. What's your opinion about information transparency?
4. What kind of governance mode could be sustainable in your opinion?
5. What's your suggestion to micro-regeneration projects? For example, the roles of different actors

Interview questions – residents (in Chinese)

采访提纲居民

- **前期认知：**

1. 您**为什么**参与社区花园/微花园建造项目？期望从项目中获得什么？
2. 在决定参与时，您对于项目流程（即项目将分为几个阶段、谁发起了这个项目、谁参与和主导项目，项目的具体建造地址等内容）了解吗？
3. 您对于项目信息透明度满意吗？有什么意见？

- **项目建造过程：**

4. 在项目过程中，有哪些事情令您印象深刻吗？
5. 您在项目整个过程中参与了哪些公众参与的活动（比如工作坊、展览、亲自动手建造等）？您认为哪些活动可以提升或者需要增加哪些环节？

- **项目后续：**

6. 您对于项目成果有什么看法吗？与您的预期有没有差距？对花园维护/管理的模式满意吗？有何意见或建议？
7. 通过这次活动，您对于社区花园/微花园是否有了新的认识？您学到了哪些知识？
8. 您是否会向周围朋友介绍自己参与的花园建造项目？为什么？如果未来有机会，您会积极参与类似的活动吗？您是否会号召他人一起参与绿化？
9. 微花园项目对邻里关系或者场地使用产生了怎样的影响？（比如根据您的观察，这里是否比以前更加吸引小区居民？人们是否更愿意在这里聊天等？）
10. 通过此次项目，您对于老旧小区改造/老城留白增绿（文化保护）有了怎样的认识？
11. 未来如果有类似项目，您希望 街道/社区居委会、社会组织、设计师、志愿者和居民能够在项目中起到怎样的作用？
12. 疫情封闭期间，您认为微花园项目是否起到了一定作用？
13. 社区的花友会您是否了解并参加？

Interview questions – Residents’ Committee (in Chinese)

采访提纲-社区居委会

1. 社区及在地政府对于社区花园项目秉持怎样的态度？对于社区花园项目给予了哪些支持？
2. 通过您的长期在地观察，社区花园项目是否对邻里关系、居民对公共事务的热心程度、公共空间的管理、公共空间的使用产生了影响？
3. 您对于项目信息透明度又怎样的看法？例如：您认为哪些信息应该公开给居民？信息透明对项目进行有没有影响等？
4. 您认为公众参与活动对居民参与建造项目会不会产生一定影响？例如：在项目展开实地建造前进行公众教育、参观展览等普惠型活动。或者为社区花园项目进行前期意识铺垫等。
5. 您对于社区花园建造项目未来的发展有哪些建议？您希望 街道/社区居委会、社会组织、设计师、志愿者和居民能够在项目中起到怎样的作用？
6. 您认为社区花园采取怎样的管理模式才会更加可持续？
7. 您认为社区花园项目对于**社区文化**发展和建设有没有产生影响？
8. 除社区花园外，美和园社区还进行了哪些服务居民，居民公众参与的活动？
9. 社区花园项目在疫情期间是否起到了作用？

Interview questions – Sub-district office (in Chinese)

采访提纲-街道

- **整体概况**

1. 您所在社区人口组成如何？居住情况如何？
2. 在社区空间/社区花园微更新中，“共商共建共享”机制是怎样体现的？可否详细介绍一下您所在社区空间微更新的过程都有哪几步？分别有哪些团体参与其中？是怎样运作的？（项目筹备阶段、设计阶段、实施阶段、维护阶段）
3. 社区空间微更新在社区中属于哪一部分工作？社区和在地政府对此是怎样的态度？是否有相关政策支持？对于社区来说，推动社区空间微更新项目的关键要素是什么？（总体概括问一下，强调您如何看待自下而上发起的项目，在地政府对此类型项目的态度）

- **社区职能与参与过程**

4. 在微更新项目中，社区在“共建机制”中扮演怎样的角色？提供了哪些支持？
5. 在项目筹备、设计、实施、维护阶段是否有公众参与活动？居民从哪一阶段参与进来？分别采用何种形式？根据什么原因选择？
6. 通过哪些渠道召集参与活动的居民并保证代表性？什么样的参与深度较为恰当？（公示告知、需求表达、参与决策、参与维护等）什么样的信息公开程度较为恰当？有哪些沟通渠道保证信息畅通？
7. 当更新过程中出现矛盾或公众意见，通常采用什么方式解决？

