

Enabling environment for participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context

from multi-case study of
micro-regeneration projects
in Shanghai

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Abstract

Participative urban regeneration is a growing concept in the development of urbanism. There are also other terms describing a similar phenomenon, such as inclusive urban regeneration, bottom-up urbanism, community self-organization and organic planning. The motivation behind this trend is to seek a sustainable way to regenerate the current built environment, which has given rise to community involvement and bottom-up initiatives. In China, where planning has traditionally been top-down, participative approaches are also emerging, exemplified by Shanghai's micro-regeneration initiatives. These endeavors focus on small-scale interventions, where smaller collectives and individuals playing pivotal roles. However, development of micro-regeneration is still in an early stage. This research, through case study analyses and comparisons, seeks to explore the participatory experience in recent micro-regeneration projects in Shanghai, aiming to bridge the gap between practical and guideline-oriented approaches in urban regeneration governance and provide generalized favorable conditions for optimizing participative approaches, thereby contributing to the discourse on urban regeneration in both Chinese and Western contexts.

Key words

Participative approach, urban regeneration, micro-regeneration, enabling environment, Chinese context

Personal motivation

At the outset, I wanted to conduct research related to my own growing environment and focus on "left-behind places." This is more of a concept in geographical economics, and the term is widely used in urban and regional studies. I wanted to limit the research object to 'left-behind' places in megacities in China, introducing possible research objects such as urban villages and industrial ruins. Since I positioned the city under study in Shanghai, where I am relatively familiar with and have worked as an architect for three years, my advisor proposed a concept with regional characteristics: micro-regeneration. This is a new concept that was proposed in Shanghai starting in 2016 and has undergone a series of practices. Having gone through three phases and a total of thirty years of old reform, Shanghai is facing the demands and constraints of the new era, such as less mass demolition, a carbon-neutral future and a slower pace of investment. As a result, the renovation of the old district also needs a new version of solution accordingly.

This brought about a change in the research subject. Although the areas practicing micro-regenerations are different, such as historical blocks, old communities, and residual spaces, there is some definitional deviation when corresponding to 'left-behind places.' Micro-regenerations are more targeted at disadvantaged neighborhoods. The "micro" in micro-regeneration mainly manifests as: small project scale, light intervention means, and daily life-oriented functionality. Compared with urban micro-regenerations in Western countries that emphasize theoretical reflection and community autonomy, China's urban micro-updates tend more towards a "micro, specific, and gradual urban renewal strategy" in a "highly institutionalized, structured government governance system," reflecting a combination of top-down public governance and bottom-up public participation.

In less than a decade of practice, micro-regeneration, as a derivative of old district transformation, is still undergoing growth and optimization. The government has provided substantial institutional support to a large extent. However, the specific systems and practical results in various districts are still different. These projects do not have a unified participation model, and analyses are mainly done by planners, whose main emphasis is still the design. There is a lack of research-oriented surveys and examinations about the overall operation of the projects. One of the research objectives of this article is to try to fill the gap between practice and guidelines to some extent and build a bridge between the urban regeneration governance in Chinese and Western contexts.

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1.Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background

Urban regeneration has been an enduring theme in globalization and urbanization, from the developing countries to the developed countries (Barnett, 1986; Li, Hui, Chen, Lang, & Guo, 2019). Past urban regeneration practices since the Second World War have mainly focused on physical restructuring and economic growth and then have neglected social issues; consequently, long-established neighborhoods or community networks are destroyed (Bottini, 2018; Healey, 1991). Nowadays, urban regeneration in Western countries has transformed from the physical environment upgrading to neighborhood regeneration in respect of the physical environment, economy, and social dimensions (Roberts, 2000; Lang, Chen, & Li, 2016). The ideology of urban regeneration is to emphasize multi-party cooperation among the government, private sectors, and community; solve regeneration issues from social, economic, and physical environment aspects; and improve human settlements and protect the historical resources of the community (Biondi, Demartini, Marchegiani, Marchiori, & Piber, 2020; Jones, 2003; Tallon, 2013).

1.1.2 Emerging participative approach in urban regeneration

The participative approach in urban regeneration emerges as a response to the need for inclusive and sustainable development. Traditional top-down approaches to urban planning have been replaced by a more collaborative and participatory process. This approach involves involving local stakeholders, such as residents, community organizations, and businesses, in decision-making and implementation (Meadowcroft, 2004). By including diverse perspectives and knowledge, the participative approach aims to create a sense of ownership and empowerment among the community. It also fosters social cohesion, enhances the quality of urban spaces, and promotes the preservation of cultural heritage. Ultimately, the participative approach seeks to create a shared vision and ensure that the regeneration process meets the needs and aspirations of the local community (Pontrandolfi & Scorza, 2016).

This approach, also known as bottom-up urbanism, refers to a grassroots approach to urban development and regeneration. It involves self-organized civic networks and initiatives that aim to address the shortcomings of top-down approaches. These initiatives propose and generate micro-scale interventions that respond to the disinvestment in social and built structures of cities, with the goal of improving the quality of life for citizens. Bottom-up urbanism challenges traditional policy schemes and relies on direct actions from the community (Rabbiosi, 2016). Encompassing informal grassroots initiatives in public spaces, cultural interventions, and physical improvements, this approach aims to empower individuals and communities to shape their urban environment and create alternative models of spatial production and governance. By fostering community involvement, it could contribute to social, cultural, and environmental sustainability (Istenič, 2019).

1.1.3 Participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context

The traditional Chinese planning system has been characterized as a top-down system due to a strong government-dominated ideology that has limited room for the public to participate in the decision-making process of urban development and redevelopment, which might encounter deadlock situations in practice when the consensus among stakeholders cannot be reached (Zhai and Ng, 2013). In recent years, there are emerging participative approaches in urban regeneration practices experimenting with small-scale interventions in the existing built environment, focusing more on the cultivation of social capital and a new economy, such as micro-regeneration (Qu et al. 2017).

However, micro-regeneration is still in an early stage, with a history of less than a decade. There are still explorations about the governance structure and organizing process in practice. Examinations of practices depend mainly on planners. There is still a lack of research on the overall organization of the project, including how the stakeholder interact, how the resources are allocated and what participatory methods are applies. This research plans to explore beneficial experiences and provide general suggestions on an enabling environment for promoting healthy and positive participative process of micro-regeneration projects through multi-case study and comparisons.

1.2 Problem statement

The regeneration programs in China have been frequently shaped and driven by drastic changes in governance structures and macro-scale institutions (Zhang, 2002; Zhu, 2005). But the new era has brought up fresh challenges. For example, the community wants to have a say in the regeneration, less mass demolition is allowed, a carbon neutral future is expected, the investment pace is slower and land and property ownership is more complex. In this background, urban regeneration with mild interventions while taking care of the social aspects is turning a new trend. Micro-regeneration, is an innovative attempt towards a more sustainable way of improving the community integrity and quality in small scale renovations, which highlights social participation in the process more than before.

There have been a lot of researches studying about participative urban regeneration. However, this is still a new trend in the Chinese context where researches are limited. Also, there is a gap between the outcome and the conditions of an enabling environment to facilitate participative process in urban regeneration. This research plans to study from the stakeholders, resources and participatory methods through multi-case study of micro-regeneration, with the intention to understand the process in a more general way, as well as concluding the favorable conditions.

1.3 Research question

1.3.1 Main question

What kind of enabling environment helps facilitate participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context from multi-case study of Shanghai's micro-regeneration projects?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

- 1) How does participative urban regeneration develop and evolve in the Chinese context?
- 2) What conditions have contributed to the implementation of this participative approach in micro-regeneration projects in the Chinese context?
- 3) What are the possible conditions of an enabling environment for participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context?

1.4 Relevance

1.4.1 Societal relevance

Participative urban regeneration are pivotal concepts in the evolving landscape of urban development. Historically, urban regeneration was primarily centered on physical restructuring and economic growth, often sidelining social considerations and inadvertently disrupting long-standing communities, which is hurting social sustainability to some extent. Participative urban regeneration has emerged as a response to these concerns, emphasizing grassroots involvement and community self-organization. Such practices allow for spontaneous and self-organized interventions, with smaller collectives or individuals from civil society playing an increasingly significant role. These bottom-up initiatives are recognized for their potential to invigorate urban dynamics and foster innovation.

In the context of China, where traditional planning has been predominantly top-down, there is an increasing experiment with other approaches to involve the voices and concerns of other stakeholders in regeneration process. As urban regeneration trends towards milder interventions that prioritize social aspects, micro-regeneration offers a sustainable pathway to enhance community integrity and quality. While these endeavors are promising, they are relatively nascent, with challenges in governance and organization yet to be fully addressed. This research will contribute to explore the effective and positive implementation of participative micro-regeneration projects from social perspective.

1.4.2 Scientific relevance

First, the scientific research on participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context is limited. In the western context, it has been explored as “organic planning” “bottom-up urbanism”, etc. But

in the Chinese context, where the government power is traditionally strong, participative urban regeneration has its unique development trajectory. This research will contribute to this gap as to focus on the specific background and the innovative form of micro-regeneration.

Secondly, the current researches on Chinese participative urban regeneration do not provide a comprehensive framework on the conditions of the environment, which has significant impact on the development and implementation of this participative approach. Hopefully, this research will provide a referable scientific resource and some guidance on an enabling environment for future practices.

2.Literature review

This chapter will conduct an explorative literature review on the topics of participative urban regeneration and the specific context of China. As illustrated in the research method framework, several topics will be dived into.

First, a general overview on the development of participative urban regeneration will be researched, to provide a better understanding of the topic. Within the topic, three main variables will be studied: stakeholders, resources and participatory approaches. The stakeholders' general roles and interaction in participative urban regeneration will be identified. Apart from this, resources allocation in the process, which includes not only tangible assets but also intangible assets such as capacity building of the community, is another research theme. Also, explorations on participatory methods will be researched. The evaluation of these variables will finally formulate the evaluation of the participative urban regeneration practices, criteria of which will be studied and adapted in the literature review.

To study the possible conditions of an enabling environment for participative urban regeneration, literature will then be explored for a set of indicators. Specific factors will be tailored from a general framework through the understanding of this participative approach. Finally, the overview of distinctions of participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context will be concluded, which could help with the following case study in a practical way. This part will follow the previous framework and elaborate on the same variables. Due to the lack of empirical study, the distinctions will be addressed with main features that are unique to the Chinese context.

In general, the literature review is aimed to enhance the knowledge on this specific topic and create the framework or indicators for different evaluations. It also forms part of the answers of the sub-questions. In the final data analysis, the comparison will not only be conducted among various cases, but also between the literature and the practices. The main concepts and their relationship are illustrated in Figure 2-1.

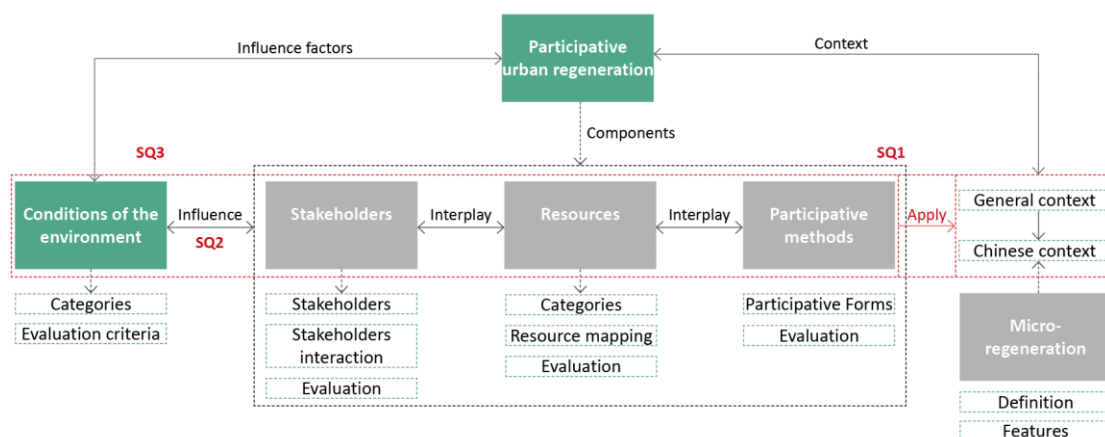


Figure 2-1 Key concepts of literature review (own illustration)

2.1 Participative urban regeneration

2.1.1 Background and development

Participative approaches in urban regeneration practices have emerged with the concerns about social aspects (Chen & Qu, 2020). In the Western setting, there's a rising trend of unconventional approaches that emphasize gradual changes in the existing urban landscape. These methods intentionally allow for unplanned developments within a broader strategic framework, thus creating space for spontaneity and self-organization (Buitelaar et al., 2017). A key feature of this organic planning method is the shift in the types of participants involved (Buitelaar et al., 2012). Smaller groups or individuals from the community are increasingly joining the domain traditionally occupied by larger, professional entities. Observational studies have noted the significant role of individuals or small groups in larger participatory projects, initiating minor, grassroots projects through self-organization (Boonstra & Boelen, 2011; Edelenbos et al., 2018; Moroni, 2015; Portugali, 2000). These bottom-up efforts are gaining more recognition and importance in established development practices, with government planning bodies acknowledging, appreciating, and even actively supporting such initiatives. Additionally, various researchers highlight the importance of these grassroots initiatives in driving urban dynamics and fostering innovation (Partanen, 2015).

The development of community involvement in regeneration has been extensively documented since the 1990s when there was a shift in public policy towards engaging communities in decision-making processes. This shift was driven by a desire to address urban decline and reinvigorate democracy. The involvement of communities in regeneration programs was seen as essential for achieving successful outcomes. This trend towards community involvement is reflected in various studies and literature on urban regeneration (Banks and Shenton, 2001; Edwards, 2001). The increased relevance of community involvement in regeneration is also influenced by the declining levels of political participation and the need to empower deprived urban areas (DETR, 2000; Dobbs and Moore, 2002).

Term	Source	Definition
<i>Participative urban regeneration</i>	Qu et al., 2017	Practices in urban regeneration practices experimenting with small-scale interventions in the existing built environment, focusing more on the cultivation of social capital and a new economy
<i>Inclusive urban regeneration</i>	Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi, 2016	Urban renewal processes that aim for genuine community participation, especially involving the weakest and most deprived constituencies, to ensure sustainable and equitable urban development.
<i>Bottom-up urbanism</i>	Danenberg & Haas, 2019	Citizen-led urban initiatives that contrast with the conventional system of top-down planning, emphasizing grassroots involvement and participatory methods in urban governance.

<i>Community self-organization</i>	Edelenbos et al., 2018	More active forms of citizenship, where members of the public engage in informal and loosely structured organizations to advance their policy agendas and engage directly in public administration.
<i>Organic planning</i>	Plein et al., 1998	A new form of citizen participation that focuses on fostering citizen discussions about the desired future of a community, region, or jurisdiction, often using the concept of 'visioning' to identify and address a wide array of issues and concerns in a developmental format
<i>Quasi-participatory decision-making in urban development</i>	Zhang, 2002	Developments that integrate both top-down and bottom-up elements, characterized by the inclusion of 'expert consulting' within the municipal government, active involvement of sub-districts or street offices in local development issues, and the participation of newly created owners associations at the neighborhood level.

Table 2.1.1-1 Different terms of participative urban regeneration (own work)

There are also other terms explaining a similar trend such as “bottom-up urbanism”, “community self-organization” and “quasi-participatory decision-making in urban development” (Table 2.1.1-1). The tendency of each research varies to some extent from term to term. For example, inclusive urban regeneration attaches more importance to involving the weakest and most deprived group while organic planning focuses more on co-visioning. However, they share an emphasis on social participation in the process of urban regeneration, which is the main research object in this article. In this research, “participative urban regeneration” will be mainly applied, while bottom-up initiative will also be mentioned as a similar concept.

Addressing the common features, participative urban regeneration refers to a process of urban development and regeneration that actively involves and engages the local community in decision-making and implementation. It goes beyond the traditional top-down approaches and seeks to empower residents and stakeholders by giving them a voice and role in shaping the future of their neighborhoods (Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi, 2016). By involving residents and stakeholders in decision-making, this approach promotes more sustainable, inclusive and effective urban regeneration. It aims to balance professional expertise with community needs, fostering empowerment and ensuring that regeneration projects are aligned with the actual needs and aspirations of local residents(Edwards, 2008).

Participation is seen as a way towards democracy. An important relevant theoretical framework is deliberative democracy, which is a political theory that emphasizes the importance of inclusive and reasoned public deliberation in decision-making processes (Elster, 1998). This theory is also recognized as part of the background of the cultivation of participative urban regeneration, in which this approach aims to create spaces for meaningful engagement and exchange of ideas,

where diverse perspectives and interests can be heard and considered (Kearns, 1995; Raco, 2000; Banks and Shenton, 2001; Fagotto and Fung, 2006). It provides a theoretical basis for community involvement in decision-making processes (Muers, 2004). However, the main challenge in reality is how to organize and implement these principles within the context of politics and individual utilitarianism (Savini, 2011).

The complexity of civic participation arises from the gap between the universally recognized "ethic of participation" and the lack of standard practices of inclusion. Therefore, one of the key challenges for city governments is to construct participatory spaces specifically tailored to the unique needs of local communities (Savini, 2011). There are other challenges like complex partnership dynamics, ensuring genuine representation of marginalized groups and balancing professional dominance with community-led initiatives. Political and practical barriers also impede effective participation. Hence, the potential of participative approach in urban regeneration lies in fostering inclusive urban environments that reflect diverse community needs, promoting empowerment and enhancing service provision. It can lead to urban spaces that are more attuned to local aspirations, contributing to improved community well-being and sustainable development (Edwards, 2008).

2.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

Gaining a more comprehensive insight into the stakeholders involved in the participative process is crucial for advancing sustainable urban regeneration (Zhuang et al., 2019). In general, the diverse groups of stakeholders involved in participative urban regeneration contribute unique perspectives and resources each. Local residents and neighborhood associations are at the forefront, offering invaluable insights into community needs and preferences. Local businesses and property owners, affected by changes in the urban landscape, play a crucial economic role. Developers and investors bring the necessary financial and technical expertise to actualize regeneration projects (Parés et al., 2012).

As for public sectors, government entities, from local to national levels, provide decision-making, funding, and regulatory frameworks. Urban planners and designers contribute their technical skills to shape the regeneration vision. NGOs and advocacy groups ensure representation of diverse interests and marginalized voices, advocating for inclusive and equitable development. Academic institutions offer research and innovative solutions to inform the process. These stakeholders collaborate to ensure urban regeneration projects are well-rounded, meeting the varied needs and aspirations of the community (Parés et al., 2012).

The main players are context-specific in implementation. But they can be categorized into public sector, community side, market side and third sectors as illustrated in Figure 2.1.2-1 (Pestoff, 1992). The state side includes different levels of government. The market side include developers and social enterprises. Residents and sometimes community cooperatives compose the community stakeholders. While the third parties have designers, consultants, NGOs, financial institutions and so on (Zhuang, 2019).

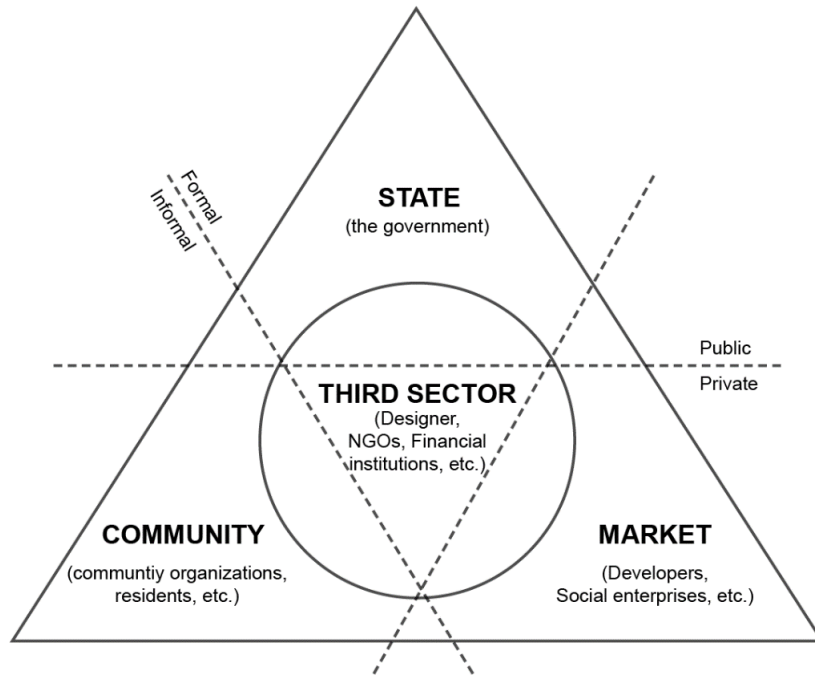


Figure 2.1.2-1 Main stakeholders in participative urban regeneration
(adapted from Pestoff (1992))

Main stakeholders

1) Government

The role of the government in participative urban regeneration is to facilitate and support the process of involving citizens and stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes. The government plays a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for participation, providing resources and expertise, and ensuring that the outcomes of the participative process are integrated into urban regeneration policies and plans (Pontrandolfi & Scorza, 2016). It also has the responsibility to ensure that the participative process is inclusive, transparent, and accountable, and that the interests and needs of all stakeholders are considered. By actively engaging with citizens and stakeholders, the government can promote a sense of ownership and empowerment, and foster collaboration and cooperation in the urban regeneration process.

The government, in general, is responsible for developing community assessment, understanding residents' needs, completing community planning, guiding community physical construction as well as decomposing and implementing system planning. They provide essential policy support and resources to facilitate the work of community planners and promote sustainable community micro-renewal development (Wang et al., 2022).

2) Community organizations

Community organizations are groups or associations formed by members of community to address specific issues or promote the well-being of the community, which plays a crucial role in participative urban regeneration in engaging residents and stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation processes (Kim et al., 2020). Their responsibilities lie in advocacy, mobilization,

capacity building, collaboration, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. They often take a lead role in coordinating activities, securing fundings and ensuring the successful execution of projects that benefit the community.

Community organizations have different forms in different contexts. For example, community cooperatives, or "cooperative di comunità" in Italy, are emerging as significant players in urban regeneration policies. These cooperatives are citizen-led organizations that leverage local resources for collective projects, often through bottom-up processes. They are seen as innovative tools for citizen participation, contributing to the renewal of democratic processes. In the context of urban regeneration, these cooperatives can co-create with municipalities to deliver local public services more efficiently, contribute to local welfare, and transform neighborhoods. (PLANEIX, 2016).

3) Residents

Having the closest relationship with the community, residents' participation is essential for the success of micro-regeneration projects. They contribute to the collective by actively engaging in various activities and initiatives aimed at improving and revitalizing the community. They could provide input and feedback on project plans and strategies. Residents also contribute their time, skills and resources to the implementation of regeneration activities, such as physical improvements, social programs and environmental initiatives. Their active participation could help to create a sense of ownership and pride in the community, fosters social cohesion and enhances the overall life quality in the neighborhood (Chen et al., 2022).

4) Designers

Designers usually act as a communication bridge between the government and the public in participative regeneration. As professionals, they can leverage their advantages to help guide community regeneration and improve community infrastructure and environment based on residents' needs. As coordinators, they facilitate collaboration among the stakeholders such as the government, residents and enterprises, emphasizing communication, coordination and social participation in the planning process (Wang et al., 2022).

5) NGOs

NGOs are another important third sector in the context of participative urban regeneration. They facilitate community-driven initiatives and bring together different actors involved in the processes. They integrate local knowledge systems in the design and planning process and reinforce a learning process. Sometimes NGOs also ensure political support for community regeneration initiatives (Treija & Bratuškis, 2017). Their participation helps bridge connections, facilitate communication, and build collaborative networks among different stakeholders (Wang, Zhang & Wu, 2022).

6) Developers

Traditionally, developers are important in driving the transformation of communities. They play a key role in identifying potential development opportunities, acquiring land or properties, securing financing and managing the design and construction process (Deakin & Allwinkle, 2007). They also collaborate with various stakeholders including local government, investors and community

organizations to ensure the success of the regeneration project. Developers in participative urban regeneration act as facilitators, collaborators and managers (Ferilli et al., 2017). The shift towards participatory approach requires developers to involve local stakeholders in the cooperative re-weaving of the city fabric, leading to substantial and permanent changes in urban issues.

7) Social enterprises

Social enterprise is a not-for-profit private organization that aims to benefit the community by providing goods or services. The concept of social enterprise has evolved over time. Initially, it was used interchangeably with social entrepreneurship, which referred to the process of creating social enterprises. However, the term "social entrepreneur" gained prominence in the US, emphasizing individuals who bring innovative solutions to social problems. In Europe, the focus was more on the collective nature of social enterprises and their association or cooperative form. The concept of social enterprise emerged in Italy and has since spread to other European countries. The EMES Network defines social enterprises as organizations that rely on collective dynamics, value autonomy, and bear economic risks (Defourny & Nyssens, 2008).

Social enterprises can play a significant role in participative urban regeneration by engaging local communities, promoting social inclusion, and addressing community needs. They can provide employment opportunities, training, and skills development for disadvantaged individuals, contributing to economic growth and social cohesion. Social enterprises often have a strong focus on community development and can collaborate with local residents, organizations, and authorities to identify and address urban challenges. Through their innovative and participatory approaches, social enterprises can contribute to the revitalization and sustainable development of urban areas (Defourny & Nyssens, 2008).

Stakeholders' interaction

In participative urban regeneration, stakeholder interactions are multifaceted, involving both formal and informal channels (Parés et al., 2012). Governance networks, typically comprising regional councils, management committees, and various participatory forums like workshops and assemblies, provide structured spaces for stakeholder engagement. However, alongside these formal mechanisms, informal interactions play a significant role. These include bilateral meetings, personal contacts, and unofficial requests, which are integral to the policy-making process. Their involvement spans from participating in official participation realms to engaging in activism and informal dialogues with institutional representatives. This blend of formal and informal interactions among diverse stakeholders contributes to the comprehensive design and implementation of urban regeneration programs.

The stakeholders interact in a dynamic ecosystem where each group's actions and decisions influence others. Typically, government entities typically lead with policy and regulatory frameworks, while local residents and community groups provide grassroots insights and feedback. Developers and investors negotiate with governments and communities, balancing economic viability with public interests. Business owners and NGOs advocate for their specific concerns, often influencing project outcomes. These interactions, characterized by negotiation, collaboration,

and sometimes conflict, are crucial for ensuring that urban regeneration projects are not only viable and sustainable but also align with the diverse needs and aspirations of all involved parties (Zhuang et al., 2019).

Evaluation of stakeholder involvement

Evaluating stakeholder involvement is significant for understanding social networks, addressing the limitations of traditional decision-making models, supporting sustainable development strategies, enhancing stakeholder participation and empowerment, improving communication and knowledge sharing, and enhancing social capital and social cohesion. Stakeholder dialogues and interaction increase the social productivity by fostering relationships (Scheffran, 2006). By examining the interaction between stakeholders, it could help understand the dynamics and effectiveness of participatory process in community regeneration. The main evaluation criteria lie in the level of citizen engagement, the extent to which their opinions are considered in decision-making and the overall impact of participatory process on local governance. The evaluation could provide insights into the strengths and limitations of the current model and informs future improvements in community governance practices (Liao et al., 2019). The assessment framework adopted in this research is shown in Table A3-1.

