

Obstacles to emancipation in neighborhood regeneration: The case study of Dong Gang New Town, Suzhou

Jin Meiling*

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Submission: Apr 08, 2022	In recent years a neighborhood regeneration policy has been implemented at the Chinese national level to tackle deprivation in old neighborhoods. This article elucidates neighborhood regeneration based on concepts of neighborhood, social innovative urban governance, and social capital using the case study of Dong Gang New Town in Suzhou Industrial Park. The findings show that the implementation of the neighborhood regeneration policy has no significant impact on the neighborhood governance. In addition, findings indicate that the regeneration process was not emancipated, although some of residents' needs were met by the regeneration. The results also show that this is due to weak linking social capital among resident, non-government organizations and the local government. This article concludes with policy suggestions on local organizations' role to improve neighborhood governance for better neighborhood physical environments in Dong Gang New Town
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* Corresponding author: meiling.jin@tu-dortmund.de Ph.D. candidate. Department of Spatial Planning Technical University of Dortmund, Germany

Introduction

Neighborhoods in Chinese cities built before 2000 faces challenges of the aging society, increasing number of tenants, traffic issues due to increasing number of car-ownerships and private-property management related problems. Therefore, better neighborhood governance is demanded, however, the reservation of decision makers to actively engage the civil society in urban projects is considered as a general urban governance problem (Li and Zhong 2020; Rao et al. 2007). There has been local initiatives to implement participatory planning in old neighborhoods (Hui et al., 2021) and neighborhood regeneration projects with civic participation are implemented as well as collaborations among relevant sectors in neighborhoods at national level since 2019 to improve the quality of life in old neighborhoods (The State of Council of P.R.C., 2020). It requires not only existence of participatory channels, but also high quality of the participation. This article intends to shed light on social relations among residents and governments in neighborhood regeneration.

In order to address above urban issues in Chinese cities we start with existing debates on local governance. Neighborhood regeneration can be used in the same way as in urban regeneration, i.e., as “area-based intervention which is public sector initiated, funded, supported, or inspired, aimed at producing significant sustainable improvements in the conditions of local people, communities and places suffering from aspects of deprivation, often multiple in nature”(Ginsburg, 1999; Leary & McCarthy, 2013, p. 9). However, urban regeneration projects have been criticized for being property-led and economically driven regeneration. Ginsburg (Corrigan et al., 1997; Flint & Kearns, 2006; 1999; Salmon, 1992; Wallace, 2001) has highlighted the change of urban policy in UK towards social regeneration, in which social needs and participatory process are emphasized. Similarly, Temkin and Rohe (1996) propose a comprehensive neighborhood change to emphasize strong social relations, which contribute to neighborhood stabilization. However, Meegan and Mitchell (2001) emphasized the place in urban regeneration projects for social inclusion by showing how Liverpool changed the area of neighborhoods to integrate natural neighborhoods, which are built on strong civil society groups. Similarly, Galvin and Mooney Simmie (2017) approached civic participation in urban renewal from an adult education perspective, the so-called expansive participation, which requires project initiators to learn to understand marginalized community members rather than educating them. Recently, community regeneration was also discussed, which is urban regeneration initiated by strong communities and grass root organizations as an alternative to austerity urbanism (Nevin & Shiner, 1995; Pradel-Miquel, 2021; Rabbiosi, 2016). For instance, Rabbiosi (2016) demonstrated a community garden which was initiated by a civic society group in Milan. Expansive participation and community regeneration can be considered as innovative solutions of social regeneration for better neighborhoods. But the former proposes a change in austerity urbanism and the latter proposes to abolish it.