- **后期维护及影响**

8. 更新后的场地采取怎样的维护方式才能保证可持续？目前有哪些问题？
9. 根据您的观察，参与式微更新项目对邻里关系、居民对公共事务的热心程度、公共空间的管理、公共空间的使用，居民间的纽带，居民与在地政府之间的纽带产生了影响？对社区文化建设是否产生影响？
10. 未来开展参与式社区空间微更新项目，您有哪些建议？您希望政府、社区居委会、社会团队、志愿者、居民在项目中起到怎样的作用？您认为如何维持该类型项目的可持续性？
11. 社区花园项目在疫情期间是否起到了作用？
12. 微花园项目是否在经济上有一定的优势体现？

Interview questions – Sub-district office (in Chinese)

采访问题-规划师/设计师

- **关于东四南平台/史家胡同风貌保护协会：**

1. 在平台管理及运作上，是一个怎样的组织网络？在平台所负责的各项事宜中，具体的决策流程是怎样的？对于一个项目的各项事宜确定，是怎样的决定过程，谁做出最后的决定？
2. 在街道层面，有怎样的资源网络可以被利用？包括物质和非物质的资源，他们分别发挥了怎样的作用？一个项目结束以后，居民如果有需求，是否可以有这个资源网络来利用，直接寻求帮助？
3. 在平台运营的这几年内，您认为对于街区整体的韧性（包括应对气候变化、疫情、文化遗产的消失，现代化的冲击等）起到了怎样的影响？
4. 平台的长远发展愿景，希望平台在未来扮演怎样的角色？如何与协会进行合作？
5. 项目及平台的可复制性

- **关于微花园的案例：**

6. 这个项目的起源？（从最开始的想法的提出，到项目策划的完成）
7. 项目的组织形式？【包括院落选择？参与人员的包容性？不同利益相关方的交流方式？对于项目的最终落地，是一个怎样的决策（谁拍板什么内容）过程？4个部分的分工时完全相互独立吗？】
8. 在共建过程中的记忆深刻的事件？项目是否充分将参与者的想法呈现出来？用了什么样子的手段来保证这个呈现？
9. 结束共建后的管理共治方式？项目中体现出了怎样的社会资本的价值？除了微花园实体的建造，对于知识上有怎样的集体贡献？比如资料库】项目结束后，居民还有需求，可以跟设计团队直接取得联系吗？或者街道直接提供帮助吗？
10. 项目的影响？居民对于微花园空间的利用发生了怎样的变化？基于您长期的在地实践与观察，这个项目对于居民或社区的自发性、主观能动性有什么影响？居民、社区之间的学习有什么影响？对社区整体空间的发展是否产生了影响？对社区的长远发展有什么意义？【P.S. 如果关联到韧性概念的四方面就更好了（对于韧性的解读我们从应变能力，转化能力，资源利用，合作行为-也就是共建共治共享 以上四个方面来解读）】

- **关于规划师的角色：**

11. 您认为在一个项目的全运作周期中，甚至于项目结束后的一段时间内，规划师扮演了什么角色，未来是否会产生变化？

Translation Example

Planner 1-1 (in Chinese)

Q: 您认为史家胡同自上而下和自下而上相结合的这种项目，对于社区自治有何影响？对于应对一些外面发生的政策变化，或者资源配置会有哪些积极的影响？

A: 嗯…在中国尤其是在北京干事，你不与自上而下的结合，基本上干不成，你的可动的空间是特别小的，你只要是进到公共空间里面来的事情，你都得有政府的许可，否则的话就什么都干不成。但是政府去干事的时候，政府如果操作不当的话，他又会遇到很多阻力，居民可能不就会去反对他，或者他做了一个什么东西砸他的。然后而且可能花的钱也会比较多，所以他自下而上和自上而下相结合的这个概念其实是就是在政府与他认可的一个空间范围内，甚至他可以提供资金支持的空间范围内，然后去调动居民的自发的这种意愿。