2.1.3 Resource analysis

Traditional urban regeneration approaches usually involved large-scale construction, costly demolition and reconstruction. These approaches focused on wider areas and housing improvements. However, current community initiative approaches have shifted towards smaller interventions in existing spaces within localized areas. This change in perspective emphasizes the importance of localized communities and smaller-scale planning. Community regeneration prioritizes the reuse of existing resources and spaces, solving inherited problems like old facilities and low space utilization. It also incorporates market forces and private investment, in addition to public sector involvement, to facilitate the development. The shift towards current micro-regeneration approaches allows for more flexibility, lower costs and a greater focus on community-specific needs and resources (Li et al., 2023).

Categories of resources

According to the livelihood framework (Lloyd-Jones & Rakodi, 2014), the portfolio of assets could be categorized into five types:

- a- Natural capital: such as land, water, forest;
- b- Physical capital: such as shelter, infrastructure like roads and transport, buildings, irrigation systems;
- c- Financial capital: such as cash income and remittances, credit, savings in kind and cash;
- d- Human capital: such as skills, knowledge and health;
- e- Social capital: such as formal and informal institutions, networks and access to opportunities.

This framework is applied in the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) (Krantz, 2001), which is

aimed for understanding and addressing poverty. The concept of livelihood is recognized as a realistic recognition of the multiple activities in which households engage to ensure their survival and improve their well-being (Carol, 1999). Even though it is designed for a different field, the general definition of the types of resources could be transferred into participative urban regeneration, which will be elaborated on tangible assets (natural capital and physical capital) and intangible assets (financial capital, human capital and social capital) in the following description.

1) tangible assets

Different regeneration space requires different assets to accomplish. In general, the natural capital includes green spaces, trees, water bodies and other natural elements that are preserved or integrated into the project. Physical capital could include renovated buildings, upgraded infrastructure, public spaces and amenities (Wang, Zhang & Wu, 2022).

2) intangible assets

Financial capital may come from various sources such as government funding, private investments, crowdfunding, grants and loans. Human capital includes professionals such as community planners, project managers, community organizers and non-professionals like the residents. Social capital refers to the social networks, relationships and trust among individuals and groups within the community. In micro-regeneration projects, it plays a crucial role in fostering community engagement, participation and collaboration. It involves the involvement of local residents, community cooperatives and other stakeholders in the decision-making processes and the development of social cohesion (Wang, Zhang & Wu, 2022). Specific types and significance of capital may vary depending on the context and objectives of each project.

Capacity building is therefore important in the community-led regeneration projects. There have been several explorations in different contexts. For example, Pourzakarya & Bahramjerdi (2021) applied various strategies in the development of Ghalam Gudeh neighborhood in Iran, including training workshop, participatory planning, neighborhood development center and co-experience of creative activities. Training workshops were held with the cooperation of local clusters to formulate project goals and strategies, emphasizing the significance of capacity-building and empowerment of the local community. The Neighborhood Center was established as a place to utilize the capabilities and capacities of active NGOs to empower and consult locals and attract their participation in the regeneration process. Ferilli et al. (2017) brings up the concept of “power to people” and suggests that the cultural regeneration processes can contribute to capacity building by providing access to educational, recreational and cultural activities that enable participants to acquire new skills and competences.

Resource mapping involves identifying and assessing the available resources, both tangible and intangible, within a specific neighborhood or area. This includes mapping the existing physical infrastructure, cultural heritage sites, community assets and other resources that can contribute to the regeneration process. This process could help in understanding the potential of the area and determining how these resources can be utilized and integrated into the redevelopment plans. The identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can help with decision-making and resource allocation (Wang, Zhang & Wu, 2022).

Evaluation of resource use

When assessing resource use in participative urban regeneration, for ensuring that the process is effective, inclusive, sustainable and beneficial to the community, there are several crucial considerations, such as resource allocation for monitoring, linking local projects to city-wide development plans, stakeholder participation in the selection process and social sustainability assessment framework (Colantonio et al., 2009).

As a continuation of the resource categorization, the evaluation framework will follow a similar structure. The indicators of tangible resource utilization are linked to the efficient employment of physical resources in addressing environmental concerns. These include the recovery of materials, reduction of waste, enhancement of energy efficiency, and preservation of resources (Hemphill et al., 2004). The indicators of intangible resource utilization mainly go into financial capital and social capital, while human capital has been discussed in stakeholder analysis. In financial evaluation, costs and revenues are normally considered (Tajani & Di Liddo, 2023). In participative urban regeneration, the ways of financing can be various. Also, the long-term financial functioning counts a lot in a successful case, where social participation could potentially play an important role. As for the social evaluation, long-term perspective cannot be ignored as the same. Other considerations include participation of local residents and political representatives, community activation and consideration of different spatial and functional levels (Colantonio et al., 2009). The resource use evaluation framework is shown in Table A4-1.

2.1.4 Participatory methods

The essence of social participation is the active involvement of individuals in managing the affairs of a community or society. It is a certain attitude expressed through engaging in public affairs and being the basis of civil society. Social participation promotes communication between authorities and residents, increases civic control over self-government activities, and improves the effectiveness of self-government. It also educates both residents and authorities about the functioning of local self-government, builds trust in the activities of the authorities, and strengthens strategic alliances. Social participation allows residents to have a real impact on local life, promotes the formation of a strong local identity and community integration, and increases public trust in the local government. It is a process of continuous identification of expectations and needs, and it serves as an instrument for improving the quality of life of the local community (Czupich, 2018).

Participative forms

According to Blakeley & Evans (2009), several principles in public participation are crucial, including improvement of opportunities, variety of participation types, inclusion of non-stayers, participation gap, multiplicity of opportunities, communication and information, recognition of protests and demonstrations and inclusion of independent oppositional groups. In general, different levels of participation can be categorized based on the degree of engagement and

influence that participants have. In the study of Stelzle & Noennig (2017), four levels of participation were identified: information, consultation, collaboration, and empowerment. The information level involves providing participants with relevant information but limited involvement in decision-making. Consultation seeks feedback and opinions from participants. Collaboration entails active engagement and joint decision-making. Empowerment represents the highest level, where participants have significant influence and decision-making power. This categorization helps in understanding the different approaches and selecting appropriate methods for participatory urban design processes (Figure 2.1.4-1).

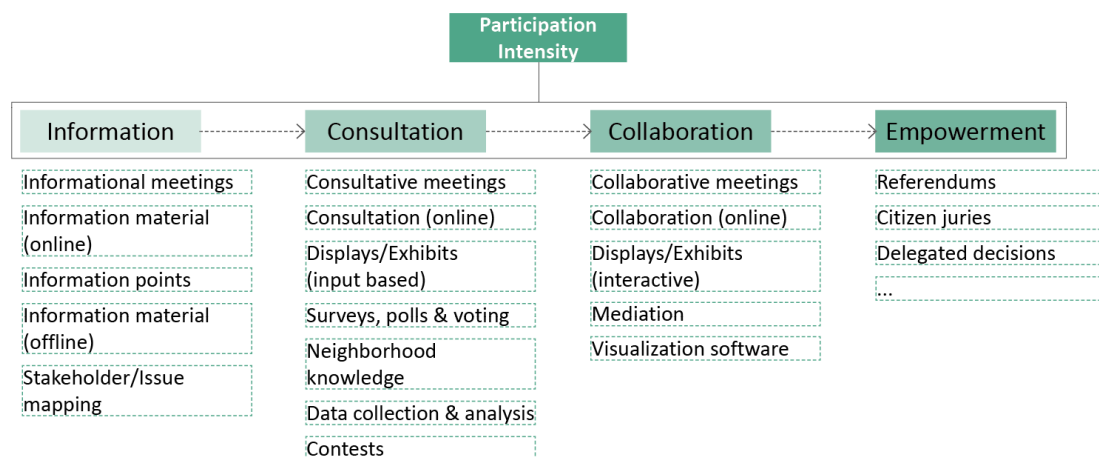


Figure 2.1.4-1 Typical forms according to participation intensity (Adapted from Stelzle & Noennig (2017))

There have been some innovative explorations on the forms of participation in urban regeneration projects, from participation platforms to participation models/framework. Such as:

1) Socially inclusive visioning

Socially visioning can be understood as a process where community members come together to envision the future of their neighborhoods or cities. Visual tools can help stakeholders understand complex data and concepts more easily, making the decision-making process more transparent. It can also foster collaboration by providing a common platform for stakeholders to discuss, debate, and come to a consensus. What's more, by presenting data and information visually, stakeholders can make more informed decisions based on clear insights. Additionally, it could potentially help build trust within the community (Alshuwaikhat & Nkwenji, 2002).

2) Digital platforms

Internet usage and the rise of virtual communities have significantly influenced citizen participation in urban planning processes. The internet provides a platform for citizens to engage, discuss, and collaborate on urban projects, leading to enhanced community participation and civic engagement (Bottini, 2018). These platforms vary in their functionalities, such as posting ideas or discussing topics. The main components of these platforms include online mechanisms that facilitate participation at different levels (e.g., starting a project, crowdfunding) and offline components (e.g., workshops, local funding) to enhance digital mechanisms. They focus on empowering city actors, serving as specific playgrounds for self-governance where citizens can propose, develop, and

implement their projects. The development of these platforms has become a central task for city planners, emphasizing the shift towards more participatory urban planning (Abel et al., 2021).

3) Participation models/framework

Savini (2011) distinguishes between two models of participation: issue-based and structural. These models are characterized by three dimensions: the type of structure, the nature of the problem, and the profile of active stakeholders. Depending on which model is adopted, participation can be operationalized around specific issues or strategic visions.

4) Others

There are various efforts to facilitate community participation in urban regeneration. For instance, there were attempts to solicit resident feedback when developing design briefs and organizing introductory meetings at the beginning of competitions. Zhu (2023) also emphasizes the role of media in promoting participation and the everydayness of this new urban regeneration approach, which encourages citizens to observe minor neighborhood inconveniences in their daily life and actively participate in events that transform their environment.

With all the development of methods of public participation, there are still challenges such as: 1) the commonly used methods are generic and may not be adaptable to specific situations or project constraints; 2) the majority of commonly used methods are non-digital, limiting the advantages of more ambitious digital methods to larger and resourceful cities; 3) there is a lack of systematic means available to support the design of well-integrated work processes for successful citizen participation; 4) empowerment methods are strictly restricted by law, limiting the scope of informal participation (Stelzle & Noennig, 2017). Lifestyle factors, personal and social alienation, and a low sense of political efficacy contribute to non-participation. Efforts to engage marginalized groups and address time constraints are necessary to enhance citizen participation (Blakeley & Evans, 2009).

Participative evaluation

In the field of participation level evaluation, Arnstein's "Ladder of Participation" (1969) stands as a highly esteemed and frequently revisited framework in the study of participation. In this model, Arnstein outlines eight distinct stages of participation, categorized by their nature, beginning with 'manipulation' (a form of pseudo-participation) and culminating in 'citizen control' (complete involvement by citizens), which represents the top tier. The ladder metaphor effectively underscores the hierarchical nature of these stages and the effort required to progress from one level to the next, suggesting that moving up the ladder necessitates both the willingness and active participation of the individuals involved.

According to the changes in the context brought about by the time, CIMAS (Observatorio Internacional de Ciudadanía y Medio Ambiente Sostenible) introduced a theory that replaces the traditional ladder metaphor with a concept of gradually ascending stairs aimed at achieving democratic participation through top-down planning. This model (Figure 2.1.4-2) establishes a correlation between planning and participation, offering more detailed explanations specific to the

field. CIMAS advocates for a paradigm shift where citizens are not just statistical data for governmental use in normative-technical planning, but rather form a self-managed, organized network that fosters democracy through direct involvement. While this model clearly defines its levels and goals, it somewhat overlooks the role of third sectors, which seems to fade along the progression of the model (CIMAS, 2014).

To develop a more realistic approach to democratic planning, it's crucial to include the third sectors, which comprises technicians from various fields, from public relations to architecture. Their involvement is essential to complement the contributions of self-managed organizations. It is also acknowledged that each case is unique and should be seen as an opportunity to discover a balanced, inclusive approach tailored to specific circumstances (Munoz Aparici, 2016).

For a more general framework to assess the participation, Liu et al. (2022) bring up an index system for measuring participation performance, which consists of three dimensions: competence, fairness, and outcome indicators (Figure 2.1.4-3). Competence indicators assess the ability of stakeholders to interact and deliberate on issues. Fairness indicators reveal the distribution of opportunities for meaningful participation among stakeholders. Outcome indicators measure the impact of public participation on conflict mitigation and decision-making.

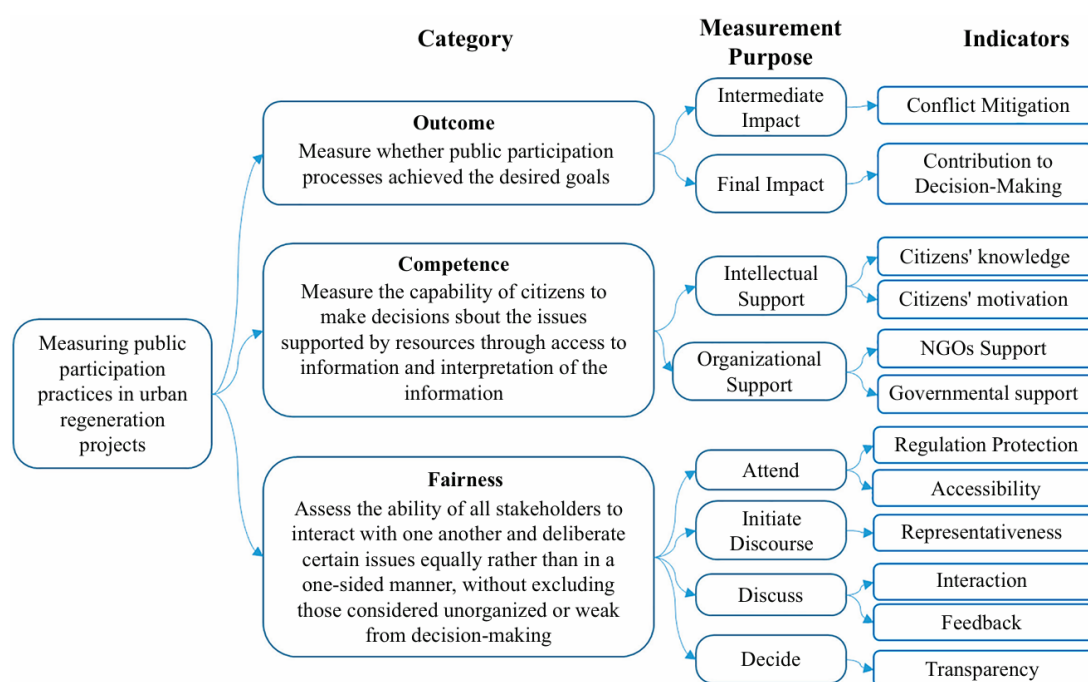


Figure 2.1.4-3 Index system for measuring the performance of public participation practices in urban regeneration (Liu et al., 2022)

According to your experience with public participation in urban regeneration projects, to what extent do you agree?

Competence

- (1) Citizens are equipped with adequate knowledge to participate (Citizen's knowledge)
- (2) Citizens' motivation is aligned with the scope of participation (Citizens' motivation)
- (3) NGOs play important roles in enabling citizens to participate (NGO support)
- (4) The government plays important roles in enabling citizens to participate (Government resource support)

Fairness

- (1) Citizens are provided with proper channels to participate (Accessibility)
- (2) The government formalized regulations to protect the public's right to participate (Regulation protection)
- (3) Reasonable citizens' voices are heard during the decision-making process (Representativeness)
- (4) A sufficient number of interactive channels have been established for all stakeholders to participate in discussions as equal actors in the decision-making process (Interaction)
- (5) Reasonable public voices received feedback from the decision-makers (Feedback)
- (6) Members of the public are offered sufficient information equally to initiate discourse in the decision-making (Transparency)

Outcome

- (1) Involvement of the public in participation has led to positive impacts in conflict mitigation among different stakeholders (Conflict mitigation)
 - (2) Involvement of the public in participation has led to positive impacts in decision-making in urban regeneration projects (Decision-making)
-

Table 2.1.4-1 Evaluation of public participation in urban regeneration (Liu et al., 2022)

This index system provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating the effectiveness and inclusiveness of public participation in urban regeneration projects. It is designed for the context of China but has the potential to be applied in other countries as well (Liu et al., 2022). This will be the main framework used to evaluate the participation process for the case studies in this research.

2.2 Conditions of the environment for participative urban regeneration

2.2.1 Enabling environment

An enabling environment refers to the conditions and factors that support and facilitate the emergence and success of certain activities or practices. In the context of urban regeneration, an enabling environment refers to the conditions of the environment that encourage and support participatory approaches and initiatives. It creates opportunities for individuals and organizations to engage in participatory urban regeneration projects and contributes to the development of inclusive and sustainable communities (Chen & Qu, 2019).

2.2.2 PESTEL analysis model

The PESTEL analysis model is a strategic tool used to analyze the external factors that can impact an organization, which is commonly applied in strategic planning and decision-making processes. PESTEL stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors. It covers a wide range of external factors, providing a holistic view of the environment. While at the same time, external factors can be uncertain and the abundance of information can be

overwhelming and difficult to interpret. Another important feature is that it focuses on macro environment, which neglects the micro environment and internal factors that are also impactful (Buye, 2021). For this research of participative urban regeneration projects, this basic framework could be an appropriate choice but will need compliments and adaptations.

In the research of Pan et al. (2019), PESTEL framework is interpreted and applied as a comprehensive coding system to identify the constraints and strategies reported in the construction engineering and management literature. The constraints and strategies identified under the PESTEL aspects are reclassified into themes pertaining to the construction business environment. In another study, Ulubeyli et al. (2019) also made adaptations to the PESTEL framework by using specific indicators related to green building industry. The detailed sub-factors that are relevant to the targets are important for specific studies.

2.2.3 Conditions of the environment for participative urban regeneration within the PESTEL framework

PESTEL factors generally have a qualitative structure, making it uneasy to measure. The multi-criteria decision-making model proposed by Yüksel (2012) combines the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Analytic Network Process (ANP) techniques to create a structured and interconnected framework for evaluating PESTEL factors. The calculation of the local weights of the independent factors will not be the focus in this research, while this multi-criteria model will be used as the base for the evaluation. Combined with the background of participative urban regeneration projects, the indicators are modified as shown in Table 2.2.3-1.

The model proposed by Yüksel (2012) can be applied in various industries and sectors where there is a need to evaluate the macro environment, such as business strategy, market analysis, risk assessment, policy development and investment analysis. To modify this model into a proper adaptation for evaluating the conditions for participative urban regeneration, several relevant literatures provide important reference.

In the political conditions, regional relations are kept as a sub-factor, which indicate the collaborative interaction and partnership between various localities and stakeholders within a broader geographical area. Similarly, the area development goal is also important as a targeted objective to improve and revitalize a specific urban area. It could help enhance local democracy and empower communities in decision-making (Savini, 2011). Another factor, institutional support, plays a crucial role in shaping the outcomes of community participation and empowerment. It provides the framework and structure for participatory processes and helps to establish formal consultation structures (Savini, 2011). Execution support could balance power dynamics and political support has the potential to ensure democratic legitimacy and inclusivity (Edwards, 2008).

For the economical conditions, fiscal policy support, relevant funds, disposable budget and preparation cost are basic variables to calculate the financial feasibility of a project (Tajani & Di Liddo, 2023). Apart from that, investment incentives refer to financial or policy-based inducements designed to attract and encourage private sector participation and investment in the project area,

which have an impact on the participatory settings and outcomes in terms of empowerment and conflict dynamics (Savini, 2011).

The social conditions are comprehensive. Life style and educational level of the community could potentially influence the participation willingness, which is more of a result from other conditions to some extent. Social cohesion could promote community engagement, collaboration, and a sense of ownership, leading to better outcomes and long-term success in regeneration initiatives (Parés et al., 2012). Democracy culture represents the cultivation of values, practices, and norms that emphasize inclusive decision-making and active citizen participation, which might promote inclusivity, transparency, accountability, and community ownership, leading to more informed and equitable decision-making processes. This also links to the power dynamics closely (Muers, 2004).

Technological investment policies and support for the research and development activities from the government are the basic conditions in the technology aspect. In addition, new tools help address the limitations of traditional methods, therefore the adaptation to new tools also counts significantly (Stelzle & Noennig, 2017).

Environmental conditions are not as specific to participative urban regeneration as the other factors. Public health, public space and green issues are important as they contribute to creating livable, inclusive and sustainable cities that prioritize the well-being and active participation of their residents (Istenič, 2019). Another closely-related factor is resource accessibility, which refers to the ease and equity with which community members can access and utilize the necessary resources, services, and facilities. This condition could enable the local community to actively engage in cultural and social activities, leading to a more inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration process (Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi, 2017).

In the legal aspect, the design and improvement of relevant laws as well as the implementation of the laws are supposed to provide a compulsory security of citizen rights and a framework to ensure equitable involvement of all stakeholders. A more distinctive factor is the responsibility boundaries, which holds the potential to determine the roles and accountability of different actors involved in the decision-making process (Savini, 2011).

This adapted framework to evaluate the conditions of an enabling environment as shown in Table 2.2.3-1 will be applied as the evaluation framework in the following case studies.

2.2.4 Enabling environment

The term "enabling environment" began gaining traction in academic and policy discourse during the 1980s and 1990s, which period saw a paradigm shift from top-down, state-centric approaches to more inclusive and participatory models of development. It emerged as a response to the complex and multifaceted nature of development challenges, highlighting the necessity of supportive policies, institutions, and governance structures to achieve sustainable and inclusive development outcomes (World Bank, 1989).

In terms of participative urban regeneration, many scholars have explored the definition of enabling environment in its development. For example, Healey (1997) emphasizes it in terms of "creating the institutional capacity and social capital necessary for effective participatory urban regeneration, where local stakeholders have the power and resources to influence planning and development outcomes". Beswick & Tsenkova (2002) describes it as "a set of conditions that include supportive policies, institutional frameworks and participatory mechanisms that enable effective stakeholder involvement in urban regeneration processes".

Conditions of the environment	Sub-factors(Yüksel, I. (2012))	Sub-factors adapted for participative urban regeneration	Description	References
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Relations with European Union 2-Regional relations 3-Democratization process 4-Developments in north Africa and middle east 5-Political stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Regional relations 2-Area development goals 3-Institutional support 4-Execution support 5-Political support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-the collaborative interactions and partnerships between various localities and stakeholders within a broader geographical area 2-a targeted objective to improve and revitalize a specific urban area 3-the backing and resources provided by organizations and authorities 4-the practical assistance and resources provided by political actors to enable the implementation 5-the endorsement and facilitation provided by political actors to engage and include different groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-/ 2-Savini(2011) 3-Savini(2011) 4-Edwards(2008) 5-Edwards(2008)
Economical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-National income 2-Investment incentives 3-Monetary policy 4-Fiscal policy 5-Foreign investment 6-Current deficit 7-Energy cost 8-Foreign debt 9-Unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Fiscal policy support 2-Relevant funds 3-Investment incentives 4-Disposable budget 5-Preperation cost 6-Investment sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-the financial strategies and funding mechanisms implemented to facilitate and sustain participative urban regeneration 2-the possibilities and difficulties in applying for relevant funds 3-financial or policy-based inducements designed to attract and encourage private sector participation and investment in the project area 4-specific to the community 5-specific to the project 6-/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-/ 2-/ 3-Savini(2011) 4-Tajani & Di Liddo(2023) 5-Tajani & Di Liddo(2023) 6-/
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Life style 2-Level of education 3-Awareness of citizenship 4-Obey the rules 5-Will to work of the people 6-Democracy culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Life style 2-Level of education 3-Social cohesion 4-Democracy culture 5-Power dynamics 6-Participation willingness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- the way of living that is fostered and shaped within a community 2-/ 3-the strengthening of bonds and collaboration among diverse community members 4-the cultivation of values, practices, and norms that emphasize inclusive decision-making and active citizen participation 5-the distribution and exercise of influence and decision-making authority among various stakeholders 6-the degree to which community members and stakeholders are motivated and ready to actively engage in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Parés et al.(2012) 2-/ 3-Parés et al.(2012) 4-Muers(2004) 5-Muers(2004) 6-Muers(2004)
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Technological investment policies of government 2-New patents 3-Support the research and development activities by government 4-Adaptation to new technologies 5-Rate of change in technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Technological investment policies of government 2-Support for the research and development activities from the government 3-New tools 4-Adaptation to new tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-the strategic allocation of resources and implementation of policies by the government to support and integrate technology in the process 2-the provision of funding, resources, and policy backing to facilitate and advance research and innovative practices 3-new participatory forms, new technologies 4-the tendency of embracing and integrating emerging technologies and methodologies in projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-/ 2-/ 3-Stelzle & Noennig (2017) 4-Stelzle & Noennig (2017)
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Transportation infrastructure 2-Traffic safety 3-Public health 4-Urbanization level 5-Disaster management 6-Green issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Public health 2-Public space 3-Green issues 4-Resource accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-the focus on improving the health and well-being of the community 2-the creation or enhancement of accessible, inclusive, and functional communal areas 3-environmental concerns and sustainability aspects 4-the ease and equity with which community members can access and utilize the necessary resources, services, and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-/ 2-Istencić(2019) 3-Istencić(2019) 4-Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi(2017)
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Competition laws 2-Judicial system 3-Consumer rights 4-Implementation of laws 5-International treaties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Relevant laws 2-Citizen rights 3-Implementation of laws 4-Responsibility boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-/ 2-the legal and ethical entitlements of individuals within a community to involve in and influence the project process 3- the enforcement and application of relevant legal regulations and policies 4-the delineation of roles and accountabilities among different stakeholders and entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-/ 2-Ferilli, Sacco & Blessi(2017) 3-/ 4-Savini(2011)

Table 2.2.3-1 Evaluation criteria of environmental conditions (own work)

In this research, an enabling environment for participative urban regeneration is studied as a series of external conditions of the environment that support and facilitate the emergence and success of these projects, especially for the long-term social participation. It is supposed to empower the citizens in reshaping their neighborhoods.

2.3 Participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context

2.3.1 Context distinctions

While both the Chinese and Western contexts recognize the importance of public participation in urban regeneration, there are differences in several aspects, such as the level of participation, empowerment of citizens, and the resources and motivations for participation (Lu, 2020). In the western context, there has been a longer history of public participation in urban regeneration, with a focus on democratic decision-making and involving diverse stakeholders. In China, less consideration has been given to the willingness and interests of the community or citizens. Moreover, public participation here is still in its infancy and is often considered shallow or symbolic. Citizens are mainly informed and consulted, but the dominant power to make decisions lies with the government and developers. Also, the citizens may lack the necessary resources and training to engage in the decision-making process, which in turn lower their care on broader public interests. Explorations have been conducted to address these limitations and find an appropriate development path of this approach.