This paper contributes to such debates by theorizing neighborhood regeneration by reviewing neighborhoods, innovative urban governance, and social capital to explore the change in austerity urbanism. This article considers that neighborhood regeneration should be an area-based intervention where the government emancipates the process to meet community physical needs via utilizing linking social capital. This is examined through the main research

question: “How are neighborhoods regenerated in Chinese cities?” In the following, this article uses neighborhoods, socially innovative urban governance, and social capital for theoretical background. An old neighborhood regeneration project in Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) is examined as case study through qualitative methods. This is followed by findings on assessment of regeneration on the residents’ needs and the regeneration process. Finally, the findings will be discussed according to the features of neighborhood regeneration

Theoretical background

Neighborhoods as a functional existence

There are different definitions of neighborhoods. For instance, according to Galster (2001), neighborhoods are a collection of various features categorized in a geographic manner. They include not only the technical features of condominiums, but also demographic, class, political, social relational and sentimental features of the residents. Furthermore, some state that community is often considered as interchangeable term with neighborhoods while some states that it has been transformed from place-based communities to place-less communities (Jenks & Dempsey, 2007; Mahmoudi Farahani, 2016, p. 2). In addition, some consider neighborhoods as functional existence, which is defined by the area of services and facilities that can be easily accessed for daily lives of residents (Jenks & Dempsey, 2007). This article considers neighborhoods as functional existence.

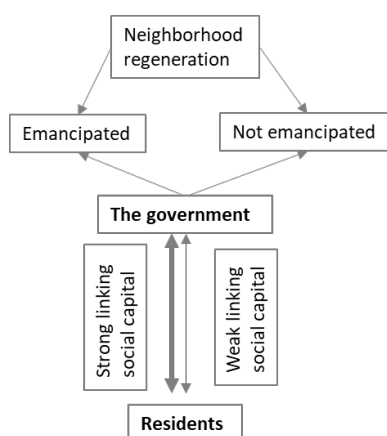
Social innovation and neighborhood governance

The social innovation model is proposed for community development to replace territorial innovation, in which urban development is characterized by large scale (Moulaert & Nussbaumer, 2005b; Swyngedouw et al., 2002). The model is based on the redefinition of capital as not just as business capital, but also as social, human and ecological capital, i.e., focusing on the society in general (Moulaert & Nussbaumer, 2005b). The key strategies are the satisfaction of diverse human needs, innovative social relations and the increase of the socio-political capacity (Moulaert et al., 2005). Furthermore, Moulaert et al. (2005) suggest to combine the satisfaction of diverse human needs and the change of social relations. In contrast, social innovation is also used for economic growth and can be even the outcome of neoliberal urban governance (Elisa Ravazzoli & Diana E. Valero, 2020; Stijn Oosterlynck et al., 2019). Nonetheless, social innovation is an important concept to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods for social cohesion.

Moulaert et al. (2007) emphasize the importance of civic participation to emancipate the process of urban development. Furthermore, a transparent process is needed to communicate and to cooperate between diverse sectors (Polívka & Reicher, 2019). Gerometta et al. (2005, p. 2018) further conceptualize innovative social relations from the theoretical background of civil society and state that the civil society represents people who are involved in public decision making, while there are also people excluded from civil society. They conclude: “(J)ust to rely on the power of civil society would therefore not lead to social innovation but result in the reproduction or even in the deepening of inequality.” Thus, innovative social relations are not about minimizing the role of the government, but about changing the role of the government sector to engage diverse people in public decision making. For instance, Weinzierl et al.

(Falanga, 2020; Szüdi & Kováčová, 2016; 2016) discuss meeting housing and neighborhood needs through innovation funding by collaboration between local government and non-profit organizations and municipal government in Vienna, Slovakia, and Lisbon. Overall, neighborhood regeneration should emphasize the innovative neighborhood governance, especially when civil societies are lacking power. Social capital is an important foundation of social innovation (Gerometta et al., 2005) and in the economic field and pedagogical research, social capital is defined in applicational manner (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 2001; Granovetter, 1983; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Robison et al. (2002) provide a clear definition of social capital by comparing different type of capitals such as organizational capital, which is resources related with sympathy in social relations. R. D. Putnam (2000) points out the decline of civil engagement in US in 90s and emphasized the role of social capital in political studies. R. E. Lang and Hornburg (1998) explain application of social capital in housing policy is due to central government retrench social welfare spendings and devolve the power of central governments in US. Considering the feature of political doctrine, R. Putnam (2001, p. 2) define social capital as a collection of "...features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit". Forrest and Kearns (2001) explain how neighborhood policies are connected with social cohesion and social capital. Social cohesion is measured with five aspects; common values, social order, low economic disparity and social capital and place attachment. R. Lang and Novy (2014, p. 1745) argue that linking social capital, which is considered as "the vertical ties between residents and people in positions of influence and power in different societal fields", is an important resource for building social cohesion in neighborhoods. This article considers linking social capital is a resource related with sympathy between residents and policy actors. Overall, neighborhood regeneration should be area-based intervention where the government emancipates to meet community physical needs via utilizing linking social capital (see Figure 1).