就是让他们自己去发掘他们想做的事，然后调动他们自发参与的积极性，然后去开展咱们叫街区更新，或者说社区营造都好开展这些活动。其实它是一个之前我就一直说的，他这种社区营造跟社会运动特别不一样，就是说社会运动等于双方是有点矛盾冲突的那种感觉，可能是就是说纯自发然后去扛政府或者是那种感觉，但是社区营造虽然这两年我不太说这词儿了，但是其实这种工作方法还是有点像社区营造的这种方式。

再一个他是非常怎么说是比较灵活的，就是他其实在政府允许的这个空间里面我们可以去自发的去做一些事，然后去如果要是能得到支持的话。我们如果得不到支持的话，这个事也可以慢点做，或者是先再去找其他的方向。所以其实还是比较比较灵活的。

说实话我想象不出来，没有政府参与的情况下，能干什么能干的肯定是特别少的，只能在你私人领域内，或者是一些就不涉及到公共空间的这种软性的范围内去搞一些事。

但是现在就说实话你来宣传，你就如果完全不考虑怎么说政府的这种大的方向的话，你可能都发不出去，所以我觉得挺好的。但是他唯一的可能也不太好的就在于政府领导经常流动性还是比较大的，他有可能换一个领导就会换个思路。所以有时候有些路子会比比方说平台到底有没有例会，然后或者前几年政府有钱的时候，他是这么一个干法，这两年没钱了，他就另外一个干法。所以这是一个变化的因素，但是就算你考不考虑这个变化，你必须都得特别是在政府的怎么说他的范围内去做这件事。

Q: What do you think is the impact of Shijia Hutong's combination of top-down and bottom-up projects on community self-government? What positive impact will it have on dealing with some external policy changes or resource allocation?

A: Emm...Working in China, especially in Beijing, if you don't integrate with the top-down, you basically can't do it. Your movable space is very small. As long as the project is about public space, you have to get the permission of the government, otherwise nothing can be done. But when the government is doing things, if the government does not operate properly, it will encounter a lot of resistance. For example, the residents may not just oppose it, they may even

do something to smash it. And it may cost more money. So the concept of combining bottom-up and top-down means that within a space recognized by the government, or the space it can even provide financial support, (we can) go to mobilise the spontaneous will of the residents.

It is to let them (residents, designers or planners) discover what they want to do by themselves, and then mobilise their enthusiasm for spontaneous participation, and then carry out what we call sub-district block regeneration or community revitalization these kinds of activities. In fact, it is what I've been saying before, community revitalisation is very different from social movements. That is to say, social movements are equal to the feeling that the two sides are a bit contradictory. It may be purely spontaneous and about against the government or that kind of feeling. But the working method (of the integration between top-down and bottom-up) is a bit like the way of community revitalisation, although I haven't used the word community revitalisation in the past two years.

Another one is that it is very flexible, that is, in the space allowed by the government, we can do some things spontaneously if we can get support. If we don't get support, we can do this matter slowly, or we can look for other directions first. So it's actually quite flexible.

To be honest, I can't imagine what we can do without the participation of the government. There must be very few people who can do anything. It can only be done in your private domain, or in some 'soft' areas that do not involve public space.

To be honest, in terms of the dissemination in current stage, If you don't consider the general direction of the government at all, you may not be able to publish it. So I think it (mean the approach of the combination between top-down and bottom-up) is very good. However, its only shortcoming is that the government leaders change frequently. Every leader has his/her own ideas (regarding community development). For example, the platform should have regular meetings or not (depends on the leaders' opinions). Or when the government had money a few years ago, it did this (project or mechanism) one way, and when it ran out of money in the past two years, it did it in another way. So this is a factor of change. But even if you do not consider this change, you must do it (the project) especially within the scope of the government's approval.

Q: 您根据长期的就是在东四南这边这么久的一个工作经验来说, 您觉得像这种 Top down 和 bottom up 这种相结合的项目, 对于居民的他的自发性、积极性上面有没有一些影响?