2.3.2 Development of micro-regeneration

Participative approaches in urban regeneration, which attaches great importance to involving diverse stakeholders and fostering collaboration in the urban regeneration process for inclusive and sustainable communities, are emerging in China with the recognition that neither the state nor the market alone can address the issues faced by disadvantaged communities (Chen & Qu, 2019). It is recognized as a response to the complex challenges of urban areas, including imbalanced urban development, various interests and resources.

Chen & Qu (2019) specifically studied the case of Shenzhen and Shanghai. The participative approach in Shanghai aims to move away from top-down planning and large-scale redevelopment towards a more inclusive and people-centered approach, which represents a shift towards process-oriented place-making and reimagining. Micro-regeneration is mentioned as a special concept initiated by the Yangpu District. The district government saw the potential of small-scale participative approaches in transforming aging and unattractive urban environments with limited costs and joint efforts between different actors, before they issued policy documents to encourage collaboration and shared public facilities, and offered to provide financial instruments to facilitate participative actions.

Based on the research of Zhu (2023), there is no official and technical definition for micro-regeneration currently. Essentially, this concept encompasses a diverse array of design-focused

interventions at the neighborhood level, often referred to as a 'design fix'. These can vary from minor renovations of individual buildings and enhancements of neighborhood corner spaces to the upgrading of local public spaces and facilities. While these initiatives are primarily started and financed by governmental entities, they are progressively receiving support from various social groups. Micro-regeneration is often viewed as more 'human-centered and emotive', as it allows local residents to experience a sense of connection between their immediate living surroundings and the wider urban development narrative.

2.3.3 Stakeholder distinctions

With the emphasis on public participation and the role of social organizations, there has been a shift from a centralized administration and planned economy to a more inclusive and participatory approach. This transformation has been particularly evident in the urban "community" context, where community organizations have gained increased autonomy and responsibilities in managing political and social functions (Liao et al., 2019). In the context of micro-regeneration, there are several main distinctions in the stakeholders' map (Figure 2.3.3-1): 1) The less important role of developers, which have a lot of power in urban regeneration traditionally; 2) The third sectors play an increasingly important role, from community planners, social organizations to academic institutions; 3) The close relationship between the local government and the community organizations (Lu, 2020).

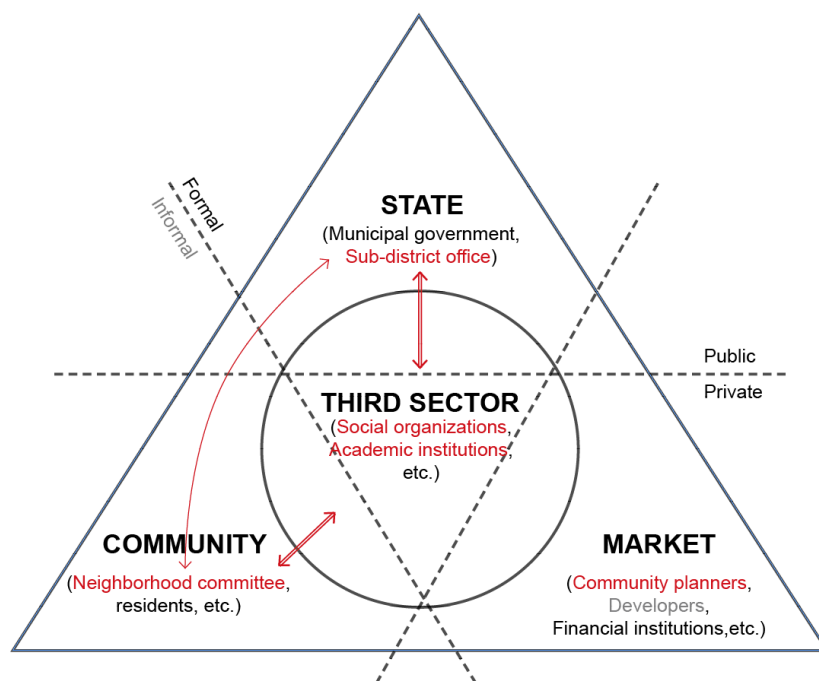


Figure 2.3.3-1 Main stakeholders in Chinese participative urban regeneration (adapted from Pestoff (1992))

With the shift towards a more inclusive and participatory approach, new stakeholders play a more active role in decision-making and implementation processes, such as:

- 1) Community planners

Community planners began to emerge in the 1960s as part of the evolution of community planning in Europe and the United States. Their role was acknowledged for their ability to facilitate effective communication among various stakeholders and to encourage community residents' involvement in urban planning. (Wang et al., 2022).

The involvement of planners in community planning has rapidly developed in China, especially in more developed provinces and in collaboration with universities. Planners work with the government or subdistrict offices and provide residents with their professional knowledge in an advisory process. They facilitate the transfer of government information to residents in a timely and non-administrative manner. They also listen to residents, provide professional advices and seek government feedback, thereby resolving conflicts between governments and residents more efficiently (Liao et al., 2019). Having the most chances to get in touch with other stakeholders, they have become central nodes as mediators and negotiators, and help potentially achieve a more collaborative, participatory and democratic planning process (Lu, 2020). The community planner system aims to coordinate the demands of community stakeholders, prioritize community-based perspectives and enhance public participation in community micro-regeneration projects (Wang et al., 2022).

1) Sub-district offices (local government)

The government in Shanghai plays a supervisory and guiding role in community planning, which involves multiple levels of government. Specifically, the district offices play a crucial role in providing the overall vision and direction for the development of the community while subdistrict offices (known as “jiedaoban”), who are local government representatives, work closely with community planners. They assist in the implementation of community plans and act as a bridge between the government, community planners and neighborhood residents (Lu, 2020).

2) Neighborhood Committee (community organization)

In the Chinese context, community organization, usually know as neighborhood committee (“juweihui”), serves as important intermediaries between the government, community planners and residents. It works closely with subdistrict offices, as the representative of the community. In general, neighborhood committee represents the interests and needs of the residents in the planning process. It also plays a vital role in disseminating information about community planning initiatives to the residents. They are supposed to provide updates on the progress of planning projects, share relevant documents and reports, and organize meetings and workshops to engage residents and gather their feedback. By facilitating discussions and deliberations among residents, they work to reach consensus on community development goals and priorities (Liu et al., 2020).

On the other hand, they are supposed to build the capacity of residents to participate effectively in community planning. For example, neighborhood committee will provide training and educational programs to enhance residents’ understanding of planning process, urban development concepts and sustainable practices, which could empower residents to contribute meaningfully to decision-making process. As an important role throughout the lifecycle of a project, they are also responsible for the execution and monitoring process. They monitor the progress of project, assess its impact on the community and provide feedback to improve the planning and

implementation process (Liu et al., 2020).

3) Social organizations

There have been discussions on the differences between social enterprise, NGO and social organization. An NGO is a specific type of social organization, which is a non-profit voluntary group organized to address issues in support of the public good. It is usually a formal organization with a defined structure and subject to regulatory requirements. While a social enterprise is a type of business that primarily seeks to address a social problem or benefit society while operating in a commercially viable way. It combines the social mission of a non-profit with the market-driven approach of business. A social organization can refer to any group or entity organized for a social purpose, which includes NGOs but can also encompass a wider range like community groups, clubs, cooperatives and even informal groups working towards social goals. It is more akin to traditional non-profits while social enterprises operate more like business.

In the Chinese context, the key third sectors who get involved in neighborhood regeneration and community building generally claim themselves as social organizations. They are registered under the Civil Affairs Bureau (“minzhengju”) and work with the aim to construct a sense of community. Some participate in designs and some focus more on the activities organization (Lecture). Utilizing the advantages of 'low threshold', 'broad participation', and 'multi-cooperation' in urban micro-regeneration to explore a flattened and dynamic social governance mechanism, and to create a social pattern of co-consultation, co-construction, co-governance and sharing, some social organizations have made beneficial attempts in this regard (Hua & Zhuang, 2022).

4) Academic institutions

Universities and research institutes, such as Tongji University and Shanghai Urban Construction and Design Research Institute, contribute to the participative urban regeneration process through research, assessment, and expertise. They provide guidance and support to community planners and other stakeholders in developing comprehensive plans and strategies (Lu, 2020).

These new stakeholders bring diverse perspectives, local knowledge, and a stronger focus on social and environmental sustainability. They advocate for community empowerment, social justice, and the preservation of cultural heritage, challenging the top-down approach of traditional stakeholders. This transformation in stakeholder roles has the potential to create more equitable and sustainable urban regeneration outcomes, as it fosters collaboration, shared responsibility, and a sense of ownership among all stakeholders involved (Liao et al., 2019).

2.3.4 Resource distinctions

In the Chinese context, specific stakeholders have closer relationship with the resource allocation. For example, residents have a deep understanding of the community's physical environment and can maximize the use of existing resources. As for intangible resources such as the knowledge, skills, and social connections that residents possess, the extensive experience and exposure to the community allows them to have a natural sensitivity to community information. Residents also have multiple identity attributes and societal roles, which enable them to establish networks and

relationships both within and outside the community. By leveraging these tangible and intangible resources, residents can establish robust networks, reduce resource costs, and increase cohesion within the community (Li et al., 2023).

Also, the cohesive cooperation between the neighborhood committee and third sectors such as community planner and social organizations are critical in identifying and assessing the available resources within a community, understanding the needs and aspirations of residents, and facilitating the allocation of resources in a fair and equitable manner. External resources and funding opportunities could also be leveraged through the collaboration to support the regeneration process (Liao et al., 2019).

2.3.5 Participatory methods distinctions

There are some new explorations in participatory methods in the Chinese context, the one of which that has been mostly discussed about is collaborative workshop. It is an innovative practice in China that combines both top-down and bottom-up approaches to community participation. This method promotes participation from the public and government actions. Through mutual communication and collaborative interaction, various stakeholders, including the government, residents, social organizations, and others, bring their views and experiences into the dialogue to address community development issues (Li et al., 2020). The workshop serves as a platform for dialogue, cooperation, and consensus-building among these stakeholders, based on mutually agreed objectives and shared understandings.

2.4 Summary of literature review

This chapter primarily explores two core concepts in this study and their interactions: participative urban regeneration and enabling environment. For the former, this study conducted thematic research, including stakeholder analysis, resource analysis and participatory methods, which are important components for understanding participative urban regeneration. On the other hand, studying enabling environment began with an understanding of the conditions of the environment. This research adopts an adapted PESTEL framework as a basic structure for the following case study.

Regarding the relationship between these concepts, this study first explored the differences in theory between Chinese participative urban regeneration, using micro-regeneration as an example, and the general Western context from the perspective of important components. As for the transition from conditions of the environment to an enabling environment, the evaluation framework of the previous concept (participative urban regeneration, shown in Table A5-1) is used as a filter to identify favorable conditions for micro-regeneration development. The summarizing framework is shown in Figure 2.4-1.

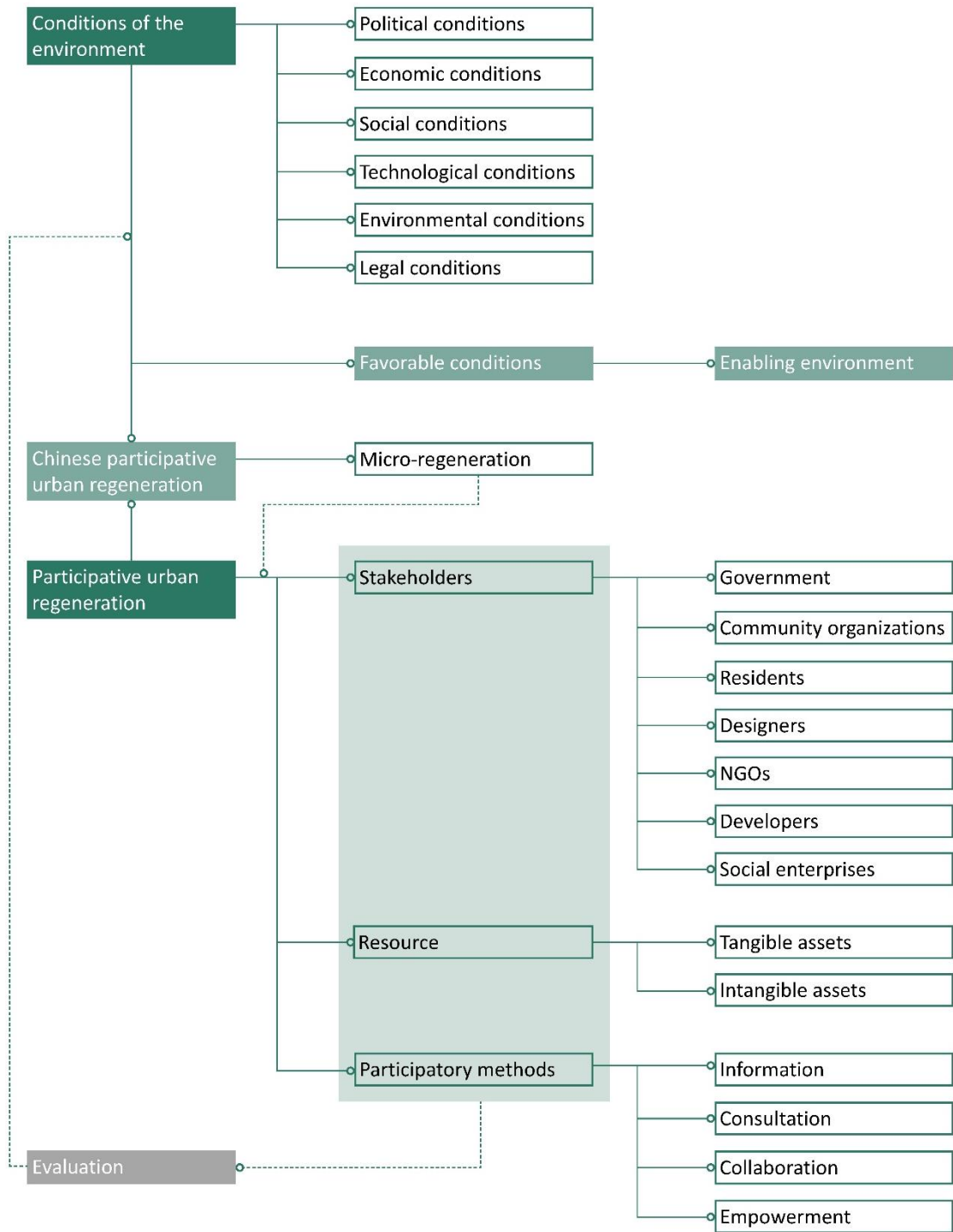


Figure 2.4-1 Summarizing framework of literature review (own illustration)

3. Research design

3.1 Research methods

3.1.1 Research goals

The main goal of this research is to systematically understand how typical micro-regeneration projects is organized and how different stakeholders get involved. In this way, a more general conclusion on the conditions for creating an enabling environment for participative approach will be reached through an investigation into various perspectives, especially the community's.

There are 2 sub-goals:

1. Explore from selected micro-regeneration cases on favorable conditions for such participative approach.
2. Provide potential transferable suggestions on creating an enabling environment to sustain such approach in the future projects.

3.1.2 Research methods

To answer the research question ***“What kind of enabling environment helps facilitate participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context from multi-case study of Shanghai’s micro-regeneration projects?”***, a combination of literature review and multi-case study is applied to explore the favorable conditions in practice. The main research method applied is qualitative research, which included 7 case studies in 4 areas as main analytical source. According to Hancock et al. (2009), the qualitative method involves accounts of experience or data that cannot be accurately described mathematically. It emphasizes descriptive or explanatory aspects, potentially leading to the development of new theories or concepts, as well as assessing organizational processes. The goal of this research relies largely on the assessment of the process and there is a need for generalizing external environment conditions. Therefore, the qualitative method is more suitable while the quantitative method will also be conducted as a supplement or triangulation to the qualitative data.

3.1.3 Dissemination and Audiences

This research is aimed at important actors in the field of participative urban regeneration, especially micro-regeneration projects in China, such as relevant government employees, community planners and specific social organizations. It could also be a valuable source for the residents in those communities where small intervention is welcomed, if the information is reachable. Though as an academic paper, I wish it could provide theory support for real projects, which means this research focuses more on the practical meanings. Therefore, I envision an extensive dissemination strategy. Apart from open-access publications, infographics or summaries for non-specialist audiences is also a plan.

3.2 Research process design

3.2.1 Research process framework

As shown in Figure 3.2.1-1, the linear flow of the study goes through several important elements. First, the general process of participative urban regeneration was studied. A project journey map is applied as information organizing template, including 4 phases from project generation to project elaboration, project production and project impact. Each phase has different expectations of the data collection as shown in Table 3.2.1-1. It integrates the key components of stakeholders, resources and participative approaches, as well as conditions of the environment. Although this project journey map is not strictly in chronological order, it requires data from the whole life cycle of the project.

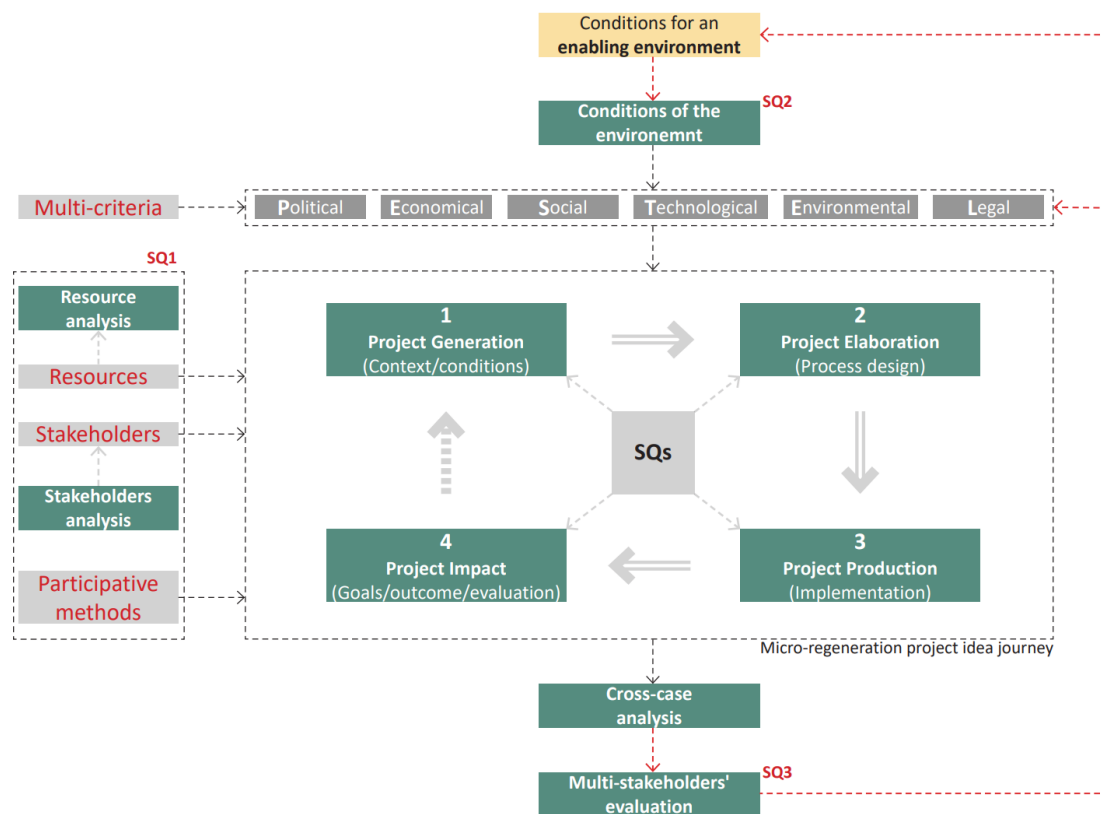


Figure 3.2.1-1 Research process framework (own illustration)

The second critical progress in the research process was addressing the conditions of the environment, as an elaboration of the basic information from the project journey map based on a PESTEL framework. The stakeholders, who are the following research targets, have different intensity of relevance with aspects of different conditions of the environment.

For example, the community has the closest relationship with the outcome of the project. Therefore, the social aspect conditions are expected mainly from this side. As for the community planner/ social organization who performed more as a bridge in between the resource and goal, demand and supply, technological and environmental conditions could be more known about.

Knowledge on the political, economic and legal conditions are expected mainly from the public sectors, such as the residential committee, who usually takes a centered role in micro-regeneration projects (Figure 3.2.1-2).

Micro-regeneration projects journey			
Project generation	Project elaboration	Project production	Project impact
<i>Conditions of the environment</i>	<i>Process design</i>	<i>Implementation (participation)</i>	<i>Goals, Outcomes, Evaluations</i>
External: 1-Political dynamics 2-Cultural background 3-Legal requirements 4-Institutional regulations 5-Financial environment 6-Population characteristics Internal: 7-Organizational capabilities 8-Professionalism and commitment Others: 9-Initiator 10-Motivation	1-Timing 2-Types of budget allocation (by programme or earmarked funds, operating, capital) 3-Participants (selection method, numbers, representativeness) 4-Co-decision milestones 5-Role of internal actors (local government, designer, the community) 6-Role of external actors (experts, consultants, civic organizations)	1-Organizational mechanism 2-Participation forms (traditional like public meetings, focus groups, simulation and advisory committees; innovative like digital platform, social inclusive visioning, collaborative workshop and social media) 3-Participants selection 4-Participation rate 5-Participation phase (Project preparation/launching themed activities/building together)	1-Educate participants about the project (design and budget) 2-Gain support for budget proposals 3-Gather input for decision-making 4-Change resource allocation 5-Enhance trust 6-Create a sense of community 7-Transparency and accountability 8-Process/Project management (time, budget, quality) 9-Policy innovation

Table 3.2.1-1 Micro-regeneration projects journey structure (adapted from Bartocci et al., (2023))

After research on selected projects, a cross-case analysis was conducted before reaching different stakeholders for evaluations. Certain stakeholders, such as designers and social organizations, have experience in other similar projects, which could be seen as potential resources beyond the scope of this multi-case study. The conclusion referred back to the criteria of conditions of the environment, aiming to provide transferrable suggestions on similar participative urban regenerations in the future.



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Figure 3.2.1-2 Stakeholders layers (own illustration)

3.3 Case study design

3.3.1 Selection of cases

Micro-regeneration is a form of participative urban regeneration that evolves in the Chinese context and features with small interventions. To generalize favorable conditions for participative methods in such projects in different settings, there needs to be some distinctions in terms of external conditions in case selection, such as location, policy and institution, which could lead to different participatory process.

The number of micro-regeneration projects are numerous, which makes it uneasy to directly seek selections from the pool. However, the bridge role, including designers and social organizations, have multiple experience in micro-regeneration projects. In this way, the researcher selected the cases from the third-sectors: one community planner, one architect and two social organizations from different areas. Apart from that, governmental employees of Liangchengxincun Sub-district, Hongkou District were reached for a more top-down perspective out of feasibility. Their typical projects constitute the study cases of this research.

Due to the limitation of perspectives of different cases, cases located in the same sub-district will be analyzed together while retaining the study of their unique development conditions. In this multi-case study, 8 interviews from different sectors were conducted, including 2 designers, 2 social organizations, 2 community voluntary organizations and 2 neighborhood committees. Apart from these, there is also complementary data from an open discussion among community voluntary organizations in Xinhua Sub-district.

3.3.2 Operational research design

From the literature review, the main stakeholders of micro-regeneration come from the government side, the community side and the third sector. Ideally, one interviewee from each sector could help provide comprehensive evaluation of the participative approach. It is considered to conduct two rounds of interviews (Figure 3.3.2-1). The third sector, being the community planner or the social organization, would serve as an entry point for the case study, who usually plays as the “bridge” in a project. Then the sub-district office (if reachable) and the neighborhood committee will be interviewed. From their perspectives in the first round of survey, knowledge on the stakeholders, resources and participation is expected, as well as the development of participative approach in urban regeneration in the Chinese context. After that, questionnaires among the residents will complement the user perspective on evaluation of the process and the conditions. These data will be processed together before the second round of the interviews. This time the objective is to understand the challenges, favorable conditions and their transferability. The final goal is to picture an enabling environment for participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context.

In practice, the operational process was compressed into one round of interviews. Also, as a

qualitative research, questionnaire was not conducted at the end due to time limitation. Luckily, a new role of community voluntary organization provided compensated input from the community perspective.

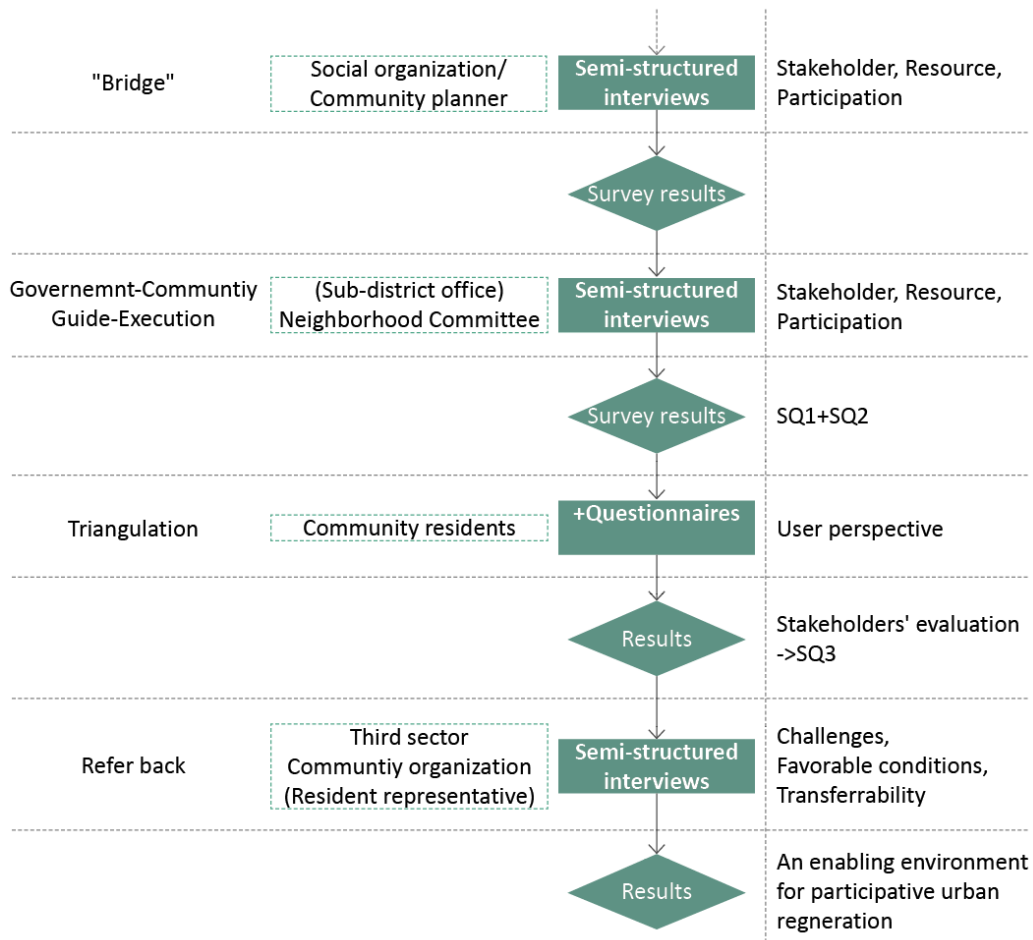


Figure 3.3.2-1 Operational research plan (own illustration)

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Overview

This research combines literature review and semi-structured interviews as the main methods for collecting data. The data to be used in this research can be divided into secondary data and primary data. The secondary data is the basis of the theoretical framework, from which the gap is observed and the goal, as well as the practical research method for the case-study is designed. Apart from that, the primary data from the interviews and questionnaires will be collected and analyzed to verify and add up the achieved secondary data. The research process will be modified and the conclusion will be drawn from the interaction of the two different types of data.