Fig.1 Analytical framework of neighborhood regeneration.



Transformation of urban policies in China

Urban regeneration between 1978 to 2016 under neoliberal urbanism (with Chinese characters) in China.

From the foundation of The People's Republic of China in 1949 until the economic reform in 1978, urban planning was mainly used as an instrument to construct efficient cities for 2nd industry such as metallurgical, mechanical, energy, chemical and electric power projects (Q. Chen et al., 2004; Ren, 2009). Housing were built by the government and allocated by companies to reduce production costs (Phoenix News Media, n.d.). During the cultural revolution, urban planning was not carried out and restarted around 1978 (Ren, 2009).

The Shenzhen Special Economic Zone was initiated in 1981 and privatization of land use rights was tested there and finally implemented nationally to solve the previous land wasting phenomena (Z. Chen, 1997). In 2005, Shenzhen started to implement urban regeneration policies due to the increasing property values and high labor costs (Lai & Tang, 2016). He and Wu (2009; L. H. Li, 2015) state that policies on privatization of land management and housing provision in 1980s are the cornerstone for neoliberal urbanization in China. Their argument of neoliberal urbanization in China is based on an understanding of neoliberalism as economic growth first approach and acknowledging contextualized neoliberal urbanism with Chinese characteristics. However, Buckingham (2017) questioned the co-existence of neoliberalism and "Chinese characteristics" because "Chinese characteristics" often involve strong government role. Moreover, Zhou, Lin & Zhang (2019) argued that anti-neoliberal urbanization in China takes place, and the government took a strong role, e.g., in the formation of Taobao villages supporting rural development or sharing bicycles system in cities. Nonetheless, big cities such as Shenzhen and Shanghai have experienced tremendous changes amid international competition for inward investments through strong state intervention (Liew, 2005). However, neoliberal urbanism impacted negatively on urban neighborhoods. For instance, He and Wu (2007) use property-led redevelopment in Shanghai and argue that residents in old neighborhoods had been displaced due to unaffordability of living costs and that economically exchangeable value are superseded over housing needs in old neighborhoods. Zhang (Y.-L. Chen & Shin, 2019) elaborates the negative social impacts of neoliberal housing reform in Nanjing, e.g., relocated residents are less compensated in displacement. Urban regeneration projects were accelerated by pro-economic land use policy.

The Chinese government aims to remedy this through providing public housing (e.g. public rental housing and affordable housing) in addition to commercial housing (L. Li & Chan, 2017). Furthermore, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development was established in replacement of the Ministry of Construction in 2008 to address urban problems (L. Li & Chan, 2017). Therefore, L. Li and Chan (2017) argue that urban policies started to shift from being market-oriented towards a hybrid mode e.g., housing privatization is pursued with provision of affordable housing. However, public housing is restricted for talent workers (e.g. professionals or highly skilled technicians or managers in Shenzhen) and excluded less skilled or less educated workers in the Pearl River Delta Region (Gong & MacLachlan, 2020).

Urban regeneration from 2017 and onwards for high quality economic development

The 19th session of national congress of the CCP announced that the main inharmoniousness of the society has been transformed from "the main contradiction between the people's growing material and cultural needs and the backward social production" in 1981 into "the contradiction between people's growing need for a better life and unbalanced and insufficient development"

in 2017. Furthermore, the congress also stated that they changed the focus of economy from high-speed growth to high quality development. Particularly, the economic goal of 2019 was set between 6% to 6.5%, which was lower than the economic growth rate in 2018 (Caixin.com, 2019). Furthermore, urban regeneration became a key policy term in recent years. Y. Chen and Lan (2021) reported that the policy clarifies the definition of urban regeneration as an implication for supporting sustainable urban regeneration rather than large-scale urban redevelopment, and demolition. The old neighborhood regeneration policy released in 2020 marks the change in urban planning for sustainable urban regeneration at national level (The State of Council of P.R.C., 2020).