A: 我觉得一定要把 TOP-down 的这部分隐藏起来, 你心里知道它是自上而下, 都是在背后发生的, 我们是在项目设计的时候是考虑到政府的这些工作方向, 但是就跟居民去说的时候, 一定要把自己包装成一个自下而上, 就一定要跟他说这件事, 纯民意立项, 如果你想干的话, 由我们去给你找钱, 如果你要不想干的话, 完全可以不干, 然后而且你就还要自己去争取, 我才能去给你把这个钱找来, 得是这种方式, 他才能有这积极性, 一旦让他知道说这个事儿是一个 top-down 的事, 他就居民的心态立刻就不一样了, 他因为中国老百姓等要靠习惯了, 尤其是老城里面这些公房的老百姓, 他觉得他这些问题政府该着替他解决。

当然政府有些确实也该着, 但是就是说不认为自己有责任去改变自己的生活环境。其实是在社区发展过程中特别不好的一个心态。所以我们是就需要让他们形成这个心态, 就得让他觉得这件事是他自己想干的, 是他自己争取来的。

Q: Based on your long-term work experience in Dongsinan, do you think that the combination of top-down and bottom-up projects will have a positive effect on the spontaneity and enthusiasm of the residents?

A: I think the top-down part must be hidden. You know in your heart that it is from top to bottom, but it all happens behind the scenes. When we designed the project, we took those working directions of the government into consideration, but when we talked to the residents, we must package our (project proposal) as a bottom-up one. We must tell residents that the project comes purely from public opinion. If you (residents) want to do it, we (planners or other staff) will find money for you. If you don't want to do it, you don't have to do it. You (residents) have to fight for it yourself, so I (planner) can get you the money. Only in this way can they (residents) have such enthusiasm. Once you let them know that it is a top -down matter, their mentality will be different immediately. Because the Chinese people, especially the people in the public housing in the old city, have get used to that the government should take care of all their problems.

Of course, the government should do something. But the issue is that he (resident) does not think he has the responsibility to change his living environment. In fact, it is a particularly bad mentality in the process of community development. So we need to let them form the mentality that the project is what he wants to do and he has won it by himself.

Q: 您希望就责任规划师在未来的发展中可以承担的角色上会有什么变化?

A: 就责任规划师呢他首先还是规划师, 所以我们对责任规划师的定位就是说他还是要非常准确的把握规划, 然后协助街道能够把规划落地, 这是他自上而下的一个职责。但同时他也对街区具有责任, 所以说他需要去怎么说, 就不能是一个外来者的视角, 而是一个街区一份子的视角去用他的同理心去体会这个街区里面真实存在的问题, 然后去帮助街区里面居民或者在地单位也好, 去就想办法真实地解决这些问题, 所以他可能需要运用他的专业知识在帮政府去分析怎么能够在符合一个城市管理的和城市规划相关政策的前提下, 然后利用好各种各样的资源去更合理的解决问题, 这个是责任规划师要做的。

他要做的其实具体来说在前期的这种问题的把握跟总的这种策划上面责任规划师应该是要发挥一个更有前瞻性的作用。然后在具体的实施过程中, 他要对这个项目的实施有一个项目的设计, 但是最终的落地不能他不太可能他所有事情都能做, 所以需要有一些设计师或者是社工之类的伙伴, 和他一起去落地, 但是他可能是要全过程关注参与和提供一些推动助力和指导。

Q: What changes do you hope will be made in the role that responsibility planners can assume in future development?

A: As for the responsible planners, they are still planners first. So our positioning of the responsible planner means that he still needs to grasp the planning very accurately, and then assist the sub-district to implement the plan. This is the responsibility from the perspective of 'top-down'. But meanwhile, he is also responsible for the block, so he cannot be from the perspective of an outsider, but from the perspective of a member of the block to use his empathy to understand the real problems in this block. Then he needs to help the residents in the block or the local units to find ways to solve these problems in a real way. He may need to use his professional knowledge to help the government analyse how to comply with a city management and urban planning related policies under the premise, and then make good use of various resources to solve the problem more reasonably. These are what the responsibility planner should do.

In fact, what a responsible planner has to do is to play a more forward-looking role in the grasp of community problems in the early stage and the overall planning. Then in the specific implementation process, he needs to have a project design for the implementation of this project. But it is impossible for him to be able to do everything in the final implementation, so it is necessary to have some partners such as designers or social workers and go to the ground with him. Responsible planner is asked to pay attention to public participation in the whole process and provide some promotion and guidance.