3.4.2 Secondary data-literature review & public lectures

Examining secondary data through literature review is an important initiative phase of this research. As outlined by Bryman (2012), there are two primary types of literature reviews: systematic and

narrative. The systematic review is known as a stringent approach, concentrating on a narrower aspect of a research area. In contrast, the narrative review, a more conventional method, is recognized for its broader and more adaptable scope. Considering the specific research questions, this research will apply the narrative review approach. Also, information collected from public lectures could contribute to the theoretical framework as empirical knowledge.

3.4.3 Primary data-interview & questionnaire

According to Yin (2009), case study method is particularly useful in qualitative research for understanding real-life situations. There are two primary forms of case studies: single and multiple. A single case study offers a detailed insight into a specific scenario, while multiple case studies are often seen as more compelling and robust, as noted by Herriott & Firestone (1983). For this research, multiple case studies were selected to address the research questions due to several reasons: 1) the conditions of the environment could vary to different extents in different cases. To conclude transferable experience, multi-case study is more appropriate. 2) The comparison among the cases could also provide valuable information to get better understanding of participative methods in micro-regeneration.

3.5 Data analysis

The data in this research were mainly collected from literature and interviews, which were analyzed together. The literature review focused on the core concepts and necessary adaptations for the practical study, while thematic analysis served as the primary approach for examining the interview data, where key concepts identified within and across the transcripts were coded in different categories to identify recurring patterns in the coded text and to explore the relationships among these codes. Given that the data originates from diverse sources, triangulation was essential to verify the validity of the findings.

To gather the needed data to fill in the project journey map (Table 3.2.1-1), a breakdown of the sub-research questions was used. By identifying the main contents of each sub-question, as well as the data collection plan, expected outcome and data analysis plan, topics of different phases will be touched and translated into required data. The details will be elaborated in data analysis sector.

As illustrated in the research process framework (Figure 3.2.1-1), the sub-questions were studied step by step to arrive at the conclusion. SQ1 was aimed to get the overview of the projects, concerning analysis of stakeholders, resources and participatory methods, which constitute the main body of the project journey map. SQ2 was supposed to understand the potential conditions for an enabling environment. Criteria will be drawn and adapted for participative urban regeneration from literature study, serving as a basis of the close code method for the later interviews. The final SQ3 was about the evaluation of participation process from different stakeholders' perception and the general favorable conditions of an enabling environment for such method. The data collection plans for the sub-questions are summarized in Table 3.5-1,2,3.

SQ	Main content	Data collection	Expected outcome	Data analysis
SQ1: How does participative urban regeneration develop and evolve in the Chinese context?	Background and development	<u>Literature</u> : literatures on participative urban regeneration/bottom-up urbanism/other similar concepts, including general context and the Chinese context <u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant NGOs)</u> :	<u>Literature</u> : the development and involvement of participative urban regeneration <u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : the growth of participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context	Literature review Thematic analysis Triangulation
	Project lifecycle	<u>Literature</u> : literatures on participative urban regeneration projects procedure <u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant NGOs)</u> : focus on the lifecycle of the project	<u>Literature</u> : project lifecycle in general <u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : project timeline with main progress in the process in specific cases	Literature review Thematic analysis Triangulation
	Stakeholders mapping	<u>Literature</u> : literatures on participative urban regeneration projects; Relevant reports about micro-regeneration projects online <u>Semi-structured Interview/Focus group meeting if feasible (designer, local government, relevant social organizations, representatives of the community)</u> : focus on main actors and their interaction	<u>Literature</u> : main actors and their roles in general; general relationship among the involved actors <u>Semi-structured Interview/Focus group meeting if feasible</u> : main actors and their roles in practical micro-regeneration projects; a comparison in between the literature and the reality (special actors or roles)	Literature review Thematic analysis Cross-case comparison Triangulation
	Resource mapping	<u>Literature</u> : literature on participative urban regeneration projects which focus on the resources <u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant social organizations, representatives of the community)</u> : focus on the tangible resource and intangible resource	<u>Literature</u> :the categories of the resources and potential mapping of specific resources <u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : the mapping of the resources	Literature review Thematic analysis Triangulation
	Participative methods	<u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant social organizations, representatives of the community)</u> : focus on the participative process of the project <u>Questionnaire (residents of the community)</u> : focuses on the user perspective on participating	<u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : the participation form of the project, including participative platform, participants selection, participation rate and participation phase <u>Questionnaire</u> : to check if the info is in line with other perspectives	Thematic analysis Cross-case comparison Triangulation

Table 3.5-1 Data plan of sub-question 1 (own work)

SQ	Main content	Data collection	Expected outcome	Data analysis
SQ2: What conditions have contributed to the implementation of this participative approach in micro-regeneration projects in the Chinese context?	Evaluation framework	<u>Literature</u> : literatures on evaluation of the environment; literatures on participative urban regeneration	<u>Literature</u> : an adapted evaluation framework for the conditions of potential enabling environment	Literature review Thematic analysis
	Conditions of the environment in practice	<u>Literature</u> : literatures on participative urban regeneration projects <u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant social organizations)</u> : focus on the external and internal conditions (PESTEL factors); also the initiating process including initiator and motivation	<u>Literature</u> : theoretical framework of the conditions of the environment in participative urban regeneration <u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : relevant conditions according to the framework	Literature review Thematic analysis Triangulation

SQ	Main content	Data collection	Expected outcome	Data analysis
SQ3: What are the possible conditions of an enabling environment for participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context?	Process evaluation from different stakeholders	<u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant social organizations, representatives of the community)</u> : focus on the evaluation of the participation process <u>Questionnaire (residents of the community)</u> : focuses on the user perspective	<u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : evaluation of the participation process of micro-regeneration projects in terms of stakeholders, resources and participatory forms <u>Questionnaire</u> : to collect quantitative data and check if the info is in line with the interviews	Thematic analysis Triangulation
	Challenges in the process	<u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant social organizations, representatives of the community)</u> : focus on the obstacles in the project process, are they specific to the context? <u>Questionnaire (residents of the community)</u> : focuses on the user perceived challenges	<u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : challenges for positive participative micro-regeneration projects according to the environmental condition framework <u>Questionnaire</u> : to collect quantitative data to complement the interviews	Thematic analysis Cross-case comparison Triangulation
	Contributing conditions	<u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant social organizations, representatives of the community)</u> : focus on the favorable conditions according to previous framework based on the user evaluation <u>Questionnaire (residents of the community)</u> : focuses on the user perspective on favorable conditions	<u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : conditions of an enabling environment for positive participative micro-regeneration projects <u>Questionnaire</u> : to collect quantitative data to complement the interviews	Thematic analysis Cross-case comparison Triangulation
	Transferability	<u>Semi-structured Interview (designer, local government, relevant social organizations, representatives of the community)</u> : focus on the generalization of the favorable conditions and transferability of the case project	<u>Semi-structured Interview</u> : contextual detail and suggestion for the transferability	Cross-case comparison Triangulation Thick description

Table 3.5-2,3 Data plan of sub-question 2, 3 (own work)

3.6 Ethical considerations

In conducting this research within the community, it is committed to obtain informed consent from all participants, ensuring that they fully understand the purpose and methods of this study, and

their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. The research prioritizes the confidentiality and privacy of participants, guaranteeing that all personal information will be securely stored and used solely for the purposes of this research. Recognizing the diverse cultural fabric of the communities, the methods are designed to be culturally sensitive and respectful of local norms and values. The community are supposed to not just engage as participants, but as active collaborators, ensuring their perspectives and needs shape the research process. The commitment extends to transparency in the objectives and processes. Also, comprehensive feedback on the findings were provided to the community. The researcher is dedicated to ensuring that the research benefits the community, avoids harm and contributes positively to its long-term wellbeing. All the activities were in strict compliance with relevant legal and ethical standards.

The research applied to a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). By adhering to HREC guidelines, the researcher demonstrates the commitment to ethical integrity, fostering trust within the community. This is aimed to not only align with moral imperatives but also enhances the credibility and validity of the research findings.

As for data management, primary data, collected firsthand by the researcher, including interview transcripts, interviewees' personal information, audio/video files and data analysis materials, were securely stored on the researcher's personal computer and backed up on a hard drive, with access restricted solely to the researcher. Confidentiality of the interviewees' personal information were strictly maintained, and all primary data were used exclusively for academic purposes. Prior to each interview, interviewees received an informed consent letter to ensure they understand and agree to the data's purpose and usage. The completed thesis, incorporating this data, will be published on the TU Delft Repository. Data protection measures adhered to the guidelines of the Ethics and Privacy Committee or the General Data Protection Regulation of TU Delft.

3.7 Generalizability & Limitations

This research is aimed to offer insights that are broadly generalizable to urban areas undergoing similar regeneration processes. The diverse participative approaches studied in the multi cases are supposed to enhance the applicability of the findings across various urban contexts. However, the generalizability of the results beyond China is limited due to the country's unique political, economic, and cultural landscape. The favorable conditions in micro-regeneration projects also have limitation to larger scale interventions. The study's reliance on qualitative methods, while providing depth, may limit its statistical representativeness, and the rapidly changing urban policy landscape in China means that our findings might have a constrained temporal applicability. Furthermore, potential biases in participant responses due to the sensitive nature of public participation represent a limitation. Therefore, while this study potentially sheds valuable light on the factors enabling participative urban regeneration in Chinese cities, its generalizability is primarily within similar contexts in China, and its applicability to other global contexts or differing governance models should be approached with caution.

4. Case study of Shanghai's micro-regeneration projects

In this section, micro-regeneration cases in a total of 7 were selected from 4 sub-districts from 4 different districts in Shanghai as case studies, including Changning District, Hongkou District, Yangpu District and Huangpu District. Each sub-district has its own resource features, which are categorized as shown in Figure 4.1-1. The interviews and individual case analysis follow the sequence from specific background, evaluation of the case, challenges to favorable conditions. The evaluation categories were integrated from the literature review, combining sub-factors from stakeholders, resources and participation analysis, which will be further discussed in the evaluation section of cross-case study.

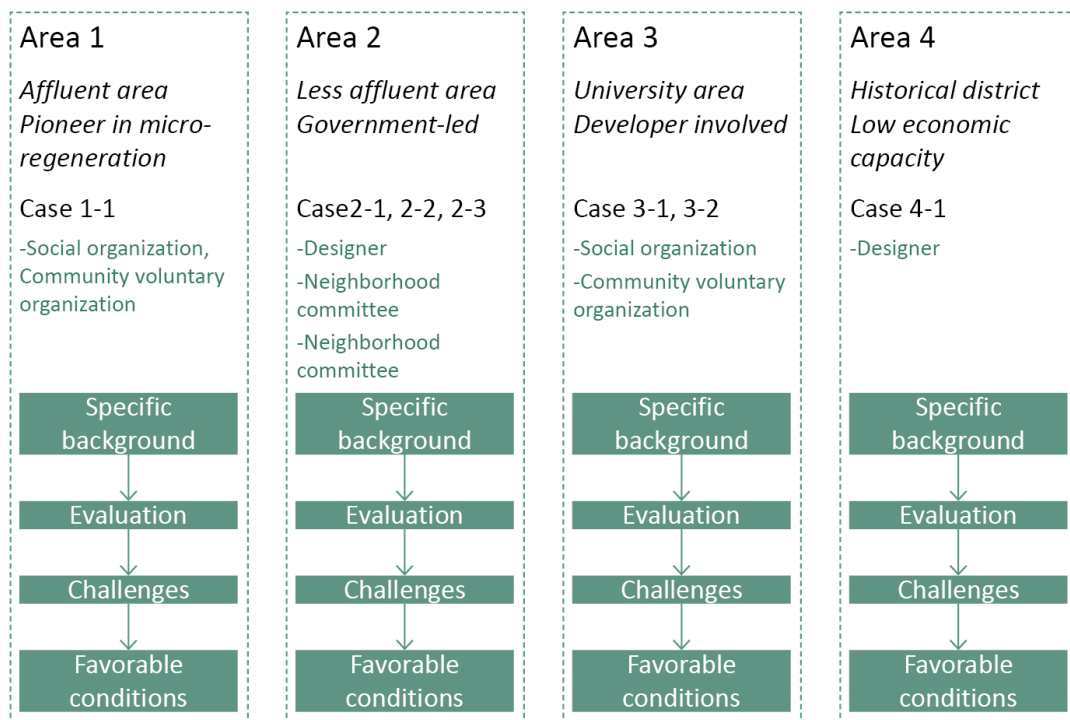


Figure 4.1-1 Case analysis overview (own illustration)

The geographical and temporal relationship of the cases are shown in Figure 4.1-2,3. All cases are located in the downtown of Shanghai. Apart from the case in Changning District, Huangpu District and one case in Yangpu District, the other cases were all initiated in recent 2 years (since 2022), after the devastating impact of covid-19. Meanwhile, relevant policy/regulation, mechanism revolution and influential initiatives that have significant impact on the development of micro-regeneration in Shanghai in the last decade were addressed.

In the context of the entire city, the concept of the 15-minute community life circle and urban fine management initiative play important guiding roles in the rise of micro-regeneration projects. Activities such as "Walking in Shanghai" and SUSAS provided designers with good resources and opportunities to support in urban spatial exploration. As development returns to normal in the post-pandemic time, establishing connections between people has become a more important

societal demand. This has provided significant support for the advancement of participative micro-regeneration projects in the past two years, especially from the government after Chairman Xi's advocacy of 'City for people' in 2019. Additionally, the legal and regulatory framework for participative micro-regeneration is gradually being improved through practical experience.

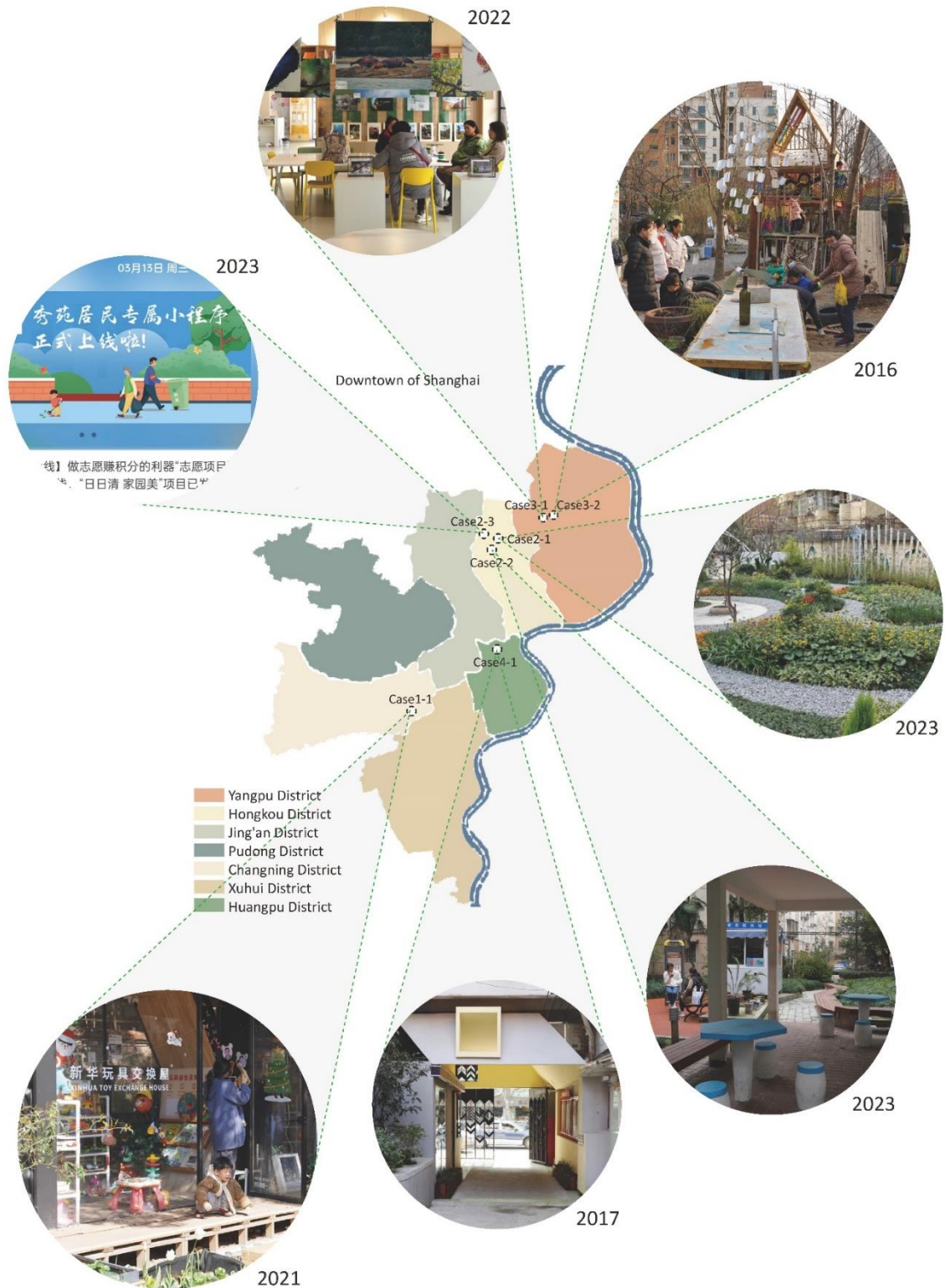


Figure 4.1-2 Geographical relationships of the cases (own illustration)

	Policy/Regulation	Mechanism	Influential initiatives
2024			
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <Shanghai action guidance for 15-minutes community life circle> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online course series of 'City for people' • Community Micro-regeneration Seminar • 1st Xinhua · Community construction conference • 5th SUSAS 2023: Commensalism
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <Shanghai Urban Regeneration Guidelines> • <Guidelines for participative community planning in Shanghai> 		
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14th 5-year plan of fine management of Shanghai urban development: requires a 90% coverage of community planners in downtown Shanghai • <Shanghai Urban Regeneration Regulations> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <15 minutes community life circle plan · Shanghai initiative> • 4th SUSAS 2021: 15-minutes community life circle
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <Guidance on Implementing the 'City for people' Concept and strengthening participative community planning> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Shanghai Urban Regeneration Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th "Walking in Shanghai 2020" micro-regeneration plan: 15-minutes community life circle
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 pilot sub-districts for "15 minutes community life circle" • 'City for people' concept brought up by Chairman Xi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of community planner system in Changning District. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd SUSAS 2019: Encounter • 4th "Walking in Shanghai 2019" micro-regeneration plan: Activate space under the bridge
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-year plan of fine management of urban development: beautiful home, neighborhood and country • <Shanghai Urban Master Plan 2017-2035> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of community planner system in Yangpu, Pudong New, Putuo, Jing'an and Hongkou District. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd "Walking in Shanghai 2018" micro-regeneration plan: Activate space under the bridge
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy of urban development shifts from old area renovation to urban regeneration • Shanghai Urban Regeneration Planning Land Implementation Regulations released • Shanghai calls for 'fine management' for urban development 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd SUSAS 2017: Sharing future public space • 2nd "Walking in Shanghai 2017" micro-regeneration plan: Community space, corner space, community roads
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanghai launches four major plans for urban regeneration • Shanghai releases <15-minute Community Life Circle Guidelines> (trial version) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Colorful Community" brought up by Pudong New District • 1st "Walking in Shanghai 2016" micro-regeneration plan: Community space
2015		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Shanghai Urban public Space Design Promotion Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st SUSAS 2015: Urban regeneration • "NICE2035" initiated by College of Design and Innovation, Tongji University
2014			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanghai first proposed 15-minute community life circle

Figure 4.1-3 Temporal development related with micro-regeneration in 2014-2024
(own illustration)

AREA

1

**Affluent area
Pioneer in
micro-regeneration**

*Xinhua Sub-district,
Changning District*



4.1 Area 1 (Xinhua Sub-district, Changning District): Case 1-1

4.1.1 Specific background

Xinhua is one of the earliest sub-districts to engage in participative micro-regenerations in Shanghai. Since 2018, Xinhua Sub-district has been continuously supporting the community revitalization efforts led by Dayu Community Design Team, in conjunction with the “15-minute Community Life Circle Plan” from the government. This has facilitated a series of activities promoting community participation, culminating in a sustainable mechanism for collaborative management of micro-regeneration projects in the community.

Xinhua Sub-district benefits a lot from the development of adjacent area, such as Kamisei Shinko, developed by Vanke and OMA in 2016. With relatively affluent consumer and cultural resources, many urban design events are held here, including Urban Design Festival initiated by AssBook in 2017. These conditions led to explorations of community design, which form the last piece of regional development puzzle, as a pioneer in Shanghai.

The Xinhua Road covers an area of 2.3 square kilometers with a population of 67,000 people. It includes old public housing estates, upscale residential communities, as well as cultural and office parks. The diverse elements form one of Shanghai's most charming living environments and serve as a pilot community for the first batch of “15-minute Community Living Circle Plans” in Shanghai. A total of 7 locations on Xinhua Road underwent micro-regenerations, including a playground, a toy exchange house and a vegetable garden. With the completion and opening of Xinhua Community Design Center in 2022, this space operated by Dayu Community Design Team has become a resource integration platform for community regeneration in Xinhua Sub-district.

There have been plenty of voluntary organizations growing with the support of the center, which brought participative micro-regeneration in Xinhua to a new stage. For example, there is a community shared kitchen operated by the residents, and a “Bring your own desk-worker program” on the second floor of the design center where residents could receive support to form self-organizing and connected groups aiming at community issues.

Enterprises also participate a lot in the long-term development of the area. For instance, the eco-friendly fashion brand "Jifuxing" collaborated with the community design center to utilize the narrow alleys and lawns of Lane 345 as a runway, creating a community fashion show. The show featured the integration of ethnic handmade textiles with sustainable fashion. Collaboration like this enables the community to access a variety of social resources and brings about a whole new transformation in the community's way of life.

All of this is made possible by the implementation of the 15-minute Community Life Circle Proposal, which puts the need for micro-enhancement of the community environment and increasing social cohesion to the public. The Action Plan of the 15-minute Community Life Circle in Xinhua Sub-district also received the 2022 Merit Award of ISOCARP, which made Xinhua a sample in micro-regeneration of other areas in Shanghai, even nationwide.

Project overview of Case 1-1: Lane 345, Xinhua Road

Source: https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_21550637 (Left); Author (Right)



Time	2021-2022.09
Location	Xinhua Sub-district, Changning District
	Xinhua is one of the earliest streets to engage in participatory community micro-regenerations. The sub-district itself is relatively affluent, and the overall area attracts strong corporate investment, providing a good foundation for community development.
Main stakeholders	local government, enterprises owning the unlicensed properties, social organization (Dayu Community Design Studio), ECUST (East China University Of Science and Technology), SUF (Shanghai United Foundation), law firm
Investment	the district government, enterprises, SUF
Characteristics	The project starts with a focus on public benefit, aiming to enhance public services and achieve sustainable operation. It includes Shanghai's first comprehensive community construction center. The project succeeds in a process of simultaneous participation, construction, operation, and iteration.
Interviewee	social organization (One of the co-founders), community voluntary organizations (Leaders)

Table 4.1.1-1 Case 1-1 project overview (own work)

4.1.2 Evaluation

In terms of individual support, residents of Xinhua Road community have experienced a shift from indifference or lack of support to acknowledgment and participation. Looking at the age distribution and educational level of the population, Xinhua community has an advantage in its proportion of middle-aged and young residents, who are better educated. However, trust between the designers, neighborhood committees and residents can only accumulate over time and through specific events. The level of government support underwent a similar trend. According to the co-founder of Dayu Community Design Team,

“There were no precedents (participative micro-regeneration) in Shanghai to reference, the sub-district government initially remained neutral until several micro-regeneration projects achieved initial recognition during the 2018 Urban Design Festival in Xinhua Community.”

Subsequently, the value of this approach was recognized by the society. As a result, the government

began to provide resources to support community development initiatives, while residents began to participate in project operation and maintenance. Some even became initiators of new projects over time and gradually developed into community voluntary groups with support of Xinhua Community Design Center.

In terms of fairness, all the interviewees expressed a high degree of identification with offline relationships. Besides the effectiveness and depth of information dissemination, it also implies limitations in the scope of information dissemination. The early micro-regeneration projects in Xinhua community were relatively traditional, relying on in-depth communication and discussion between designers and local residents, with the aim of improving physical spaces. After establishing a certain participant base, online resource integration platforms became effective auxiliary methods. As mentioned by the co-founder of Dayu Community Design Studio,

“Alongside the announcement of recruitment plans by the Community Design Center, various participation templates will be provided. Residents can also choose personalized participation modes while the Center will provide necessary assistance and even funding.”

Meanwhile, participants themselves also become part of the resource pool. Currently, participative regeneration operations in Xinhua community are quite open, including active outreach to vulnerable groups. For example, among the volunteer organizations formed in the community, there are teams led by disabled individuals.

As for outcomes, the active projects in Xinhua community not only provide residents with opportunities for knowing each other and communicating but also reduce conflicts between different interest groups. The Community Design Center has become more of a public home for the community. Various physical spaces are vibrant and well-maintained through collective use and participative maintenance, including lawns, vegetable gardens, canteens, and sports fields.

Moreover, these developments have gradually expanded from Xinhua Road to other areas. In September 2023, Xinhua Community Design Conference was held, where Xinhua Sub-district expanded its community construction initiatives to the Xinhua Central Activity Area. Under the leadership and support of the sub-district government, multiple initiatives were launched for a growing awareness and identification among residents and white-collar 'residents' of Xinhua community. They have become more conscious, organized, and proactive in participating in community construction initiatives.

Over the course of more than five years of participative community micro-regeneration practices in Xinhua, social organizations, government and residents have gradually built trust. Economically, there has been a shift from pure government support to having the influence to attract corporate investment. Additionally, micro-regeneration projects, due to their low cost, inherently possess sustainable resource utilization characteristics. As a model for similar projects, Dayu Team has also provided experience and research support in establishing the theoretical framework in a long-term perspective.