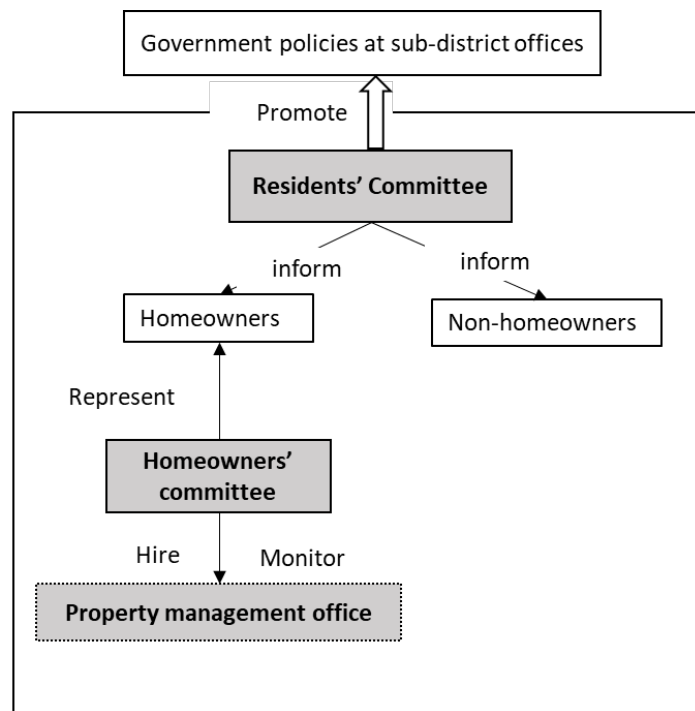
Old neighborhoods are residential buildings complex (or communities) built before 2000, which were built massively to meet housing demand quickly during a low economic development period with low building standards and are “out of control” for a long time (Cao, 2021; The State of Council of P.R.C., 2020; Z. Wu et al., 2021, p. 1). Some argue that the state of “out of control” is due to complicated homeownerships, the increasing number of elderlies and tenants in these communities, and the unclear financial responsibilities of private and public sectors, which is a neighborhood governance issue, while some argue it is related with neighborhoods that physical improvement is needed such as preservation of historic buildings and culture (Z. Wu et al., 2021). According to the national policy, the regeneration should include three levels: basic level through basic municipal infrastructural improvement such as water supply and external walls, refinement level such as adding elevators to buildings and enhancement level such as housekeeping service, and caring lunch service (The State of Council of P.R.C., 2020). Furthermore, regeneration should be conducted through interactive processes with residents to deliver better regeneration outcomes and to empower the residents (The State of Council of P.R.C., 2020). It should be the example of a new mode of urban regeneration, which aims to remedy social problems due to the prior focus on large-scale urban regeneration projects for fast economic growth since the economic reform in 1978. Thus, it is an important policy because deprived neighborhoods are the targets. While collaborative financing or multi-stakeholder collaboration in old neighborhood regeneration have been researched (Tang, 2020; Wang Shuping & Guo Fei, 2021) and J. Liu et al. (2020) criticized the policy for its focus on material aspects rather than social and holistic approaches.

Organizations within neighborhoods in Chinese cities

In general, the size of a neighborhood in Chinese cities often aligns with a residential area or a gated apartment complex, which typically houses several thousand persons and is called Shequ (Jia, 2016). Sub-district offices, which are the lowest level of government sectors, are direct vertical links between neighborhoods and the government. There are three non-government organizations within a neighborhood as outlined in Figure 2: residents’ committee, property management office, and homeowners’ committee. According to the Organization Law of City Residents Committee (The National People's Congress of P.R.C., 1990), the residents’ committee is defined as a grassroot self-governance organization to manage, educate and serve residents. Residents’ committees are also considered as important mediators between social organizations and the government sectors (H. Wang & Zhu, 2007). Since 1994, a professional property management in newly built residential area is required as a result of privatization of