4.1.3 Challenges

In the community micro-regeneration practices in Xinhua Sub-district, macro-level challenges primarily involve finance and institutional aspects. Following the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in government financial pressure, and the revenue of many enterprises has been affected. Projects relying solely on government or corporate investment may face long-term economic sustainability issues due to over-reliance. On the other hand, despite the positive institutional and resource support provided by Xinhua sub-district government, there needs to be a balance in government intervention as suggested by the co-founder of Dayu Team:

“Excessive government involvement may restrict the freedom of bottom-up initiatives. A mutually beneficial cooperative relationship should be reciprocal.”

Unilateral government promotion requires sustained large expenditure, while residents often possess high execution capabilities for what they want to do. A win-win approach for the government is to assist residents in leveraging their individual capabilities to drive project implementation.

Micro-level challenges mainly focus on the development orientation of the community design center and voluntary groups. As the center becomes a more centralized resource integration platform, it faces the challenge of managing a larger resource pool effectively. For Dayu and the many community voluntary groups it supports, achieving sustainable operation, especially economically, is a core goal, the exploration of which has not been completed yet.

4.1.4 Favorable conditions

Based on the evaluation and challenges identified by the interviewees regarding the cases, a summary was made of the existing favorable conditions and suggested favorable conditions for each case from their perspective. The latter has already been discussed in the challenges section. The following section will elaborate on the former one. For cases in areas 2, 3, and 4, similar existing conditions will be simplified.

Existing favorable conditions

1) Political

Firstly, the government has adjusted its value orientation. On one hand, in the general direction of urban development, there is a transition from traditional large-scale transformations towards micro-regeneration approaches that emphasize harmonious interaction between people and the environment. Besides infrastructure improvements, there is also a focus on enhancing the well-being of the people. As the first city in China to propose the concept of “15-minute Community Living Circle” in 2014, Shanghai has incorporated it into the “Shanghai 2035” master plan and provided a favorable environment for the development of micro-regeneration projects. On the other hand, individuality of the people is emphasized. Social participation has become a key component of urban development. Since Chairman Xi's visit to Shanghai in 2019, where he

proposed the idea of people-centered urban development, governments at all levels have been implementing this concept in their action plans. Each district government has also been exploring their own adaptive strategies.

Next is the resource support from the government, which can be broadly categorized into manpower, funds, and channels. Since the government has recognized the value of participatory micro-regeneration methods, it has provided support in various aspects. Special teams have been established to oversee related projects, and certain funds and channels have been provided or introduced. It strongly supported the establishment and functioning of Xinhua Community Design Center. At the operational level, the neighborhood committees, as government agencies most familiar with the corresponding community conditions, have formed close collaborations with the teams responsible for community construction.

2) Economic

On one hand, benefiting from the cultural and commercial development of the area, Xinhua has a certain ability to attract corporate investment. On the other hand, many enterprises have fiscal expenditure targets for investing in community development or themed public welfare activities in order to establish a corporate image of social responsibility. This has provided various micro-regeneration projects with diversified investment channels. Apart from corporate investments, there are also relevant foundations and different fund programs that these projects could apply to.

3) Social

In terms of social conditions, the proportion of young and middle-aged people in the Xinhua community is relatively high. This group has a higher level of education in average, which leads to more abundant recognition and support for participatory community regeneration projects. The participation of some individuals can also stimulate others, form a positive expansion and feedback mechanism, as well as enhance community cohesion, marked by the development of community voluntary organizations.

4) Technological

One of the most successful aspects of the experience in Xinhua is the establishment of its Community Design Center, which serves as a resource integration platform connecting the government, entrepreneurs and residents. Through the social organization's exploration of various participation models, diverse opportunities are provided to residents, encouraging them to develop their own bottom-up initiatives. This supports the development of issue-based voluntary organizations and nurtures a sense of ownership among residents. Consequently, residents' awareness of maintaining the community environment is also strengthened.

Another important tool is the social media, including new media and traditional ones. Firstly, many online community groups emerged during the lockdown period of the pandemic. Participative micro-regenerations, which are centered around people and respect individual activeness, find these online groups to be a valuable "base" for community development after the pandemic. Secondly, the operation of specific regeneration projects also relies on online promotion, primarily through the WeChat official accounts and Xiaohongshu accounts of the Community Design Center

and Dayu Community Design Team. Finally, the publication of physical materials is also irreplaceable. For example, Xinhua has community publications compiled by residents themselves. Books and other publications are also important for the construction of theoretical systems and the summarization of experiences for transferability research.

Favorable conditions of Case 1-1: Community voluntary organization (representative)			
Condition categories		Description	Generalized conditions
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Support from the neighborhood committee	/
	<i>Social</i>	Support from local social organization in project management	/
		Development of local community voluntary organization in long-term operation of the project	Cultivation and development of community voluntary organizations
	<i>Technological</i>	Establishment of Xinhua Community Construction Center	A resource integration center connecting the government, enterprises and the community
Application of new media, such as online groups, WeChat Official Accounts and other media platforms		/	
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Social</i>	Collaboration with universities in micro-regeneration design	/
		A resource sharing network among similar projects	/
		Referrable examples of sustainable operational model for community voluntary organizations	/
	<i>Economic</i>	More participation of social capitals	/

Table 4.1.4-1 Favorable conditions of Case 1-1 from community voluntary organization (own work)

Favorable conditions of Case 1-1: Social organization (one of the co-founders)			
Condition categories		Description	Generalized conditions
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Establishment of Shanghai Urban public Space Design Promotion Center (2015)	/
		1st SUSAS (Shanghai urban space art season) in 2015 started to explore the value of urban corner space	/
		1st Urban Design Festival initiated by AssBook in 2017 started to explore community micro-regeneration	Design activities and competitions related to micro-regeneration
		Support from Changning District	Support from District and

		Urban Regeneration Office, Changning District Commerce Commission and Xinhua Sub-district Office	Sub-district government, including manpower, funds and channels
		Establishment of Changning District Youth Community Planner Training Program	A youth community planner training system
		Government's practice of "City for People" concept	/
		Government's practice of "15-minutes community life circle"	/
	<i>Economic</i>	The development of Kamisei Shinko by Vanke in 2018 (which enhanced the cultural and commercial vitality of the area)	High area attractiveness to investments
		Many enterprises have fiscal expenditure targets for investing in community development or public welfare activities (not compulsory)	/
	<i>Social</i>	A relatively high proportion of young and middle-aged group	A popularity with higher education background
		Need for spiritual connection among people after the pandemic	/
		Brand effect of successful project in attracting social capitals	/
		Participation of local residents with professional knowledges and the development of voluntary groups	Cultivation and development of community voluntary organizations
	<i>Technological</i>	Establishment of Xinhua Community Design Center	A resource integration center connecting the government, enterprises and the community
		Application of new media, such as online groups, WeChat Official Accounts and other media platforms	/
		Development of traditional media, including community magazine, academic publications and toolkits	Formation of theoretical system for participative micro-regeneration
	Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Support for the development of local social organizations keen on micro-regeneration
Systematic experience sharing of successful cases			/

		A balance between intervention and autonomy of the government, giving proper room for residents' subjectivity and creativity	/
	<i>Economic</i>	More participation of social capitals	/

Table 4.1.4-2 Favorable conditions of Case 1-1 from social organization (own work)

4.1.5 Conclusion Area 1

Community-involved micro-regeneration in Xinhua Sub-district are currently the most vibrant sample in Shanghai. This success owes much to the pioneering efforts and model optimization of the social organization rooted in this area, as well as the strong support from the government. It also depends on the people willing to participate in these projects, even proposing their own micro-regeneration proposals. The various community voluntary organizations are the result of trust built between the community design team and the public. The Community Design Center provides support to these voluntary groups while the government supports the Community design center. Such positive interactions have allowed the influence of Xinhua Sub-district to radiate to other areas of Shanghai, creating a brand effect and attracting more enterprise investments.

AREA 2

**Less affluent area
Government-led**

*Liangchengxincun Sub-district,
Hongkou District*



4.2 Area 2 (Liangchengxincun Sub-district, Hongkou District): Case 2-1, 2-2, 2-3

4.2.1 Specific background

Hongkou District, located in Shanghai, is an old urban area characterized by multiculturalism, representing the convergence of the old and the new. Along the Huangpu River, modern skyscrapers stand tall, coexisting with the traditional charm of the old town. In terms of development goals for the region, the government aims to revitalize old buildings and streets, integrating culture with the daily lives of residents. Meanwhile, influenced by city-level policies, the digital transformation has been advancing since 2021, with a three-year action plan focusing on economic digitization, lifestyle digitization and governance digitization. In this broader context, Liangchengxincun Sub-district has formulated its own “15-minute Community Life Circle” action plan (2023-2025) based on the actual situation, which includes 75% of infrastructure improvement projects and 25% of spatial quality improvement projects.

The cases studied in Liangchenxincun Sub-district include one habitat garden in Liangwu Community, one wisteria gallery in Wen’er Community and an online platform of Xiuyuan Community, covering different resource situations. Case 2-1 & 2-2 were implemented in 2023, as part of “15-minute Community Life Circle” action plan of Liangchengxincun Sub-district(2023-2025) while case 2-3 was explored by the neighborhood committee and the community since late 2023.

Case 2-1 is the first attempt by Liangchengxincun Sub-district to establish a community-shared Habitat Garden. On one hand, it transforms community public green spaces to create micro ecological environments; on the other hand, it provides residents with more opportunities to participate in community activities and governance by offering such spaces.

Project overview of Case 2-1: Habitat Garden of Liangwu Community

Source: Community planner



Time	2023.02-2023.11
Location	Liangchenxincun Sub-district, Hongkou District
	Liangchengxincun Sub-district has formulated its own “15-minute Community Life Circle” action plan (2023-2025) based on the actual situation, which includes 75% of infrastructure projects and 25% of spatial quality improvement projects.
Main stakeholders	Liangchengxincun Sub-district government, the community planner, Neighborhood Committee
Investment	Hongkou District government

Characteristics	This project in Liangwu Community is the first attempt by Liangcheng Sub-district to establish a community-shared Habitat Garden. On one hand, it transforms community public green space to create micro ecological environment; on the other hand, it provides residents with more opportunities to participate in community activities and governance by offering such spaces.
Interviewee	Designer (Community planner)

Table 4.2.1-1 Case 2-1 project overview (own work)

In case 2-2, Wen'er Community has an aging population, with individuals aged ≥ 60 accounting for approximately 43% according to the secretary of the neighborhood committee. At the same time, the property rights structure is complex, being a mixed civilian and military use area. The regeneration is part of a welfare project, coordinated by the Neighborhood Committee without involvement of professional designers. The project involved transforming the original community garden, which was affected by typhoons (resulting in fallen trees), into a Wisteria Corridor, with added fitness and rest gathering spaces. Various activities were conducted, such as flower planting activities using abandoned flower pots in the corridors, and regular health lectures and clinic treatments, which meet the needs of the community residents.

Project overview of Case 2-2: Wisteria gallery of Wen'er Community

Source: Author



Time	2023.06-2023.10
Location	Liangchenxincun Sub-district, Hongkou District
Main stakeholders	Liangchengxincun Sub-district government, Neighborhood Committee, community voluntary groups, residents
Investment	Liangchengxincun Sub-district government
Characteristics	Wen'er Community has an aging population, with individuals aged ≥ 60 accounting for approximately 43%. At the same time, the property rights structure is complex, being a mixed civilian and military use area. The regeneration is part of a welfare project, coordinated autonomously by the Neighborhood Committee without involvement of professional designers.
Interviewee	Neighborhood Committee (Secretary)

Table 4.2.1-2 Case 2-2 project overview (own work)

Case 2-3, an online community platform integrating diverse functions such as voluntary activities, second-hand market and community affairs, began its initial testing in October 2023 and officially launched in January 2024 after adjustments based on feedback. The inception of an online

platform specifically for Xiuyuan Community was a joint effort between the neighborhood committee and the property owners, rather than a mandatory directive from the sub-district office. It can be considered a purely bottom-up initiative. Online community co-governance platform like this is the first of its kind in Shanghai. With less than three months' operation, it has been seen as a remarkably effective tool. The project is still undergoing continuous optimization.



Project overview of Case 2-3: Online platform of Xiuyuan Community	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="width: 45%;">  </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: Author</p> <p>“日日清·家园美”常规志愿服务第11期5.13-5.19 活动日期 2024/05/13 - 2024/05/19 +1积分/分钟</p>  </div> </div>	
Time	2023.10-Current
Location	Liangchenxincun Sub-district, Hongkou District
Main stakeholders	Neighborhood Committee, Owners Committee
Investment	Owners Committee
Characteristics	The inception of this project was a joint effort between the neighborhood committee and the property owners, rather than a mandatory directive from the sub-district office. It can be considered a purely bottom-up initiative. Online community governance platform like this is the first of its kind in Shanghai.
Interviewee	Neighborhood Committee (Secretary)

Table 4.2.1-3 Case 2-3 project overview (own work)

4.2.2 Evaluation

1) Case 2-1

The Habitat Garden project in Liangwu Community is led by the sub-district government and implemented with support from the district government's “Hongxin Project” special plan and funding. Public participation is highly emphasized during the project. This is mainly reflected in the initial stages of identifying needs and solutions, where the local government collaborated with designers and resident representatives to conduct joint research and negotiate decisions. The design also took into account the aspects where residents can participate together.

“The main participants in the project process include representatives from the neighborhood committee, resident committee and property management. Additionally, residents who have a direct interest in the project implementation, such as those living near the construction site, were involved.”

As stated by the community planner of the case. At a broader level, the sub-district government conducts surveys and field visits to a large number of residents regarding overall development directions and needs. During the whole process, a government-led feedback mechanism is employed. The neighborhood committee also ensures equal treatment of all residents' opinions on the project. Any complaints must be addressed through coordination and resolution.

There were no significant conflicts during the project process. Guided by the principle of community co-construction, co-operation and mutual benefit from the initial collection of opinions to the later maintenance and management by volunteers, the habitat garden has provided urban residents with the opportunity to connect with nature right at their doorstep. It has also strengthened the bond between people and the community through continuous interaction and engagement. At the same time, the project itself is based on green and low-carbon principles. Except the garden, the addition of a sunroom was a requirement from the government, whose effectiveness was skeptical about by the designer.

2) Case 2-2

Liangchenxincun Sub-district is the area in Hongkou District with the most military units. With the cessation of compensated services by the military in 2017, a large number of military-owned properties were left vacant. Wen'er Community is a typical mixed-use community, with military ownership accounting for about 75% of the properties. However, military-related properties are not under government jurisdiction, posing significant challenges to the overall development of the community. In this context, the Wisteria Corridor is a government-led attempt at micro-regeneration and micro-governance. The sub-district fully considers the opinions of the residents' representative meetings and implements them through the joint office of the three committees (neighborhood committee, resident committee, and property management).

On the other hand, due to the serious aging population in the community, residents' participation heavily relies on the mobilization by the neighborhood committee. Fortunately, this bottom-up approach is in line with the government's direction. After a long period of effort, the neighborhood committee of Wen'er Community has become familiar and recognized by residents. Any opinions or ideas can be easily raised with the committee. Serving as a bridge between individuals and the government, the neighborhood committee provides spiritual and resource support to residents. As expressed by the secretary,

“We are glad that they (residents) think of coming to us first when they encounter problems, whether it's a trouble that needs to be solved or suggestions for the community. This is a recognition of our work.”

With limited budget and no involvement of designers, this project has achieved a relatively modest success. The renovation of the Wisteria Corridor not only upgraded the infrastructure damaged by typhoons but also increased the community's public space. Taking this regeneration project as an opportunity, the neighborhood committee has organized several resident-participated activities with different themes in the corridor, such as potted plant adoption and defense education.

Additionally, the Wisteria Council collaborates with corporates to regularly host various health lectures, free clinics, and volunteer services to address the health needs of the elderly.

3) Case2-3

"Xiuyuan show Happiness" mini-program is different from any traditional physical space improvement micro-regeneration project. It is a customized online community platform built through the joint efforts of the neighborhood committee and technically proficient residents, making it a digital project. Although it is in response to the concept of "City for people" and the community is exploring the digital governance transformation and seeking to build a co-governance community, there are no other precedents to refer to. According to the secretary,

“Initially, we approached this with a trial mindset, hoping that residents who contribute more to the community could receive some corresponding rewards. We wanted to create a point system and recruited tech-savvy individuals from the community to help us achieve this digital transformation. Fortunately, one of the residents had a professional background in this area, so step by step, we developed and optimized the current mini-program that is customized for Xiuyuan community.”

This project did not receive substantial support from the sub-district government and can be considered as a result developed purely from bottom-up initiatives.

Due to the uniqueness and experimental nature of the project, only relevant professionals were involved in the initial design stage, while residents provided valuable feedback on the mini-program's experience during the trial run phase. After a round of optimization, the project has officially launched version 1.0 and is gradually improving the feedback mechanism while enriching and expanding the functionality of the online platform. The creation of the mini-program has saved the neighborhood committee a lot of communication costs and provided residents with a more convenient entry point for participating in community affairs. Although not directly related to micro-regeneration, this project provides an efficient digital co-governance tool for future community development.

4.2.3 Challenges

Summarizing the challenges observed from a macro perspective in these cases, firstly, when there is a limitation in project funding, it prevents seeking third-party designers and relies largely on the neighborhood committee to organize the construction work. The secretary of the neighborhood committee in case 2-2 indicated a limitation on government budget for community micro-regeneration projects. Meanwhile, government investment belongs to public welfare projects mainly aimed at improving infrastructure, making it difficult to attract corporate investment and lacking in vitality. Moreover, in areas with complex property rights, there is a lack of communication and coordination among decision-makers, resulting in an imbalanced development state in such areas, as shown in case 2-2. Specifically, the development of digital projects faces requirements for technological and regulatory improvements. Also, the secretary of the neighborhood committee

in case 2-3 expressed a wish of sub-district government's support in the long-term operating cost of the platform.

At the micro-level, as brought up by the community planner of Liangchengxincun Sub-district,

“While community planners have an overarching plan for the micro-regeneration projects network, their understanding of each community is limited.”

A lack of designers who can serve specific communities in the long term is a condition that can be improved for a more people-centered future.

In general, case 2-1 and 2-2 essentially apply a top-down approach with emphasis of bottom-up involvement. The degree of freedom and comprehensiveness of public participation remains limited.

4.2.4 Favorable conditions

Existing favorable conditions

1) Political

Apart from government's practice of “City for people” and “15-minute community life circle”, there are several specific conditions in area 2. First, a tripartite committee joint system (neighborhood committee, resident committee, property management) is adopted in community development, where public issues are proposed by the Residents' Representative Meeting, confirmed by the Residential Party Branch, and then executed by the Joint Office of the Tripartite Committee. This set of working mechanisms is relatively mature and institutionally guaranteed.

The community planner training system could also be considered as another favorable condition, as well as the training system for grassroots government staff regarding micro-regeneration and management. The specific development affairs of the community are mainly managed by the Neighborhood Committee. Therefore, the understanding and implementation of participative community micro-regeneration by the staff become particularly crucial. A detailed action plan of the sub-district and relevant lectures provide a better working framework. Additionally, each community has a certain number of local enterprises as co-building partners, which also provides diverse resources for community's co-governance.

2) Economic

Economically, government's allocation of investments provide support for micro-regeneration projects. For aging communities, infrastructure improvement remains the primary need, while for relatively developed communities, investments in community design are considered which can better enhance community cohesion and guide more extensive participative maintenance and governance. The government also has special fund programs such as ‘Hongxin Projects’ for community micro-regeneration projects.

3) Technological

The online community mini-program developed innovatively by Xiuyuan Community integrates various functions such as community affairs, voluntary activities and information exchange, making it a potential tool for promoting digital co-governance in communities. This tool transcends the scope of participative community micro-regenerations and can integrate resources and mobilize residents' enthusiasm in broader fields.

Favorable conditions of Case 2-1: Designer (community planner)			
Condition categories		Description	Generalized conditions
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Government's practice of "City for People" concept	/
		Government's practice of "15-minutes community life circle"	/
		Joint conference arrangement (among the government, tripartite committee and resident representatives)	/
		Support from the neighborhood committee in execution	/
		Application of community planner system	/
		Experience sharing of successful cases of similar type	/
	<i>Economic</i>	District government's fund for "Hongxin Projects"	Special fund support from the government
	<i>Social</i>	Need for spiritual connection among people after the pandemic	/
<i>Technological</i>	Dynamic feedback mechanism for project lifecycle	/	
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	More designers that can involve in community's long-term development	
		Training and assessment system for community planners	/
	<i>Social</i>	Collaboration with universities in micro-regeneration design, as well as cultivating future community designers	/
		Improvement of living conditions and educational levels	/
	<i>Economic</i>	More participation of social capitals	/

Table 4.2.4-1 Favorable conditions of Case 2-1 from designer (own work)

Favorable conditions of Case 2-2: Neighborhood committee (secretary)			
Condition categories		Description	Generalized conditions
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Government's practice of "City for People" concept	/
		Government's practice of "15-minutes community life circle"	/
		Application of tripartite committee joint system (neighborhood committee, resident committee, property management) in community development	/
		Training program of micro-regeneration for local governments	/
		Each community has a certain number of local enterprises as co-building partners	/
		General autonomy of Neighborhood Committee	/
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Communication mechanism between general government and the military (different land owners)	Communication mechanism in areas with complex property rights
	<i>Economic</i>	Increased government budget expenditure allocated to micro-regeneration	/

Table 4.2.4-2 Favorable conditions of Case 2-2 from neighborhood committee (own work)

Favorable conditions of Case 2-3: Neighborhood committee (secretary)			
Condition categories		Description	Generalized conditions
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Government's practice of "City for People" concept	/
		Training program of micro-regeneration for local governments	/
		Each community has a certain number of local enterprises as co-building partners	/
		General autonomy of Neighborhood Committee	/
	<i>Social</i>	Support from Owners Committee	Support of specific professionals from the residents
	<i>Technological</i>	An integrated online community mini-program	Application of community online platform as a tool for digital co-governance

Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Technological</i>	Promotion of community online program in proper communities	/
		Create specifications and regulations for the development and use of online programs	/
		Government's support in the operation cost of the online program	Government's support in the operation cost of community online platform

Table 4.2.4-3 Favorable conditions of Case 2-3 from neighborhood committee (own work)

4.2.5 Conclusion Area 2

The three cases in Hongkou District mainly tap into the government's perspective and represent relatively responsible neighborhood committees. However, in projects primarily coordinated by the government, social participation can easily become rigid without proper design. As stated by the deputy director of Liangchengxincun Sub-district,

“The residents were participated because the government needs it. They (the government) actually design their needs before collecting their opinions.”

During the implementation process, there were some participative activities such as co-planting and wall painting. It is hard to determine whether these initiatives are formalistic or not, since they are satisfying to both groups. It might have something to do with the prejudice of the government. When the same events are planned by the third sector such as social organizations, this doubt may not be raised. Meanwhile, although the community planner system provides guidance for the overall planning of micro-regeneration projects, there is still a lack of planners who truly understand and can provide long-term service to the community.

AREA

3

**University area
Developer-involved**

*Wujiaochang Sub-district,
Yangpu District*



4.3 Area 3 (Wujiaochang Sub-district, Yangpu District): Case 3-1, 3-2

4.3.1 Specific background

Yangpu District is an old industrial area in Shanghai, in which, due to industrial transformation, a large number of factories have been abandoned. Fortunately, Yangpu District is rich in scientific and educational resources. Therefore, the government has proposed the development concept of "integrating three zones: university campus, science and technology park, and public community." It aims to take a path of development that transforms "Industrial Yangpu" into "Innovative Yangpu" through technological innovation, and transforms the "Industrial Rust Belt" into the "Vibrant Living Belt" through urban regeneration.

Among them, the area of University Town and Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) connects the university campus, knowledge community, and corporate headquarters, marking Yangpu's first successful exploration of the "integration of three zones." The two cases studied in Yangpu District, including one community bookstore and one public garden, are both located in this area. Similarly, due to its advantage in educational resources, Yangpu District pioneered in the establishment of the community planner system in Shanghai in 2018, exploring the collaborative mechanism of "community planners + community micro-governance".

Wujiaochang Sub-district is an area with relatively strong business vitality. Here, the Community Representatives Assembly includes representatives from the "Five Districts" of Wujiaochang Community: Campus Area, Science and Technology Park, Military Area and Business District. The two cases studied in this research have different backgrounds. Case 3-2 is a precedent and outstanding example of community garden in Shanghai, which was completed in 2016. Case 3-1 is an exploration of the government's accelerated implementation of the "15-minute life circle" layout after the pandemic, which is a community living room combining a coffee shop, a bookstore and a seniors' home.

Case 3-1 is one kind of community café as a collaboration between the government and a social organization. It is transformed from the ground floor of a seniors' house, adjacent to the community canteen and the Party and Mass Service Center. The bookstore offers services such as reading, coffee and exhibitions, aiming to provide nearby residents with a relaxed place for socializing while promoting artistic appreciation and hosting public welfare activities.

Project overview of Case 3-1: People's Bookstore

Source: Author



Time	2022
Location	Wujiaochang Sub-district, Yangpu District
	In 2018, Yangpu District pioneered the establishment of the community planner system in Shanghai, exploring the collaborative mechanism of “community planners + community micro-governance”. Wujiaochang Sub-district has abundant university resources, while the surrounding area of Knowledge And Innovation Community(KIC) also has certain commercial and business resources.
Main stakeholders	Wujiaochang sub-district government, Neighborhood Committee, social organization (Xinshu Culture)
Investment	The government
Characteristics	This project is one kind of community café as a regeneration type of the sub-district government. It is transformed from the ground floor of a seniors' house, adjacent to the community canteen and the Party and Mass Service Center. It offers services such as reading, coffee and exhibitions, aiming to provide nearby residents with a relaxed place for socializing while promoting artistic appreciation and hosting public welfare activities.
Interviewee	Social organization (Operational manager)

Table 4.3.1-1 Case 3-1 project overview (own work)

KIC Garden (Case 3-2) is the first community garden in downtown Shanghai located within an open street block, transformed through the collaboration of the design and operational teams with the support and commissioning from the developers. This project not only features participatory design and implementation but also adopts sustainable participatory operation. It created an open green space featuring pathways, vegetable gardens and landscaping, as well as tree bark softwood pits and sand pits for parent-child activities. Through container transformation, it has developed indoor communication spaces and hosts a variety of activities such as nature education classes, professional salons, fun lectures, and handicraft workshops, attracting participation from teachers, students, scholars, artists and residents, etc. Various groups have been formed in the long-term operation, including children's groups, mother's groups, book clubs, and gardening clubs. These groups organize diverse activities such as summer camps, planting and harvesting events periodically, continuously fostering connections between people and nature, as well as interactions among individuals.

Project overview of Case 3-2: KIC Garden

Source: Author



Time	2016
Location	Wujiaochang Sub-district, Yangpu District
Main stakeholders	Yangpu district government, social organization (CloverNature School), developer, community voluntary organization (Co-building Association)
Investment	Developers
Characteristics	KIC Garden is the first community garden in downtown Shanghai located within an open street block, transformed through the collaboration of the design and operational teams with the support and commissioning from the developers. This project not only features participatory design and construction but also adopts sustainable participatory operation. The garden is designed with the objectives of serving as a nature school and a community activity base.
Interviewee	Community voluntary organization (leader)

Table 4.3.1-2 Case 3-2 project overview (own work)

4.3.2 Evaluation

1) Case 3-1

The areas surrounding the bookstore mostly consist of old residential neighborhoods, where housing spaces are limited while dining and living rooms are often combined. Therefore, a space for socializing and communication is highly needed. Besides the elderly, there are also many young professionals or workers from the KIC park living in these neighborhoods who are seeking a sense of belonging in the community. So Wujiaochang Sub-district government planned spaces for the public that integrated the canteen, market, medical point, lounge, bookstore and lecture hall together. This bookstore is adjacent to the community canteen and community lounge. The initial public participation situation was unknown due to limitations in the perspective of the interviewee. But during the operation process, more and more residents have become involved and actively applied to become volunteers. As stated by the operational manager of the bookstore,

“Community bookstore café carries some of the functions of the old Shanghai alleys. It provides a more intimate space for nearby residents to interact. As people get to know and use this space, they build emotional connections and become willing to participate in its maintenance and development.”

The spaces and activities are open to everyone. Also, because the Community Party Service Center is right nearby, participants can readily voice their opinions or suggestions at any time. The project, based on the principle of "not extensively demolishing and rebuilding", transferred its service focus from catering solely to the elderly to serving the entire community. Simultaneously, it brought cultural and artistic resources to the public, fostering interaction among community residents. Fundamentally, it is a practice of top-down approach, with concerns of bottom-up participation.

2) Case 3-2

The KIC Garden covers an area of 2200 square meters, making it a quite large community garden and a rare public service-oriented regeneration project in real estate investment. It has

incorporated diverse forms of public participation in its construction process. At the individual level, there are murals, small green spaces built with personal contributions and adopted plants distributed throughout the area. At the school level, being adjacent to two universities, students contribute as volunteers during summer vacations, offering ideas and strategies for the garden. At the corporate level, within the KIC Garden Exhibition, there are mini-gardens showcasing the characteristics of different enterprises. At the government level, relevant departments have provided policy and material support during the garden's construction process.

In terms of operation, the previous model of operation managed by third-party professional organizations attracted a larger popular base after years' exploratory practices. However, differences in value pursuit led the garden to a new model where maintenance and operation is carried out by a volunteer organization consists of nearby residents in the end of 2022. According to the leader of the Co-building Association,

“The management of open spaces is quite complex, primarily due to covering the costs. Third-party operators inevitably have commercial considerations. Self-governance group like us (nearby residents) can better serve the community.”

This transition has achieved sustainable participatory operation and built a sense of community.

By changing the community's way of life to connect people with each other, emotional attachment is fostered among community members and intrinsic motivation for participation is instilled, which is the key to the sustainable vitality of a community garden. From participatory design to participatory construction and participatory operation, a self-governance mechanism was established. As a result, the connections between people continue to deepen, gradually becoming an integral part of public daily life.

4.3.3 Challenges

Since the interviewees from both cases are currently in charge of the operational process, a significant challenge mentioned by both is economic sustainability.

“The current low-cost operation model basically generates no profit, which puts financial pressure on the company in terms of long-term development.”

——Interviewee of case 3-1

“Currently, the operation of KIC Garden almost generates no profit. The members of Co-building Association are primarily volunteers, who are also users of the garden. We're exploring more sustainable economic models. The dilemma is that the profit model may affect the enthusiasm for public participation and may deviate from the original intention of providing public services.”

——Interviewee of case 3-2

The bookstore relies mainly on government investment, while KIC Garden initially relied on investments from developers. During the operational phase, the garden mainly depends on CloverNature School (the social organization made the design) and self-made income. At present, both cases can barely achieve a balance between income and expenses. But whether to consider increasing revenue for long-term development is a common decision-making problem.

On the other hand, as stated by the operational manager in case 3-1,

“For projects with limited initial public participation, it often takes a long time to make the public aware of, understand, participate in and approve of them. The channels and effectiveness of publicity are relatively limited.”

4.3.4 Favorable conditions

Existing favorable conditions

1) Political

Firstly, the government's value orientation towards participative micro-regeneration in urban development has greatly influenced the initiation and design of the projects. This includes action plans by various levels of government guided by the proposal of the "15-minute community life circle". Also, social participation is hugely emphasized in these projects. At the same time, there needs ample support and educational promotion provided for pioneering good examples of participative regeneration.

Specifically for the implementation, there are some mature models. Represented by case 3-2, participatory design of urban public spaces has evolved into a diverse co-governance model based on the residents. These projects are usually initiated by professional social organizations and supported by government policies, with micro spaces as the entry point. In the long-term operation, voluntary organization is encouraged to co-manage the projects with self-governance.

Also, certain types of micro-regeneration projects are initiated due to government's promotion of community public space construction, such as community café and community living room, which is developed as a replicable model.

2) Economic

Multiple investment resources could be positive for the incubation of micro-regeneration projects. In general, public regeneration projects rely on investment by the government or enterprises, with larger areas and more complex functions; residential self-governing community projects rely on investment by the sub-district or self-raised funds by the community, with higher participation and autonomy. Additionally, abundance of market resources of the surrounding area has catalyzed a lot of innovation cooperations centering the regenerated space, such as bookstores, flower shops and craft shops which bring the possibility of co-hosting events.

3) Social

First, cultivation and development of local social organizations keen on community regeneration and voluntary organizations with capability building at community level impressively reshape the growth of participative micro-regeneration. These tries cannot succeed without the open and democratic social environment of Shanghai, as well as the need for spiritual connection after the lockdown periods in the pandemic.

Favorable conditions of Case 3-1: Social organization (operational manager)			
Condition categories		Description	Generalized conditions
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Government's practice of "City for People" concept	/
		Government's practice of "15-minutes community life circle"	/
		Government's promotion of community public space design, such as community café and community living room	Government's promotion of community public space design as a replicable model
	<i>Economic</i>	Many enterprises have fiscal expenditure targets for investing in community development or public welfare activities (not compulsory)	/
	<i>Social</i>	Need for spiritual connection among people after the pandemic	/
		An open and democratic social environment (Shanghai)	/
	<i>Technological</i>	Application of new media, such as online groups, WeChat Official Accounts and other media platforms	/
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Support for the development of local social organizations keen on micro-regeneration	/
	<i>Economic</i>	More participation of social capitals	/

Table 4.4.4-1 Favorable conditions of Case 3-1 from social organization (own work)

Favorable conditions of Case 3-2: Community voluntary organization (leader)			
Condition categories		Description	Generalized conditions
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Economic</i>	Support from developers in the initiative	Developers' investment in micro-regeneration projects
		Abundance of market resources of surrounding area	/
	<i>Social</i>	Support from local social organization in project management	/
		Development of local community voluntary	Cultivation and

		organization in long-term operation of the project	development of voluntary organizations
	<i>Technological</i>	Application of new media, such as online groups, WeChat Official Accounts and other media platforms	/
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Social</i>	A resource sharing network among similar projects	/
		An offline platform for communication between universities, enterprises, government and residents to increase the diversity of participants	/
		Brand effect of successful projects in experience promotion and adaptation	/
	<i>Economic</i>	More participation of social capitals	/

Table 4.4.4-2 Favorable conditions of Case 3-2 from community voluntary organization (own work)

4.3.5 Conclusion Area 3

The two cases in Yangpu District have different investment entities. The success of KIC Garden relies on the initial project positioning by the developer. Additionally, its large scale, openness, and advantageous location make science, education and commercial resources quite accessible. Subsequent management, with operational support from local voluntary organization has made the project's development sustainable and participatory. As an early exploration of participative urban micro-regeneration, it has become a reference template for other community gardens in Shanghai. On the other hand, the community bookstore is a byproduct of the government's promotion of the 15-minute community life circle. Such community shared spaces, like community cafes and lounges, have also formed a replicable model. The development of sustainable financial operating model still requires further exploration.

AREA

4

Historical district
Low economic
capacity

*Nanjingdonglu Sub-district,
Huangpu District*



4.4 Area 4 (Nanjingdonglu Sub-district, Huangpu District): Case 4-1

4.4.1 Specific background

The renovation of old neighborhoods is a significant urban development issue in Huangpu District. Distinguished from previous large-scale relocations that consumed considerable manpower and financial resources, the district government has gradually realized that the intervention of micro-renovation may be a more sustainable and organic approach to urban regeneration.

This case is a micro-regeneration attempt in a historical neighborhood conducted with the support of sub-district offices. Guizhouxi community has a history of over a hundred years, with severe material aging. Alongside the urban social transformation, the internal structural relationships within the community have become increasingly complex. Living spaces have become fragmented and dispersed, leading to numerous challenges in daily maintenance and renovation. Additionally, due to a large elderly population, low economic capacity and declining community consensus, there is a lack of high willingness for collective cooperation.

The project design involves 12 community micro-regeneration points, utilizing existing resources to implant relatively reasonable facilities and infrastructures within limited conditions. It creates a 1800-square-meter community shared living room to guide active participation from residents, enhance opportunities for communication and interaction among residents. It also creates a more favorable environment for the next stage of broader regeneration efforts.

As a case in 2017, this project was one of the earliest practices of micro-regeneration in Shanghai and at that time spurred subsequent transformations of old neighborhoods in the surrounding areas. The project was rewarded Special Recognition for Sustainable Development of 2022 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. However, after the pandemic, this area underwent relocation under government decisions. The site is unreachable as of the end of the site research (March, 2024).

Project overview of Case 4-1: Guizhouxi Community Public Living Room

Source: <https://www.archdaily.cn/cn/913861/jiu-li-xin-ting-zi-yun-zhai-jian-zhu>



Time	2016-2017
Location	Nanjingonglu Sub-district, Huangpu District
	The renovation of old neighborhoods is a significant urban development issue in Huangpu District. Distinguished from previous large-scale relocations that consumed considerable manpower and financial resources, the district

	government has chosen minor intervention which may be a more sustainable and organic approach to urban regeneration.
Main stakeholders	Nanjingdonglu sub-district government, the neighborhood committee, designer
Investment	The government
Characteristics	This project is a micro-regeneration attempt in a historical neighborhood conducted with the support of sub-district office. Guizhouxi community has a history of over a hundred years, with severe material aging. The internal structural relationships within the community were complex. Additionally, the severe aging of residents, relatively low economic capacity and declining community consensus led to a lack of willingness for collective cooperation.
Interviewee	Designer (One of the chief architects)

Table 4.4.1-1 Case 4-1 project overview (own work)

4.4.2 Evaluation

As a century-old neighborhood, the regeneration project faces significant resistance. According to feedback from revisits in 2019 (Zhao et al., 2018),

“Only 32% of respondents expressed support for this project, while the remaining 68% did not support it. 74% of residents played only the role of spectators in the micro-regeneration, as the neighborhood committee and designers did not consult them for their opinions on the renovation, or their suggestions were not taken into consideration.”

The main reasons for this lack of support were inadequate communication from all parties involved and a perception that their actual needs were not being taken into account. Additionally, many residents did not know how to voice their demands.

Overall, participation in the middle and later stages is a process of negotiation and solving conflicts, while it in the early stages is a formalistic and one-sided mobilization process according to the investigation of Zhao et al., 2018. The effectiveness of participation sharply increases in the middle and later stages of the renovation, primarily because participation at this stage is very specific, with tangible and perceptible outcomes. However, this adds to the project's execution risks.

Through the collaborative efforts of designers and the neighborhood committee, this project underwent extensive communication and negotiation with the residents. In addition to improving the physical environment, it also achieved participatory management of certain spaces. For example, the community activity room was transformed into a shared kitchen and living room. The neighborhood committee formulated a system for renting the shared space and volunteering services, making "eating together" and "socializing" the bond connecting residents' daily lives.

4.4.3 Challenges

The most significant challenge in this project is the effectiveness of resident participation. The micro-regeneration process is organized and led by the government and the neighborhood committee, with designers leading the design and construction. During the design process, public hearings were held to incorporate residents' representative opinions. After confirming the plans, constructions were carried out. While residents' opinions have some influence on the project, their involvement remains limited. The fact is that most residents are not unwilling to participate but rather skeptical about the effectiveness of participation, hence unwilling to invest too much time in something with uncertain outcomes.

Additionally, differing objectives is another significant cause of disagreement. Residents' needs focus on internal housing improvement, while designers, after considering budget and feasibility, choose to improve community environments through public space enhancements. Given these differing objectives, the significant human and time costs required for full communication between designers and residents, coupled with limitations in construction time and budget, make achieving meaningful public participation challenging.

Furthermore, at the macro level, micro-regeneration is still not the government's first choice for revitalizing historic neighborhoods. Especially after the pandemic, the government faces significant financial pressure and urgently needs to tap more economic value from limited land resources. While micro-regeneration may improve the community's environment, it does not generate tangible income for the government. This may also be one of the reasons why the Guizhouxi Community was ultimately subjected to complete relocation.

Finally, for designers, micro-regeneration represents a project type where the effort expended often outweighs the income received. According to the chief architect of case 4-1,

“Micro-regeneration projects are closely linked to the urban environment and the daily lives of residents compared to typical construction projects. It requires designers to invest more time and thought, yet this extra workload is always not reflected in design fees.”

This is mainly because government regulations do not acknowledge that the value of design should not necessarily be linked to project costs. As a designer, the interviewee expressed a wish for a budget regulation with higher proportion of design fees in micro-regeneration projects. However, reformation like this would be a daunting task.

4.4.4 Favorable conditions

Existing favorable conditions

1) Political

It is important that the government can recognize the positive changes that micro-regeneration could bring to the urban environment and social relationships, since most micro-regeneration projects rely on government's initiation. At the implementation level, the contributions and support from the sub-district and neighborhood committee are also indispensable.

2) Economic

On the general level, the allocation of budgets to micro-regeneration projects is crucial to its implementation. Although micro-regeneration projects usually have limited budget and cannot generate substantial commercial value, successful projects can still make significant contributions to enhancing social vitality and increasing community cohesion. This made it a proper choice in this historical district compared to relocation.

3) Social

An important successful part of this case is the establishment of sharing and participation system in the long-term operation of the small project, such as mechanism of the sharing living room. Though implemented with setbacks and challenges, the project turned out to be a good example in the design perspective and activated regeneration in larger areas.

Favorable conditions of Case 4-1: Designer (one of the chief architects)			
Condition categories		Description	Generalized conditions
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	Shanghai calls for “fine management” for urban development (2017)	/
		Government's recognition of the value of micro-regeneration in developing historical districts	/
		Support of the neighborhood committee in mediating conflicts	/
	<i>Economic</i>	Government's investment choice in micro-regeneration projects (compared to relocation)	Government's recognition of the value of micro-regeneration
	<i>Social</i>	Establishment of sharing and participation system in long-term operation of the project	/
		Brand effect of successful projects in regeneration activation in larger areas	/
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	A budget regulation with higher proportion of design fees	/
		A better designed mechanism for public participation (necessity and effectiveness)	/
	<i>Social</i>	Collaboration with universities in micro-regeneration design, as well as cultivating future community designers	/
		Improved theoretical framework for micro-regeneration, with participation as an accompanying by-product	/
	<i>Technological</i>	Visualizing and interactive expressions of the design proposal	/

Table 4.4.4-1 Favorable conditions of Case 4-1 from designer (own work)

4.4.5 Conclusion Area 4

This government-led regeneration case studied focuses on the perspective of designers, with the government playing a supporting role and residents being significantly diverse interest bodies. Designers proposed innovative ideas for micro-regeneration, which were not quickly accepted by the residents. Designers persuaded the local government first to approve the design direction, followed by explanations and communication with local residents by the neighborhood committee. However, there were still setbacks and resistance during implementation. Despite the relatively successful outcome, the designers' efforts and the return on design fees were disproportionate due to the government's regulations on project budget. This project is still an early exploration of participative micro-regeneration, and the issues of historical neighborhoods depend on government's decision-making for development. The designer team subsequently explored micro-regeneration in other non-historical neighborhoods, which experience was integrated in the interview.

5. Cross-case analysis

5.1 Cases Overview

In this section a cross-case analysis will be done to address existing favorable conditions and suggested favorable conditions from different stakeholders' perspectives. First, the general and case-specific bottlenecks and challenges will be summarized per case. After that, similarities and differences will be researched between the insights of the same type of stakeholder. Finally, evaluation comparison regarding stakeholders, resources and participation will be done according to the interviewees. The data will be studied in different dimensions before reaching the conclusion of the research question.

As shown in Table 5.1-1, there are 7 cases studied, including one case in Xinhua Sub-district, Changning District, 3 cases in Liangchengxincun Sub-district, Hongkou District, 2 cases in Wujiaochang Sub-district, Yangpu District and one case in Nanjingdonglu Sub-district, Huangpu District. They have various resource conditions and different initiating process in different times, which led to diverse developments of the cases. For example, case 2-1 is a result of the promotion and adaptation of case 3-2, which is the first open community garden in Shanghai. Case 1-1 features the first community design center in Shanghai, with affluent social and governmental resource as well as a long exploration history by the local social organization. Case 4-1 is one of the earliest attempt in applying micro-regeneration in historical districts dominated by the government while case 2-3 is a 100% bottom-up initiative of developing a customized online platform for the community. In these cases, 6 out of 8 interviewees are from the current operating team of the project.

Area	District	Sub-district	Resource condition	Case	Time	Type	Initiator	Current operator	Interviewee	Role
Area 1	Changning	Xinhua	<i>Affluent, with developed cultural & commercial surroundings</i>	Case 1-1	2021	Community public space+ community construction center	Social organization	Social organization	Social organization	One of the co-founders
								Community voluntary organization	Community voluntary organization	Leaders
Area 2	Hongkou	Liang cheng xincun	<i>Less affluent, government-led</i>	Case 2-1	2023	Community Garden	Subdistrict government	Neighborhood committee	Designer	Community planner
				Case 2-2	2023	Community public space	Subdistrict government	Neighborhood committee	Neighborhood committee	Secretary
				Case 2-3	2023	Community online platform	Neighborhood committee	Neighborhood committee	Neighborhood committee	Secretary
Area 3	Yangpu	Wujiao chang	<i>University area, with Shanghai Knowledge & Innovation Community around</i>	Case 3-1	2022	Community café	Subdistrict government	Social organization	Social organization	Operational manager
				Case 3-2	2016	Community Garden	Developers	Social organization & Community voluntary organization	Community voluntary organization	Leader
Area 4	Huangpu	Nanjing donglu	<i>Historical district with less economic capacity</i>	Case 4-1	2017	Community public space	Subdistrict government	Neighborhood committee (before relocation)	Designer	One of the chief architects

Table 5.1-1 Summary of case studies' background (own work)

5.2 Common Challenges

General and case-specific challenges addressed by interviewees of each case are drawn in Table 5.3-1. The commonly mentioned challenges mainly revolve around economic sustainability and operational mechanisms. Economically, one challenge lies in the limitation of investment entities. Over-reliance on government or corporate investment poses certain risks of instability. Additionally, with the overall economic downturn post-pandemic, despite the strong promotion of participative micro-regeneration due to its inherent advantages from the government, the overall investment intensity remains limited, as mentioned in case 1-1. Things are similar with the corporates' side, as mentioned by the operational manager of case 3-1.

Another challenge is finding a balance between revenue and costs in long-term operations. The current popular social participatory management still relies on the proactive efforts of neighborhood committees or community voluntary organizations. Finding a balance between public welfare and revenue generation is a primary consideration for future development, as mentioned by multiple interviewees.

In terms of operational mechanisms, two points are prominently mentioned. Firstly, the manner and effectiveness of public participation. Usually, the challenge lies in cultivating public awareness and confidence in participating in community environmental regeneration. For example, in case 3-1, it took a long time to acquaint nearby residents with the existence of the community café, establish trust and engage them in volunteer services. Efforts to establish bonds between spaces and people are still ongoing. Similarly, case 4-1 faced skepticism from residents regarding the effectiveness of expressing opinions.

On the other hand, while participative micro-regeneration projects greatly rely on government support, excessive intervention may restrict the freedom of bottom-up initiatives according to concerns of the social organizations and the designers.

“Positive cooperation is mutual empowerment of the government and the community.”

As stated by the co-founder of Dayu Community Design Studio in case 1-1.

Case	General challenges	Case-specific challenges
Case 1-1	1. Decrease in government's and enterprises' financial condition after the pandemic 2. Potential excessive government involvement may restrict the freedom of bottom-up initiatives 3. How to find an economic sustainable operational model of the projects	1. The challenge to manage larger resource pool effectively from the perspective of the social organization 2. Transferability of the pioneer experience

Case 2-1	1.Potential excessive government involvement may restrict the freedom of bottom-up initiatives 2.Low attraction to corporate investment 3.Limited project funding from the government	1.Limited participation of community planner in specific communities
Case 2-2	1.Limited project funding from the government 2.Limited knowledge and motivation of participation of the residents	1.Lack of communication and coordination among decision-makers in areas with complex property rights
Case 2-3	1.Limited financial support from the government	1.Regulation and specification of the development of digital projects
Case 3-1	1.How to achieve long-term economic sustainability of the project	1.A profit model may deviate from the original intention of providing public services 2.It takes a long time to make the public be aware of, understand, participate in and approve of micro-regeneration projects with limited initial public participation
Case 3-2	1.How to achieve long-term economic sustainability of the project	1.Transferability of the pioneer experience
Case 4-1	1.Limited project time and budget 2.The effectiveness of public participation 3.The effectiveness of communication among different objectives	1.Financial pressure of the government in unlocking more value from limited land resources 2.The design fee is linked to project costs, which usually does not match the effort spent by the designers

Table 5.3-1 Challenges of the cases (own work)

5.3 Favorable conditions from different perspectives

During the field research process, the stakeholder structure was updated compared to the literature review. The neighborhood committee actually acts as a representative of the government with certain autonomy in the management of specific communities. Also, there is another stakeholder at the community level: community voluntary organizations. These organizations are initiated by residents themselves and have different objectives and operational goals, such as community gardens and sports spaces. The emergence of these groups is one of the outcomes of public participation in micro-regeneration projects. They have the closest relationship with the daily operation of these projects and have mutually supportive relationships with local social organizations. The 8 interviewees from this on-site survey include 4 major perspectives: neighborhood committees, designers, social organizations, and community voluntary organizations.

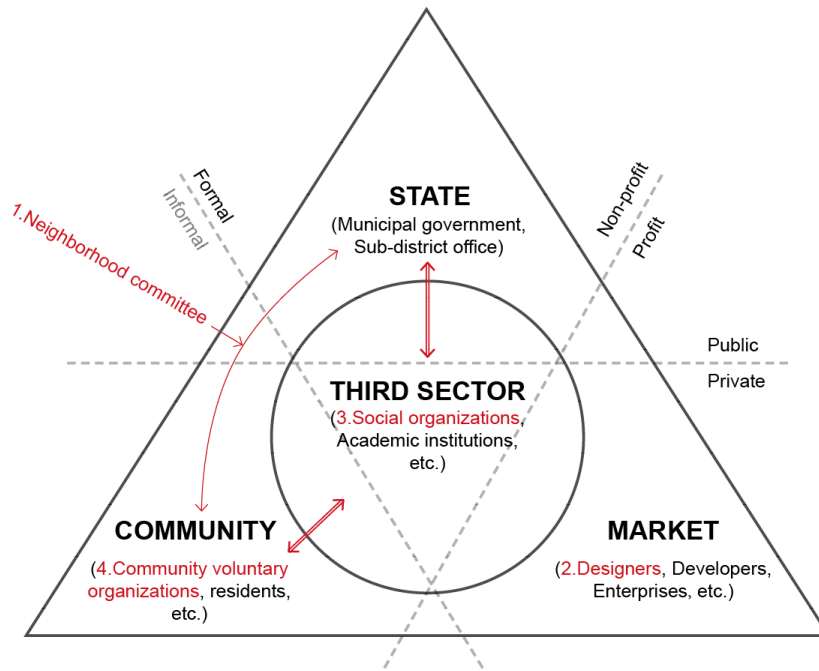


Figure 5.3-1 Stakeholder structure in the field research (own work)

1) Neighborhood committee

From the surveys conducted from the neighborhood committee of case 2-2 and case 2-3, several political conditions are addressed as common existing favorable premises. To begin with, there are some similarities in the background of these 2 project initiatives. First, they were both accomplished in 2023, after the lockdown time of the pandemic, when the society had a strong need and desire to rebuild human connection. Second, participative micro-regeneration projects have been promoted by the government in the pursuit of “City for People”. Specific action plans for “15-minutes community life circle” in different levels of the government have been much accounted of since 2023. In 2023, there were already several successful examples of micro-regeneration while the operation model was still explored during practices. In this context, area 2 conducted its own exploration in terms of community micro-regeneration.

In addition to this favoring social and political background, there are some specific advantages from the political side. For example, each community has a certain number of local enterprises as co-building partners, which could introduce different resources. On the other hand, a tripartite committee joint system (neighborhood committee, owners committee, property management) is applied in all the community development, ensuring public participation to some extent. Also, the general autonomy of the neighborhood committee simplifies the decision-making process and increases the effectiveness of information transmission, since they are the one who speak directly to the residents and serve directly for the community. What’s more, to improve the execution quality of the local government, there are training programs of community micro-regeneration and management including theory education and experience sharing. All of these facilitates the smooth development of the projects.

Due to different project types, there are several case-specific conditions. In case 2-3, the support of professionals in the residents is crucial to the initiative and execution of the project. And the community online program turned out to be an efficient tool for digital co-governance. Therefore suggestions from this case lie in technological perspective, including 1) Promotion of community online platform in proper communities; 2) Specifications and regulations for the development and use of community online platform; 3) Government’s support in the operational cost of community online platform.

As for case 2-2, it is suggested to improve communication and coordination mechanism in areas with complex property rights. It seems not directly related to micro-regeneration, but could be decisive for the overall development of the community. When the stakeholders are on the same page and in support of the minor interventions, the outcome may be more satisfying and balanced in the perspective of area development. It is also suggested to increase government budget expenditure allocated to community micro-regeneration. Currently there were no designers participated in this project, which is unique in the multiple cases and features a large extent of autonomy. However, it could be potentially better designed with professional help.

Interview of Neighborhood Committee [A: Case2-2; B: Case 2-3 (online case)]				
Condition category		Common conditions	Single-mentioned conditions	
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	1.Government's practice of “City for People” concept 2.Each community has a certain number of local enterprises as co-building partners 3.General autonomy of Neighborhood Committee 4.Training programs of community micro-regeneration and management for the local government	A	1.Government's practice of “15-minutes community life circle” 2.The tripartite committee joint system (neighborhood committee, resident committee, property management) in community development (General)
			B	/
	<i>Social</i>	/	A	/
			B	1.Support of specific professionals from the residents
	<i>Technological</i>	/	A	/
			B	1.Application of community online platform as a tool for digital co-governance
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	/	A	1.Communication and coordination mechanism in areas with complex property rights
			B	/

	<i>Economic</i>	/	A	1.Increased government budget expenditure allocated to micro-regenerations
			B	/
	<i>Technological</i>	/	A	/
			B	1.Promotion of community online platform in proper communities 2.Specifications and regulations for the development and use of community online platform 3.Government’s support in the operation cost of community online platform

Table 5.3-1 Favorable conditions from the neighborhood committees (own work)

2) Designer

In this comparative analysis, the designer in Case 2-1 is the community planner of the sub-district, while the designer in Case 4-1 is one of the lead architects of the project. Designers, serving as bridges in micro-regeneration projects, have a relatively macro perspective, mentioning both policy regulations and specific practical details. In terms of commonly agreed positive conditions, apart from the frequently mentioned concept of "city for people" and proposal of "15-minute community life circle", there are also strong support from the neighborhood committee, the application of community planner systems, promotion and sharing of successful cases and experiences, etc. as shown in Table 5.3-2.