properties (Fan, 1997). In Beijing, the property management was also implemented in old communities with management challenges, incomplete public facilities, lacking public green space and parking lots, serious shortage of funds and complicated homeownerships (Lin, 1998). Property management offices were allowed to profits, which are generated from converting public spaces into commercial space, and residents who were reluctant to pay services fees, were recommended to adapt to housing management under market economy and privatizing management system (Lin, 1998). According to the Ordinance of Property Management (Ordinance of Property management, 2016/2016), property managements are activities of property management offices selected and appointed by the homeowners to repair, maintain and manage the housing, supporting facilities and equipment and related sites, to safeguard environmental sanitation and related order activities in the property management area in accordance with the property service contract signed by the owners and property management offices. In 2009, specific guidance rule of homeowners' assembly and homeowners' committee were released under the Ordinance of Property Management. The main function of homeowners' committee is to monitor property management offices. Recently, property management is possible to be maintained by homeowners' committee when there is no property management office, in which homeowners pay less property management fee due to generated income by renting commercial tenants (Zhou, 2021). Overall, neighborhoods in Chinese cities are governed under three non-government organizations along with sub-district offices.

Fig.2 Relationship of three non-government organizations within neighborhoods.



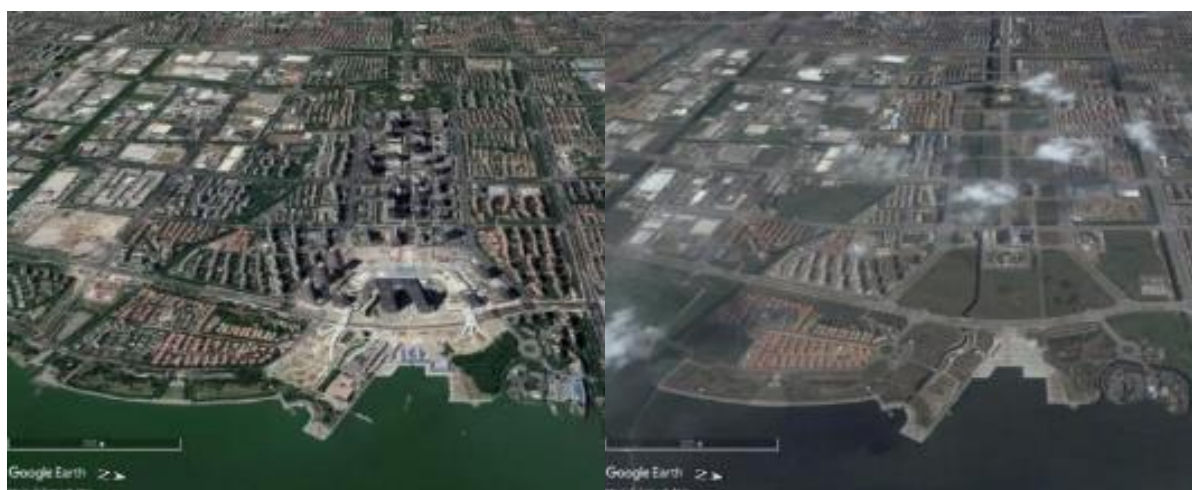
Case Study

Dong gang new town (dgnt) environmental regeneration project in suzhou industrial park

The visit of the advocate of economic reform, Deng Xiaoping, to Singapore in 1978 changed the negative view on capitalism in China (Horesh & Lim, 2017; ReminNet, 2020) and paved the way into the formation of SIP. In 1994 the Chinese government collaborated with the Singaporean government to form SIP as a part of neoliberal urbanization in China (Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, 2021). The SIP is built on a former village and four towns under the management body of the Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee (Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, 2019a). The development is featured with being large-scale in terms of the gentrification, economic growth, construction, and investment (Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, 2019a). Figure 3 shows an example of this large-scale urban development, where large area of green fields can be seen in 2003 from bird's-eye view on the left and many skyscrapers and high-rise buildings towards the west can be observed from bird's-eye view on the right.

DGNT was constructed in the 1980s, belongs to Loufeng sub-district (formerly Loufeng village) and is located at the east side of SIP adjacent to Suzhou old town as shown in Figure 4. Loufeng sub-district has 230 thousand residents represented by 24 communities equivalent to residents' committees (Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, n.d.). According to residents' statement and written documents, some of the residential buildings were built to relocate residents from Suzhou old town due to the urban development in 1980s (W. Wu, 2001). Further residential buildings were built to relocate communities due to construction of SIP in 1993 (W. Wu, 2001). DGNT is represented by Dogangjiayi Residents' Committee. Currently the population of DGNT consists of more than 15,000 Suzhou Hukou residents in 12 groups mostly managed by Yile Property Management Office.