Some conditions that were mentioned by single interviewee are applicable to general situations, such as government special fund support and the public's increased demand for establishing spiritual connections between people after the pandemic. There are also some conditions reflected in the project management mechanisms. For example, the dynamic feedback mechanism for the project lifecycle mentioned by the community planner in Case 2-1 plays a supportive role in the long-term sustainable management of the project. Additionally, there is the establishment of a sharing and participation system in the long-term operation of Case 4-1, as well as the branding effect of successful case, which activated regeneration in larger areas.

In terms of recommendations, the community planner focused more on the community planning system, while the architect focused more on the regulation of design fees. The former mentioned that

“The existing community planner service radius is too large, making it difficult to make customized designs and provide continuous services. It would be better if more designers could be involved in the community’s long-term development.”

At the same time, establishing a comprehensive training and assessment system for community planners could also be beneficial for the development of such groups.

The latter suggested increasing the proportion of design fees in government project expenses. Designers need to exert more effort than general projects in conducting research and building trust with residents in micro-regeneration projects. If there is corresponding compensation for this work, it could be beneficial in achieving more satisfactory results. Additionally, based on the negative feedback of Case 4-1, there needs to be a better designed mechanism for public participation. In this regard, designers can try to design various participation modes. For example, visualizing and interactive expressions of the proposal can be used to enhance the effectiveness of public participation during the project design phase.

The recommendations provided by both designers focused on two main aspects. Firstly, they suggested increasing collaboration with universities, including exploring design solutions for micro-regeneration and nurturing future community designers. Secondly, they proposed improving the theoretical framework for participative micro-regeneration, which encompass academic discussion, toolkit and handbooks. Both designers held the view that:

"Participation is an accompanying by-product of micro-regeneration, rather than the objective."

Interview of Designer [A: Case2-1 (2022); B: Case 4-1 (2017)]				
Condition category		Common conditions	Single-mentioned conditions	
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	1.Support from the neighborhood committee	A	1.Government's practice of "City for People" concept 2.Government's practice of "15-minutes community life circle" 3.Application of community planner system 4.Experience sharing of successful cases of similar type 5.Joint conference arrangement between the government, tripartite committee and resident representatives <i>(General)</i>
			B	1.Shanghai calls for "fine management" for urban development (2017) 2.Government's recognition of the value of micro-regeneration
	<i>Economic</i>	/	A	1.Special fund support from the government

			B	1.Government's investment in micro-regeneration
	<i>Social</i>	/	A	1.Need for spiritual connection after the pandemic
			B	1.Establishment of sharing and participation system in the long-term operation of the project 2.Brand effect of successful projects in larger areas
	<i>Technological</i>	/	A	1.Dynamic feedback mechanism for project lifecycle
			B	/
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	/	A	1.More designers that can involve in community's long-term development 2.Training and assessment system for community planners
			B	1.A budget regulation with higher proportion of design fees 2.A better designed mechanism for public participation
	<i>Economic</i>	/	A	1.More participation of social capitals
			B	/
	<i>Social</i>	1.Collaboration with universities in community micro-regeneration design, as well as cultivating future community designers 2.Improved theoretical framework for participative micro-regeneration	A	1.Improvement of living conditions and educational levels (<i>General</i>)
			B	/
	<i>Technological</i>	/	A	/
			B	1.Visualizing and interactive expressions of the design

Table 5.3-2 Favorable conditions from the designers (own work)

3) Social organization

Social organization representatives have responded more consistently compared to other stakeholders in the interviews. Acting as a bridge between the government and community, which shares some similarities with designers, social organizations have close connections with social resources. The commonly mentioned existing favorable conditions basically overlap with the perspectives of neighborhood committee and designers as shown in Table 5.3-3.

In addition, case1-1, as a mature case that has undergone a long period of exploration, also has richer prerequisites. Apart from the SUSAS (Shanghai Urban Space Art Season), which taps into the value of urban corner spaces across Shanghai, Xinhua Sub-district hold various design activities/competitions related to community micro-regeneration, such as Urban Design Festival hosted by AssBook. The region's high attraction to investments provides opportunities for the implementation of these projects. On the other hand, the establishment of the Community design center signifies a higher level of the organization's capacity for resource integration (connecting the government, enterprises, and the community).

As for suggestions, both interviewees expressed the positive effect of government's support of local social organizations keen on community micro-regeneration, a stakeholder that was often overlooked in the past but is now playing an important bridging role in practice. And more participation of social capitals could be beneficial to the economic sustainability of micro-regeneration projects. Interviewee of case1-1 also proposed systematical experience sharing of successful case, such as a digital platform for case collection. Also, a balance between intervention and autonomy is expected for giving proper room for residents' subjectivity and creativity.

Interview of Social Organization [A: Case1-1 (pioneer case); B: Case 3-1]				
Condition category		Common conditions	Single-mentioned conditions	
Existing favorable conditions	Political	1.Government's practice of "City for People" concept 2.Government's practice of "15-minutes community life circle" 3.Support from District and Sub-district government, including manpower, funds and channels	A	1.Planning of design activities/competitions related to community micro-regeneration 2.A youth community planner training system 3.Establishment of Shanghai Urban public Space Design Promotion Center (<i>General</i>) 4.1st SUSAS (Shanghai urban space art season) in 2015 started to explore the value of urban corner space (<i>General</i>)
			B	1.Government's promotion of community public space design, such as community café
	Economic	1.Many enterprises have fiscal expenditure targets for investing in community development or public welfare activities (not compulsory)	A	1.High area attractiveness to investments
			B	/
	Social	1.Need for spiritual connection among people after the	A	1.A young popularity with high education background
			B	

		lockdown periods in the pandemic		2.Brand effect of the project in attracting social capitals 3.Cultivation and development of voluntary organizations
			B	1.An open and democratic social environment of Shanghai (<i>General</i>)
	<i>Technological</i>	1.Application of new media, such as online community groups, WeChat Official Accounts and other media platforms	A	1.A resource integration center connecting the government, enterprises and community 2.Formation of the theoretical system of participative community micro-regeneration
			B	/
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	1.Support for the development of local social organizations keen on micro-regeneration	A	1.Systematical experience sharing of successful cases 2.A balance between intervention and autonomy of the government
			B	/
	<i>Economic</i>	1.More participation of social capitals	A	/
			B	/

Table 5.3-3 Favorable conditions from social organizations (own work)

4) Community voluntary organization

Community voluntary organizations often serve as long-term operators of micro-regeneration projects, which build the closest connection with local residents while having less direct interaction with the government. Both interviewees from Case 1-1 and Case 3-2 provided practical insights related with user perspective as shown in Table 5.3-4. They rely heavily on support from local social organizations.

In terms of suggestions, both interviewees mentioned establishing a resource network among similar projects, from physical resources, human resource, methodologies to experience, as well as more participation of social capitals in the process of long-term operation. Furthermore, the interviewee from Case 1-1 mentioned the advantages of collaboration with universities in project design, as well as the beneficial impact of referable examples of sustainable operational models of community voluntary organizations on its own growth and development. On the other hand, the interviewee from Case 3-2 emphasized the importance of establishing an offline platform for communication between universities, enterprises, government and residents in enhancing the diversity of participants. Additionally, the brand effect of successful projects in experience promotion and adaptation cannot be overlooked.

Interview of Community Voluntary Organization [A: Case1-1; B: Case 3-2]				
Condition category		Common conditions	Single-mentioned conditions	
Existing favorable conditions	<i>Political</i>	/	A	1.Support from the neighborhood committee
			B	/
	<i>Economic</i>	/	A	/
			B	1.Developers' investment in micro-regeneration projects 2.Abundance of market resources of surrounding area
	<i>Social</i>	1.Support from local social organization in project management 2.Cultivation of community voluntary organizations in long-term project operation	A	/
			B	/
	<i>Technological</i>	1.Application of new media, such as online groups, WeChat Official Accounts and other media platforms	A	1.A resource integration center connecting the government, enterprises and community
			B	/
Suggested favorable conditions	<i>Social</i>	1.A resource sharing network among similar projects	A	1.Collaboration with universities in community micro-regeneration design 2.Referrable operational model of community voluntary organizations
			B	1.An offline platform for communication between universities, enterprises, government and residents 2.Brand effect of successful projects in experience promotion and adaptation
	<i>Economic</i>	1.More participation of social capitals	A	/
			B	/

Table 5.3-4 Favorable conditions from community voluntary organizations (own work)

5.4 Evaluation

The evaluation of studied cases based on the integrated framework concluded in the literature review was shown in Table 5.4-1 according to discussions with the interviewees. It is elaborated from 4 aspects: competency, fairness, outcomes and efficiency.

In general, micro-regeneration projects in Shanghai have emerged as grassroots initiatives driven by social organizations, local government and community residents. They have attracted a diverse range of participants, where participation often involves various activities such as community meetings, volunteer work and collaborative decision-making processes. While funding may come from a combination of government subsidies, donations corporate investments and crowdfunding efforts, these projects usually focus on revitalizing urban spaces, improving community infrastructure and promoting cultural and environmental sustainability.

From the multi-case study, in terms of the capability of citizens to make decisions about the issues supported by resources through access to information and interpretation of the information, projects led by the government generally perform less satisfying regarding citizen's knowledge and motivation, such as cases 2-1, 2-2, 3-1, and 4-1, even though government's support of these projects tends to be stronger since they are part of specific action plans of the sub-district. Conversely, in cases initiated by the community, such as case 2-3, and by developers, like case 3-2, intellectual support is more proactive, while government involvement is relatively low. Only in case 1-1, due to the establishment of a community design center, did the community establish a close and positive relationship with the government with mediation of the local social organization.

As for the fairness of public participation, in most cases, the participants include resident representatives from the community and some residents with directly relevant interests in the project. However, the interaction of most participants ends in the joint meetings during the design phase. Regarding the transparency, only case 1-1, through long-term exploration and trust-building, has developed a relatively mature co-building model. Comfortingly, during the project operation phase, most cases established realistic feedback mechanisms, which is largely due to the diligent work attitude of the neighborhood committees or social organizations. Overall, only case 2-3, as an innovative initiative led by the community, has developed an online program without corresponding regulatory protection. Case 4-1, due to its early attempt and low level of cooperation from residents in the historical neighborhood, resulted in limited and unsmooth participation in the project process.

In the perspective of outcomes, the interviewees of case 3-1 and 3-2 are current operators, whose understanding of conflict mitigation throughout the entire process of the project is limited. In these cases, public participation is seen as positive on sustainable management. In projects with high government participation, conflict mitigation is institutionally protected, but the effective influence of public participation on project outcomes is limited, including case 2-1, 2-2 and 4-1. Additionally, cases 2-2 (complex property ownership) and 4-1 (historical district), with their unique backgrounds, are significantly influenced by external developments in the long term.

In the efficiency assessment, the performance of case 4-1 is relatively negative. In historical districts, mutual trust between the government and the public is difficult to establish. Additionally, in case 2-2, communication is lacking due to the complexity of property rights, resulting in average performance in information exchange and trust. In general, most projects have achieved waste minimization and energy/material efficiency. This is partly due to budget constraints and the encouragement and requirements from the government.

Overall, the evaluation of a project is dynamic. At different stages, the performance of stakeholders, resources and participatory methods varies. For example, case 1-1 and case 3-2 have managed to maintain their vitality over the years with evolving operational models. On the other hand, case 4-1, despite winning an award, did not perform well during follow-up surveys after it was put into use. The award was more of a recognition of the project's value and the application of micro-regeneration methods, whereas the follow-up visits truly reflect the users' perspectives. While the ultimate goal of participative urban regeneration is to improve the environment of the neighborhood, people, as both influencers and users in this process, are the most crucial element.

Categories	Descriptions	Evaluation (positive / negative / unclear)						
		Case 1-1	Case 2-1	Case 2-2	Case 2-3	Case 3-1	Case 3-2	Case 4-1
<i>Competence</i>	(Citizen's knowledge) Citizens' level of knowledge regarding relevant issues and necessary communication skills.	positive	negative	negative	unclear	negative	unclear	negative
	(Citizen's motivation) Internal motivations, such as interest and external motivations, including payment or items convertible into monetary value.	positive	negative	negative	unclear	unclear	unclear	negative
	(Social organizations' support) Formal and informal organizations comprising citizens, volunteers and consultants that help citizens fight for their own interests.	positive	unclear	unclear	unclear	unclear	unclear	unclear
	(Governmental support) Monetary, institutional, staff and information materials provided to citizens by the government.	positive	positive	positive	negative	positive	negative	positive
<i>Fairness</i>	(Interaction) Dimension reflecting how participants interact within a venue of public discussions, such as deliberation	positive	positive	unclear	unclear	unclear	unclear	positive
	(Representativeness) The extent to which the participants can be truly representative of the people who do not participate and their interests.	positive	unclear	unclear	unclear	unclear	unclear	unclear
	(Accessibility) Opportunities and channels offered to citizens for public participation.	positive	positive	positive	unclear	positive	positive	unclear
	(Regulation protection) Participation process, which is institutionalized, well-organized and managed on a practical level.	unclear	positive	positive	negative	unclear	unclear	positive
	(Transparency) Sufficient information fairly provided to the participants to make decisions.	positive	unclear	unclear	negative	unclear	unclear	unclear
	(Feedback) Timely feedback to questions, comments and requests enabling the participants to be heard and know how their participation will influence outcomes.	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	negative
<i>Outcomes</i>	(Conflict mitigation) Conflict reduction and mutual respect among citizens, government officials and third sectors.	positive	positive	positive	unclear	unclear	unclear	positive
	(Decision-making) Positive influence of public participation processes on the final decisions of urban regeneration projects.	positive	unclear	unclear	positive	positive	positive	unclear
	(Long-term perspective) Incorporate lessons learned and feedback into continuous improvement; sustainable maintenance; organic self-operation, etc.	positive	positive	unclear	unclear	positive	positive	positive
<i>Efficiency</i>	(Information exchange) The effectiveness of information sharing between stakeholders and decision-makers.	positive	unclear	positive	positive	positive	positive	negative
	(Trust and relationships) Whether there is mutual respect, open communication and trust-building mechanism in place.	positive	unclear	positive	positive	unclear	positive	unclear
	(Waste minimization & Energy/ material efficiency) Whether the resources are used properly and whether environmental issues are considered.	positive	positive	positive	unclear	positive	positive	unclear

positive negative moderate/ unclear

Table 5.4-1 Evaluation of the cases (own work)

6. Discussion

6.1 Comparison of literature and practice

This study identifies two main types of findings during the field research. One involves the multidimensional manifestations of information encountered in the literature review when applied in practice. The other type pertains to perspectives that differ from or have not been previously addressed in the literature review.

6.1.1 Practical manifestation of academic information

Firstly, the literature reveals theoretical exploration regarding the utilization of a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches in participative urban regeneration (Munoz Aparici, 2016). However, it remains unclear how these two methods are effectively combined in actual practice. By combining the developments in micro-regeneration over the past decade with the case studies in this paper, it is evident that these two approaches are not initially synchronized and the effect of market investment is non-negligible.

Earlier successful cases, such as case 3-2 in 2016 and the series of explorations conducted by the social organization in case 1-1 starting from 2018, relied on developers as initiators. The success of participative micro-regeneration in Xinhua community is not only attributed to the persistent efforts of the local social organization but also to the investment of social capital in community regeneration-related competitions and activities. Case 3-2 is another example originated from an important decision by developers to invest in an open community garden. These are the key enablers that early bottom-up initiatives can achieve. It is precisely these successes that enabled the government to recognize the advantages and feasibility of participative micro-regeneration, providing some experiential guidance as pioneer cases.

Subsequently, the government increased its investment in micro-regeneration projects and accelerated their development through the implementation of specific action plans at various levels of government, leading to widespread proliferation. These actions can be seen as a response of the top-down approach to the bottom-up phenomenon.

In the context of successful cases, the concept of micro-regeneration primarily originates from the community itself, with neighborhood committees and sub-district governments providing management, permitting, channels and partial financial support while social organizations serve as the main executing and operating entities. This is a scenario that was unforeseen before the field research. Additionally, the roles played by stakeholders mentioned in the literature were clarified through interviews. For example, social organizations, acting as NGOs dedicated to social welfare, undertake most responsibilities in resource integration and establishing and maintaining soft relationships compared to traditional designers. This includes supporting and nurturing teams proposing and participating in community-operated micro-regeneration projects and attracting

external investments for community-initiated projects. These insights greatly enrich the understanding of the existing theoretical frameworks.

Particularly, the researcher finds that in the process of promoting the development of the bottom-up approach, the top-down tradition does have its advantages. When participative micro-regeneration aligns with government urban development planning, various levels of government can actively promote and implement related requirements, to certain extent, facilitating the formation of an enabling environment.

6.1.2 New findings compared to literature review

In addition, some new points were discovered during the field research. Firstly, in terms of stakeholders, a new role was identified: community voluntary organizations, which are primarily formed spontaneously by local residents to operate and manage completed micro-regeneration projects. It is an emerging role in micro-regeneration's long-term functioning in the Chinese context. It has a smaller scale than similar groups in general global south context and is less official. Although possessing some self-governance capabilities, they still rely largely on the support of corresponding social organizations in terms of connecting with external resources. The existence of community voluntary organizations was confirmed in case 1-1, which information was obtained in the interview of the co-founder of the local social organization. In another case 3-2, it was known upon encountering the leader of the organization during the site visit. This role was not previously explored in the literature research.

The second point concerns the level of public participation in micro-regeneration. It is undeniable that in the Chinese context, the top-down approach still prevails, as evidenced in cases such as 2-1, 2-2 and 4-1. In these instances, the level of participation often falls into "information" (Figure 2.1.4-1). Even the researcher had such concerns before conducting interviews. However, deeper and more meaningful participation was observed, as demonstrated in case 1-1 and case 3-2, where social organizations and community voluntary organizations play crucial roles in the participatory management of the projects under the support of the government. The channels for translating community needs into actual solutions are more diverse and efficient than expected, and community residents are encouraged to initiate their own programs. Although there are certain regional advantages, high degrees of citizen power are reflected in these cases, showing "empowerment" in the participation level.

Another aspect is the innovation in participatory methods. Although digital platforms have been proposed as avenues for citizens to engage, discuss and collaborate on urban projects (Bottini, 2018), they primarily represent general websites. In this research, case 2-3 introduced an innovative digital tool for specific community participative management, developed independently by the neighborhood committee and the owners committee. This community-customized online platform covers a wider range of functions related to community development, including volunteer maintenance of community gardens and promotion of services from enterprises with a partnership, etc. One of its significant meanings is the establishment of an online community, which not only enhances mutual trust within the community but also increases the efficiency of the neighborhood

committee's work by leveraging the advantages of information dissemination. This innovation, which is still in the development and not yet widely promoted, is essentially a bottom-up initiative. This was unknown and unexpected before the research.

The aforementioned findings could serve as a supplement to existing literature research on participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context. The timing of the cases also indicates that since 2023, micro-regeneration has seen broader and deeper development. This study expands existing research both temporally and spatially, and provides a detailed exploration of the external environmental conditions for participative urban regeneration, proposing conditions for an enabling environment tailored to such projects. It contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of participative urban regeneration, including stakeholder networks and participatory forms.

6.2 Cross-case comparisons

6.2.1 Review of the development of micro-regeneration in the Chinese context

Started from the Western context, participative urban regeneration has evolved as a response to social concerns, fostering a shift towards unconventional, organic planning methods (Chen & Qu, 2020; Buitelaar et al., 2017). This trend, underscored by a desire for democratization and community empowerment, has seen a notable rise in grassroots initiatives within urban development.

Specifically in the Chinese context, participative urban regeneration, particularly micro-regeneration, is emerging as a response to the complex challenges of urban development (Chen & Qu, 2019). While historically China has leaned towards top-down planning, recent shifts recognize the limitations of this approach and the necessity of inclusive, people-centered strategies (Lu, 2020). Micro-regeneration initiatives in cities like Shenzhen and Shanghai exemplify this transition, aiming to revitalize urban spaces at the neighborhood level through collaborative efforts involving various stakeholders.

For example, case1-1 of Xinhua Community represents a significant influence made by the local community groups who contribute a lot to the initiative and co-management of the micro-regeneration projects, which is rarely paid attention to in the previous research. By engaging smaller community groups and individuals alongside traditional stakeholders, such as governmental bodies, participative approaches have sought to democratize decision-making processes and promote inclusivity. In this multi-case study, it embodies as the close collaboration between the neighborhood committee and community voluntary groups, with designers or social organizations as the mediator, such as case 1-1 & 3-1.

On the other hand, known from case 1-1, 2-1, 2-2, 3-1 & 4-1, the government also provided impressive support in terms of different types of resources in the recent decade, such as “15-

minutes community project life circle” proposal and special fund program. A lot of cases are implemented as a combination of top-down and bottom-up approach.

In general, the emergence and development of participative micro-regeneration as an urban design approach in China have been accompanied by discussions on the development of existing urban spaces. And the open and inclusive environment in Shanghai has provided a fertile ground for bottom-up initiatives. According to the co-founder of Dayu Community Design Team in case 1-1, with government placing greater emphasis on building a people-centered city, there has been an increase in activities and competitions related to micro-regeneration. With support of social capitals, these explorations have yielded projects recognized by the public, establishing residents' awareness and confidence in participation, which is one of the reasons why Xinhua Community has become an excellent model in Shanghai and even nationally in this regard. As she stated,

“The future development of micro-regeneration is expected to become more diversified, with the public not only providing input during the design phase but also continuously participating in the long-term operation of micro-regeneration projects. They can not only be participants in community regeneration, but also initiators.”

6.2.2 General existing favorable conditions from all cases

Among the seven cases studied in this paper, there are different project types, regional resources, leading stakeholders, and operating models. However, there are also similarities in different dimensions. Through comprehensive information selection and integration, this research summarizes the general existing favorable conditions for participative micro-regeneration as shown in Table 6.2.2-1.

Existing favorable conditions of all cases		
Condition categories	Generalized conditions	Particularity
Political	Government's practice of “City for People” concept	/
	Government's practice of “15-minutes community life circle”	/
	Government's promotion of “fine management” in urban development (2017)	/
	Government's recognition of the value of micro-regeneration	/
	Support from District and Sub-district government, including manpower, funds and channels	/
	Support from neighborhood committees in terms of execution	/
	Training program of community micro-regeneration and management for local governments	/
	Joint-conference arrangement (between the government, tripartite committee and resident representatives)	/

	The tripartite committee joint system (neighborhood committee, resident committee, property management) in community development	/
	Each community has a certain number of local enterprises as co-building partners	/
	Government's promotion of community public space design, such as community café and community living room	<i>area-specific</i>
	Establishment of Shanghai Urban Public Space Design Promotion Center	/
	Planning of design activities/competitions related to urban micro-regeneration, such as SUSAS (Shanghai Urban Space Art Season)	/
	Application of community planner system (a youth community planner training system in some districts)	<i>area-specific</i>
Economic	Many enterprises have fiscal expenditure targets for investing in community or public welfare activities (not compulsory)	/
	Special fund support from the government in terms of micro-regeneration projects	/
	Developers' investment in micro-regeneration projects	<i>area-specific</i>
	Area attractiveness to investments	<i>area-specific</i>
	Abundance of market resources of surrounding area	<i>area-specific</i>
Social	Cultivation and development of local social organization keen on community micro-regeneration	/
	Cultivation and development of local voluntary organizations with self-governing capabilities in long-term management of micro-regeneration projects	/
	Need for spiritual connection among people after the lockdown periods in the pandemic	/
	An open and inclusive social environment of Shanghai	/
	Establishment of sharing and participation system in long-term operation of the project	/
	Brand effect of successful projects, in terms of attracting social capitals and regeneration activation in larger areas	/
Techno-logical	Application of community online platform as a tool for digital co-governance	/
	A resource integration center connecting the government, enterprises and other sectors with the community	/
	Application of new media, such as online groups, WeChat Official Accounts and other media platforms	/
	Improvement of the theoretical system of participative micro-regeneration	/

Table 6.2.2-1 Existing favorable conditions concluded from all cases (own work)

1) Political conditions

Among conditions of all categories, political conditions have the most significant impact. From a macro perspective, following the introduction of the 15-minute community life circle development plan by Shanghai in 2014, a series of relevant activities, such as SUSAS and “Walking in Shanghai” emerged. Also, Shanghai municipal government established the Shanghai Urban Public Space Design Promotion Center to promote fine management in urban development. In the subsequent practical process, a corresponding 15-minute community life circle guidance system gradually formed, from the trial version in 2016 to the formal version in 2023. Participative micro-regeneration especially in community has also become a topic of social concern. In 2022, an experience summary on its mechanism and process design was issued as a practical guideline. At the same time, the concept of "city for people" proposed by Chairman Xi during his inspection of Shanghai in 2019 has accelerated the construction of 15 pilot sub-districts for the "15-minute community life circle." In addition, Shanghai started to gradually promote the community planner system in different districts since 2018, improving the overall planning layout of space micro-regeneration such as community spaces and under-bridge spaces.

From a micro perspective, the successful operation of participative community micro-regeneration relies on the support of district and sub-district governments in various aspects such as manpower, funds and cooperating channels, as well as the long-term contribution and conscientious attitude of neighborhood committees in understanding and implementing community needs, as emphasized by interviewees of case1-1(social organization), case 2-2(neighborhood committee) and case 4-1(designer). Professionally, micro-regeneration-related training for grassroots government personnel also provides some assistance. Currently, the tripartite committee joint system applied in community management provides institutional guarantees for public participation in relevant projects to a certain extent. Additionally, each community has some local enterprises as co-building partners, ensuring a certain amount of social resource support. Overall, political conditions primarily create an open and inclusive environment for the development of participative micro-regeneration and provide institutional protection.

2) Economic conditions

In the surveys, several interviewees mentioned the limitations posed by insufficient funding for the projects, such as the community planner in Case 2-1, the neighborhood committee in Case 2-2 and the social organization in Case 3-1. Other projects benefited economically from either government special funds or the attractiveness of the area to corporate investments. In the long-term operation of micro-regeneration projects, the involvement of social capital also played a crucial role. This includes various foundations and the fact that many companies, aiming to establish a responsible corporate image, have non-mandatory budgetary targets for investing in community development or themed public welfare activities, etc. This, together with community co-building partners mentioned before, contributes different types of resources to the community. Overall, the economic conditions are relatively weak at present, especially after the pandemic, both government and corporate financial performance has been negatively impacted.

3) Social conditions

Overall, through the study of cases 1-1, 3-1, and 3-2, it can be observed that the overall support

for the formation and development of local social organizations keen on micro-regeneration, as well as the support of social organizations for the formation and development of local community voluntary organizations, has played a positive role in different stages of participative micro-regeneration. These two types of organizations are also the main operators for the long-term sustainable management of current micro-regeneration projects. In addition, the promotion of pilot cases has a certain brand effect in attracting social investment and regeneration activation in larger areas. Furthermore, after the pandemic, there is a more prominent demand from the public for establishing spiritual connections with the community and others, leading to overall recognition and active participation in micro-regeneration projects.

4) Technological conditions

The technological conditions are mentioned in some cases. Particularly noteworthy ones include the application of the community online platform as a digital tool in community governance in Case 2-3. Additionally, in Case 1-1, the establishment of Xinhua Community Design Center as a resource integration center connecting the government, enterprises and other sectors with the community proved to be an effective way of managing community micro-regeneration. These successful experiences at a small scale are transferrable and scalable to some extent. Furthermore, in terms of the operation of micro-regeneration projects, the application of new media is significant in providing a diversified platform for information dissemination. As for traditional media, the social organization in Case 1-1 and the designer in Case 4-1 are both committed to establishing and improving the theoretical system of micro-regeneration and have made certain progress.

6.2.3 General suggested favorable conditions from all cases

Due to imbalanced resources, existing favorable conditions in some cases are not reflected in the rest of the cases, which means existing conditions in one case may be expected in another case. To address this issue, the researcher integrated and summarized existing favorable conditions following the review, along with the challenges addressed by the interviewees, as well as their corresponding coping strategies. Supplementary conditions are outlined in Table 6.2.3-1.

Suggested favorable conditions of all cases	
Condition categories	Generalized conditions
Political	More designers that can involve in community's long-term development
	Training and assessment system for community planners
	A better designed public participation mechanism (necessity and effectiveness)
	A project budget regulation with higher proportion of design fees
	Communication mechanism in areas with complex property rights
	A balance between intervention and autonomy of the government
Economic	More participation of social capitals
	Increased government budget expenditure allocated to micro-regeneration
Social	Collaboration with universities in micro-regeneration design, as well as cultivating future community designers

	An offline platform for communication between universities, enterprises, government and residents to increase the diversity of participants.
	A more comprehensive theoretical framework for micro-regeneration, with participation as an accompanying by-product
	Referrable examples of sustainable operational model of social organizations and community voluntary organizations
Techno-logical	Visualizing and interactive expressions of the design proposal in the design phase
	Promotion of community online platform as a digital co-governance tool in proper communities
	Specifications and regulations for the development and use of community online platform
	Government's support in the operation cost of community online platform

Table 6.2.3-1 Suggested favorable conditions concluded from all cases (own work)

In terms of political conditions, the main recommendations focus on three aspects. First, the community planner system. As proposed in Case 2-1, a comprehensive training and evaluation system which could cultivate and involve more designers in the long-term development of the community will be beneficial for improving the quality of micro-regeneration projects.

Second, the institutional conditions. For example, an official communication mechanism in areas with complex property rights could be better for the region development and the implementation of micro-regeneration. Additionally, there is a need for more effective mechanisms for public participation in project processes. Government-led joint meetings are just a basic guarantee. To achieve more positive outcomes, the design of the participatory process is also crucial, requiring efforts from both the government and social organizations or designers. Meanwhile, increasing the budget proportion for project design fees could possibly provide more incentive for designers.

Third is the level of government intervention. Most micro-regeneration projects rely on government financial support, which means they are usually fully controlled by the government. This may limit the development of bottom-up initiatives and community vitality. It may be preferable to appropriately delegate work to a third-party.

As for economic conditions, except neighborhood committees, who suggest an increased government budget expenditure allocated to micro-regeneration, all the other interviewees mentioned more participation of social capitals. These social capitals encompass various funds, support programs and corporate investments. However, they have a mutually attractive relationship with the projects themselves. For the overall external environment, the success of such collaborations is beneficial for increasing the variety of social capitals. It will also contribute to the sustainable operation of micro-regeneration projects.

In social conditions, there are two main recommendations from social organizations and designers. Firstly, strengthening cooperation with universities, not only in the design, but there can also be a conscious effort to enhance the training of future community designers at universities. Another recommendation is to improve the theoretical framework for micro-regeneration including

academic discussion, toolkits and handbook. Summarizing relevant experiences would be beneficial for exploring project execution and operational models.

The technological conditions primarily revolve around the reference provided by case 2-3. Promoting customized online community platforms as tools for digital community governance in communities of a certain scale can not only improve the efficiency of neighborhood committees' daily work but also enhance the efficiency of information dissemination in different aspects. However, as an innovative tool still in development, further promotion in the future will require the refinement of relevant specifications and regulations. Additionally, during the long-term operation of online platforms, government financial support is also something that neighborhood committee interviewees hope to see.

The conditions summarized for all cases need to be understood in comparison with different perspectives and within the context. Each condition has its applicable subject. It can be observed that most conditions require government promotion to be realized. These conditions can be divided into two types: one involves creating new conditions, and the other involves improving existing conditions. Additionally, there are two aspects for further enhancement of these conditions. First is the specific degree of change, such as increasing the proportionate of design fee for government's projects. Second is the elaboration of the conditions, such as how to increase social capital involvement in micro-regeneration projects.

This is not to say that these suggestions are all correct or that there is only one interpretation. For example, increasing the number of designers who can serve the community for a long term can be achieved in multiple ways. This paper provides possible favorable conditions for the future development of participative micro-regeneration through the perspectives of various interviewees, representing an expected future state.

7. Conclusion

The main research question: **What kind of enabling environment helps facilitate participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context from multi-case study of Shanghai's micro-regeneration projects?** is answered through 3 sub-questions:

1. How does participative urban regeneration develop and evolve in the Chinese context?

This question focuses on the evolvement of participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context, taking micro-regeneration in Shanghai as the example. The data for all aspects come from literature review and semi-structured interviews.

Micro-regeneration has been developing in Shanghai for about ten years, starting from 2014. The initial development was driven by three main factors. First, government's planning guidelines placed more emphasis on the regeneration of existing urban spaces, with corresponding support in policies and regulations. Second, social capital started to invest in community regeneration projects, which became an important part in further regional development. Third, the academic community began promoting and practicing urban micro-regeneration methods, with many early projects involving university architectural teams. Through the combined exploration of these three parties, the advantages and potential of micro-regeneration have been recognized by the society. In the following development, public participation has also played an increasingly important role.

Despite being in its early stages, micro-regeneration embodies a departure from traditional modes of urban regeneration, emphasizing grassroots engagement and localized interventions. By fostering a sense of community ownership and connection to the urban environment, these initiatives not only address physical blight but also promote social cohesion and sustainable development, heralding a promising trajectory towards more inclusive and vibrant urban communities in China. Milestones have been made, such as the 1st Community Construction Conference held in Xinhua Community Design Center, which elevated the discussion of participative micro-regeneration to a societal level (Shanghai) and provided a platform for sharing experiences and exchanging ideas regarding the topic.

Overall, micro-regeneration has undergone exploration of different participatory approaches and levels throughout its development process. The evolvement of participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context is closely linked to its unique stakeholder network and power dynamics, forming a distinctive scenario of combination between bottom-up and top-down approaches.

2. What conditions have contributed to the implementation of this participative approach in micro-regeneration projects in the Chinese context?

The second sub-question taps into the existing favorable conditions behind the implementation of participative urban regeneration in Shanghai within the PESTEL framework. This section of data is derived from on-site research interviews and relevant published articles. The conditions are

concluded in Table 6.2.2-1 and generally elaborated in section 6.2.2.

Overall, the favorable conditions of the environment for micro-regeneration projects, summarized from the resources in this study, encompass political, economic, social and technological aspects. These conditions are specified within the predefined framework (as shown in Table 2.2.3-1). Together, they have formed the foundation for the rise and development of micro-regeneration over the past decade. These conditions also exhibit temporal and spatial continuity. For example, the development of political conditions, which is the most significant aspect, demonstrates this continuity as shown in Figure 4.1-3. From the proposal of the 15-minute community life circle, the hosting of various urban design activities and competitions, the establishment of the Shanghai Urban Regeneration Center, to the release of the Guidelines for Participative Community Planning in Shanghai, other types of conditions have also played important roles in driving this process.

3. What are the possible conditions of an enabling environment for participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context?

In this sub-question, the possible conditions of an enabling environment for participative urban regeneration are drawn based on the perspectives of the interviewees, which includes the government, social organization, designer and community voluntary organizations.

Plainly speaking, the description of such environment can be seen as a synthesis of existing and recommended favorable conditions, as shown in Table 6.2.2-1 & 6.2.3-1. These are concretized translations of different categories under the PESTEL framework. However, it is not enough to merely identify these conditions. To create an enabling environment, we need to find the corresponding stakeholders behind these conditions and address them specifically. Different stakeholders may interpret the same condition differently. For example, "more participation of social capital" can be understood in various ways: from the government's perspective, it might involve increasing investment attraction in micro-regeneration projects; from the perspective of designers or social organizations, it could mean adding relevant considerations in design and operational models; and for enterprises, recognizing the advantages of investment in participative micro-regeneration projects—such as low-cost but effective publicity and regional development driving—can lead to more proactive involvement, rather than merely for corporate investment requirement.

Overall, the external environment that has fostered the flourishing development of participative micro-regeneration today is multifaceted and complex. Due to regional policy disparities and uneven development, the demands on the environment also vary. An enabling environment in this study generalizes and summarizes favorable conditions while preserving the diversity among cases. It encompasses both the advantageous aspects of current external conditions and aspects that need improvement. Creating this environment requires the joint-cooperation and efforts of all sectors of society, including the government, enterprises and communities.

8. Reflection

The selection of this research theme stems from imbalanced urban development, which is largely manifested in renovations. Urban regeneration has undergone different stages over the past few decades, and in some areas where progress has been relatively rapid, the existing physical environment has achieved overall rough uniformity, but there is still room for optimization in details. With the rise and development of micro-regeneration in Chinese cities in recent years, a bottom-up participative urban regeneration approach has come into the author's view. The enabling environment for the application of such approach in China has then been chosen as the main research focus.

To address the main research question and considering the relatively small scale of micro-regeneration projects, this study adopts a multi-case study research method. An adapted PESTEL model is employed to describe indicators of the external environment. As a study within the topic of urban development management, the research framework focuses on exploring stakeholder networks, resource distribution, and participation forms. These aspects are not only crucial for understanding the cases but also serve as important references for formulating the evaluation framework. As a qualitative research, literature review, site research, and interviews are the primary sources of data acquisition. However, the overall research time is limited, leading to certain limitations in the final findings.

Firstly, the comprehensiveness of the case study is considered. Since all seven cases in this study, except case1-1, are examined from the perspective of only one stakeholder, the information collected for each case is limited. Furthermore, although comparisons were made between perspectives of similar stakeholders in the cross-case analysis, the uniqueness of project backgrounds and the small sample size (only 2) make it insufficient to establish regular or particularly representative outcomes.

Secondly, in the description of the enabling environment, environmental conditions and legal conditions were not mentioned by the interviewees. While the former may indeed have less relevance, the latter is limited by the professional backgrounds of the interviewees and thus lacking in-depth understanding. The generalized favorable conditions for participative micro-regeneration in this paper underwent several rounds of processing and screening. However, due to the diversity of the cases, the results presented remain rather complex.

I do acknowledge that, with changes in the environment and policies, such an enabling environment is dynamic and cannot be simply defined. This may be something that can be further studied in future research.

Overall, I am grateful to Yawei Chen and Ellen Geurts for their careful guidance and affirmation of the research direction. Initially, I was not particularly enthusiastic about studying micro-regeneration, assuming that such small-scale projects were relatively straightforward. However, upon delving into the research, I discovered its complexity and, through fieldwork, gained a deeper

appreciation for the charm of well-operated participative micro-regeneration projects. Witnessing children planting and watering vegetables under the guidance of their parents, and seeing people with disabilities contributing to the community's accessible design and promotion, I realized that this has indeed become an innovative method of urban regeneration, effectively enhancing urban vitality. I also hope that my research can provide some assistance for its future development.

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Appendix 1-General interview protocol

(The interviews took place offline.)

Opening

- 1) Greet and introduce the interviewer
- 2) Introduce the research and the main research question: What kind of enabling environment helps facilitate participative urban regeneration in the Chinese context from multi-case study of Shanghai's micro-regeneration projects?
- 3) Main objective:
- 4) Ask for consent: record the interview, data use for academic purposes, level of confidential
- 5) Length of the interview: about how many questions and time span

0/Introduction

- 1) Can you introduce yourself a bit and what role did you play in this project?
- 2) Can you share your understanding of the background of this project? Under which conditions did it emerge, such as policies, institutions (community planner system) and public support?

1/Idea generation

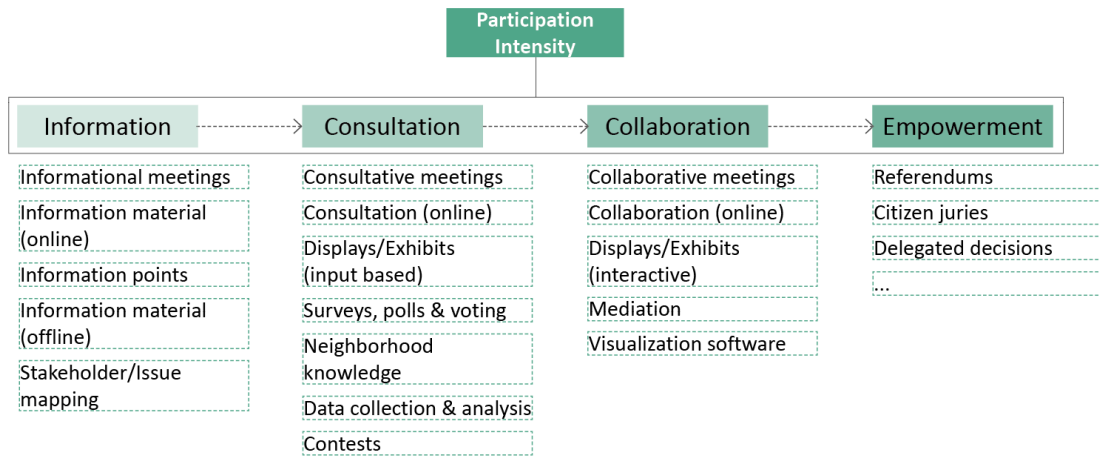
- 1) What did this project start? Who is the initiator?
- 2) From literature and media resources, I drew some conditions of the external environment, can you please check if they are applicable in this project and are there any conditions you want to add or comments you want to make?
 - a) What is the unique background of this project compared to others?
 - b) Does ... play an important role in initiating this project?

2/Idea elaboration

- 1) Can you simply introduce the scheduling of this project and the important milestones?
- 2) Who are the main stakeholders in this project? What are their roles?
- 3) Do you know about the budget allocation of this project? Including sources and proportions. Is there any difficulty in gaining budget support? (only for Neighborhood committee representative)

3/Idea production (this section focuses on the participatory process)

- 1) Can you please introduce the organizational mechanism of this project from your participation? (stakeholder network; or check if the model from the literature corresponds with the case) Are there any difficulty in communication?
- 2) Are there participants from the residents? What is the participation form in this project? (providing the reference) How is it organized?



- 3) How were the participants selected? How many(rate) were selected and to what extent did they influence the project implementation?
- 4) Which phases involved public participation? (project preparation/launching themed activities/building together)

4/Idea impact

- 1) Can you please give your evaluation of these performances (evaluation table)? And can you provide with your reasons?
- 2) What do you think are the relevant conditions (of the environment) that lead to the positive evaluations?
- 3) What are the challenges in the process of this project and what conditions might be improved for better performance?
- 4) If you have been involved in other micro-regeneration projects, what suggestions would you give to create an encouraging environment for this type of participative urban regeneration?

Closing

- 1) Ask if there is anything else regarding the topic that the interviewee want to share
- 2) Thanks for the participation
- 3) Feedback on the interview process

Appendix 2-Glossary

Community voluntary organization

Grassroots organization formed by local residents voluntarily to participate in and contribute to community-based projects

Fine management

A comprehensive approach aimed at improving the efficiency, quality, and sustainability of urban management practices. It involves the implementation of precise and meticulous management strategies across various aspects of urban life, including infrastructure, public services, environmental protection, and social governance.

Historical neighborhood (in Shanghai)

Old-style lilong communities, which are traditional residential neighborhoods characterized by narrow lanes, interconnected courtyard houses and limited public space.

Micro-regeneration

Small-scale, community-driven initiatives aimed at revitalizing and enhancing urban spaces, often focusing on the renovation and activation of neglected or underutilized areas within the city.

Neighborhood committee

A grassroots administrative organization responsible for managing and providing services to residents within a specific residential area, facilitating community governance and social welfare initiatives.

Social organization (in micro-regeneration)

Non-governmental entities that play a pivotal role in facilitating community engagement, coordinating resources, and implementing initiatives to improve urban spaces and quality of life for residents.

Sub-district area

A smaller administrative division within a district, responsible for providing local governance, public services, and community management to residents within its boundaries.

Unlicensed property

A property that lacks the necessary legal permits or licenses required for construction, occupancy, or operation according to local regulations.

Appendix 3-Stakeholder involvement evaluation framework

Stakeholder involvement evaluation framework	
1-Participation levels	Evaluate the extent of stakeholder participation in decision-making processes. This can be measured by the number of stakeholders involved, the frequency of their participation, and the level of their engagement.
2-Representation	Assess the diversity and inclusiveness of stakeholder representation. Evaluate whether different stakeholder groups are adequately represented and if their perspectives and interests are taken into account.
3-Influence	Measure the impact of stakeholder involvement on decision-making outcomes. Assess whether stakeholder input has influenced the final decisions and if their recommendations have been incorporated into policies or actions.
4-Information exchange	Evaluate the effectiveness of information sharing between stakeholders and decision-makers. Assess whether stakeholders have access to relevant information, whether their input is considered, and if there is transparency in the decision-making process.
5-Collaboration & cooperation	Assess the level of collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders. Evaluate whether stakeholders are able to work together, build consensus, and find common ground on issues of concern.
6-Empowerment	Evaluate the extent to which stakeholders feel empowered and have a sense of ownership in the decision-making process. Assess whether stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute their knowledge, skills, and expertise.
7-Learning and capacity building	Assess the extent to which stakeholder involvement promotes learning and capacity building. Evaluate whether stakeholders have gained new knowledge, skills, and understanding through their participation.
8-Trust and relationships	Establish mechanisms for stakeholders to provide feedback on the process and evaluate their experience of involvement. This can include surveys, interviews, or focus groups to gather stakeholder perspectives.
9-Feedback and evaluation	Establish mechanisms for stakeholders to provide feedback on the process and evaluate their experience of involvement. This can include surveys, interviews, or focus groups to gather stakeholder perspectives.
10-Continuous improvement	Use evaluation findings to improve future stakeholder involvement processes. Incorporate lessons learned and feedback into the design and implementation of future engagement activities.

Table A3-1 Stakeholder involvement evaluation framework (adapted from Scheffran (2006))

Appendix 4-Resource evaluation framework

Resource use evaluation framework		
Categories		Indicators
Tangible resources Adapted from Hemphill et al. (2004)		Cared infrastructure
		Waste minimization
		Energy efficiency: Building materials/construction
		Incorporation of environmental design
		Performance of environmental management
		Sustainable maintenance
Intangible Resources Adapted from Jang (2019); Tajani & Di Liddo (2023)	<i>Financial</i>	Healthy cash flow
		Clear property ownership
		Transparency
		Financial support
		Sustainable long-term performance
	<i>Social</i>	Community activation
		Link to city-wide development plans
		Resident education
		Resident participation
		Considerations of different spatial and functional levels
		Long-term perspective
		Role of local governments and support organizations
	<i>Human</i>	*Refer to stakeholder involvement evaluation (Table A3-1)

Table A4-1 Resource use evaluation framework (adapted from Jang (2009); Tajani & Di Liddo (2023))

Appendix 5-Integrated evaluation framework of micro-regeneration projects

Integrated evaluation framework of micro-regeneration projects	
Categories	Descriptions
Competence	(Citizen's knowledge) Citizens' level of knowledge regarding relevant issues and necessary communication skills.
	(Citizen's motivation) Internal motivations, such as interest and external motivations, including payment or items convertible into monetary value.
	(Social organizations' support) Formal and informal organizations comprising citizens, volunteers and consultants that help citizens fight for their own interests.
	(Governmental support) Monetary, institutional, staff and information materials provided to citizens by the government.
Fairness	(Interaction) Dimension reflecting how participants interact within a venue of public discussions, such as deliberation
	(Representativeness) The extent to which the participants can be truly representative of the people who do not participate and their interests.
	(Accessibility) Opportunities and channels offered to citizens for public participation.
	(Regulation protection) Participation process, which is institutionalized, well-organized and managed on a practical level.
	(Transparency) Sufficient information fairly provided to the participants to make decisions.
	(Feedback) Timely feedback to questions, comments and requests enabling the participants to be heard and know how their participation will influence outcomes.
Outcomes	(Conflict mitigation) Conflict reduction and mutual respect among citizens, government officials and third sectors.
	(Decision-making) Positive influence of public participation processes on the final decisions of urban regeneration projects.
	(Long-term perspective) Incorporate lessons learned and feedback into continuous improvement; sustainable maintenance; organic self-operation, etc.
Efficiency	(Information exchange) The effectiveness of information sharing between stakeholders and decision-makers.
	(Trust and relationships) Whether there is mutual respect, open communication and trust-building mechanism in place.
	(Waste minimization & Energy/ material efficiency) Whether the resources are used properly and whether environmental issues are considered.

Table A5-1 Integrated evaluation framework of micro-regeneration projects (own work)

Appendix 6-Matrix of participation in urban regeneration

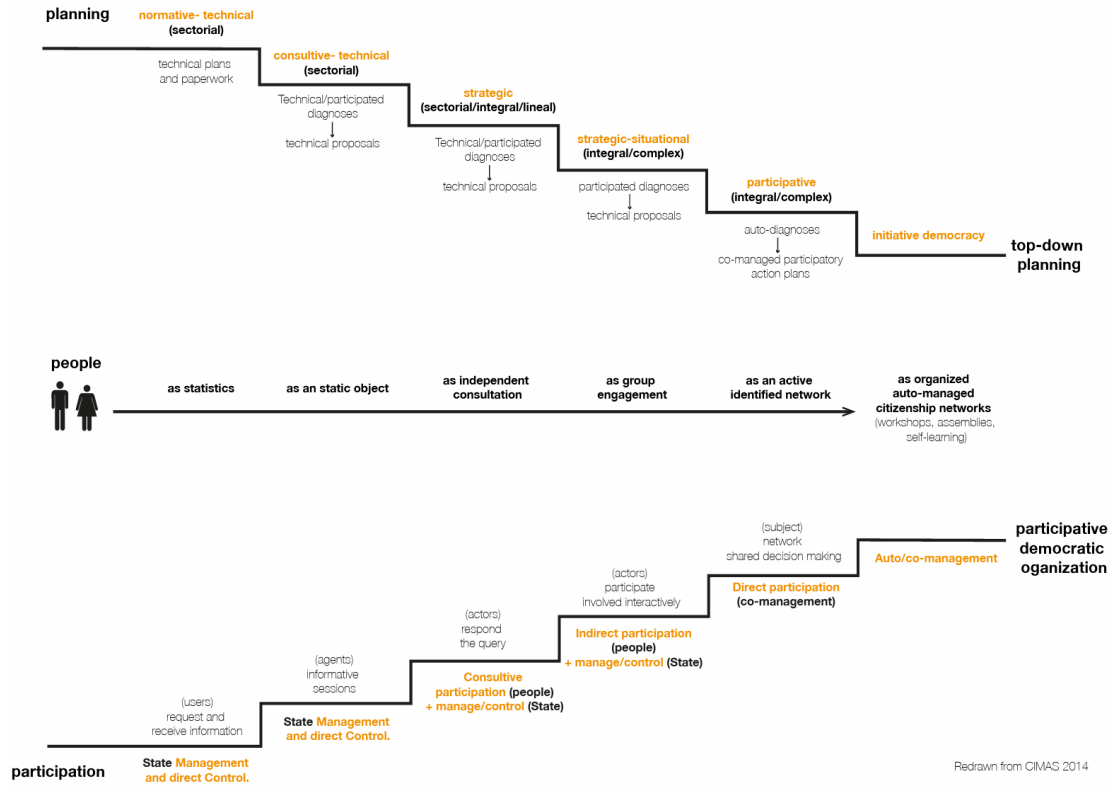


Figure A6-1 Matrix of participation in urban regeneration (Munoz Aparici (2016), adapted from CIMAS (2014))

Appendix 7-Deliverables

As shown in the figure below, the graduation process is consisted of 5 stages. P1 signifies the phase of defining and setting the problem. During P2, an extensive literature review will be undertaken, and the research methodology will be established. Furthermore, P2 will focus on devising a practical plan for data collection, which will be executed in P3. The P3 report will primarily present the data collection outcomes and provide preliminary conclusions. In P4, the findings from the research will be combined with the earlier literature analysis. By P5, about 90% of the papers will be finished, requiring only final touches and organization for the presentation.

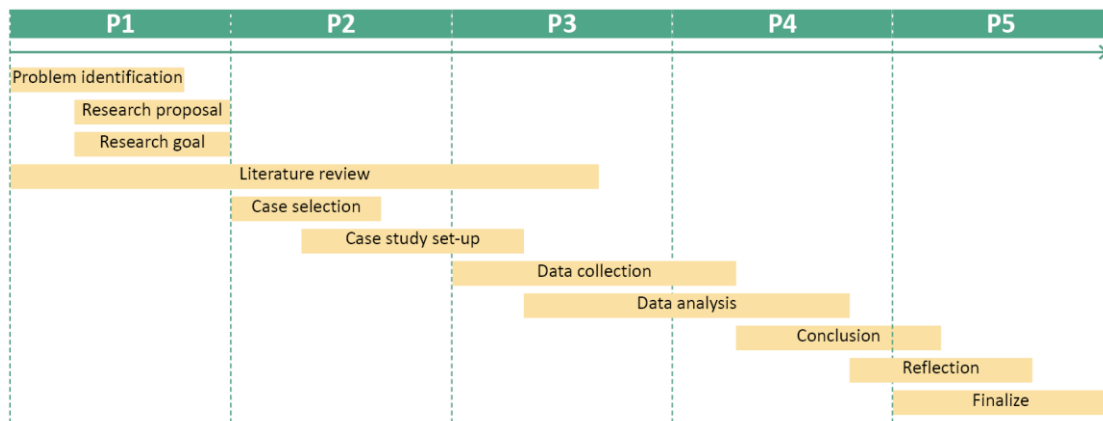


Figure A7-1 Graduation timeline framework (own illustration)