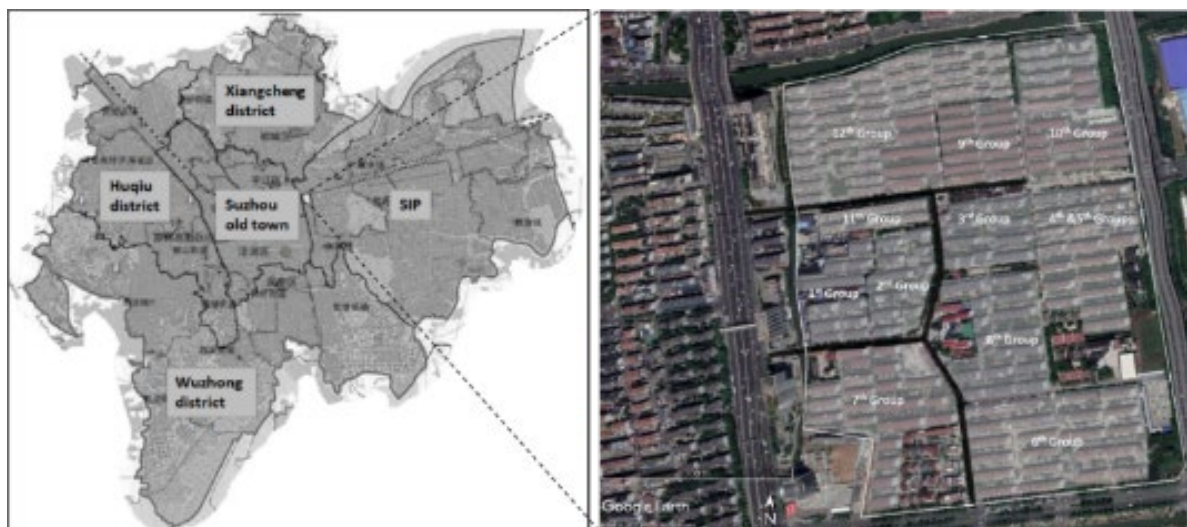
Fig.3 Northeast side of SIP in 2003 and now. Source: adapted from Google Earth.



The site is suitable for this article because DGNT regeneration was initiated during Suzhou was chosen as a pilot city for preparing national old neighborhood regeneration policy in 2019 (A. Wang, 2020). The neighborhood regeneration started in 2019 focusing on environmental aspects of DGNT as means to improve residents' quality of life (Suzhou

Industrial Park Administrative Committee, 2019b). It includes renovating and creating car parking spaces, upgrading street accessibility, public parks, public toilets, painting buildings walls and upgrading the marketplace implemented by a special task force organized by Loufeng sub-district office, which took a few months (MingchengSuzhou, 2019; Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, 2019b). Furthermore caring lunch services led by Loufeng sub-district office via charities of companies, volunteers and social workers to deliver food from a designated kitchen to elderly's homes started in 2020 as well (Suzhou city government, 2020). A comparison of DGNT before and after regeneration was displayed in public space of the study site (see Appendix). Figure 5 is a snapshot of the display focused on two outcomes of the regeneration, which are used for demonstrating the improvement of community environments. According to the public information in display, it was regenerated through a participatory process. Figure 6 shows the role of non-government organizations in DGNT regeneration, which was led by the task force office formed by Loufeng sub-district office, and initiated regeneration projects. In 2019, it was awarded as one of ten People's heart projects in Suzhou (Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, 2020).

Fig.4 The DGNT study site.



Source: adapted from a map of Suzhou central urban area land use planning 2006-2020 by Suzhou Natural Resources and Planning Bureau (2015) and Layout of DGNT is reproduced by author based on Google Earth northeast side of SIP in 2003 and now. Source: adapted from Google Earth.

Fig.5 Comparison before and after DGNT regeneration. Source: adapted from a photo of public display taken by author.

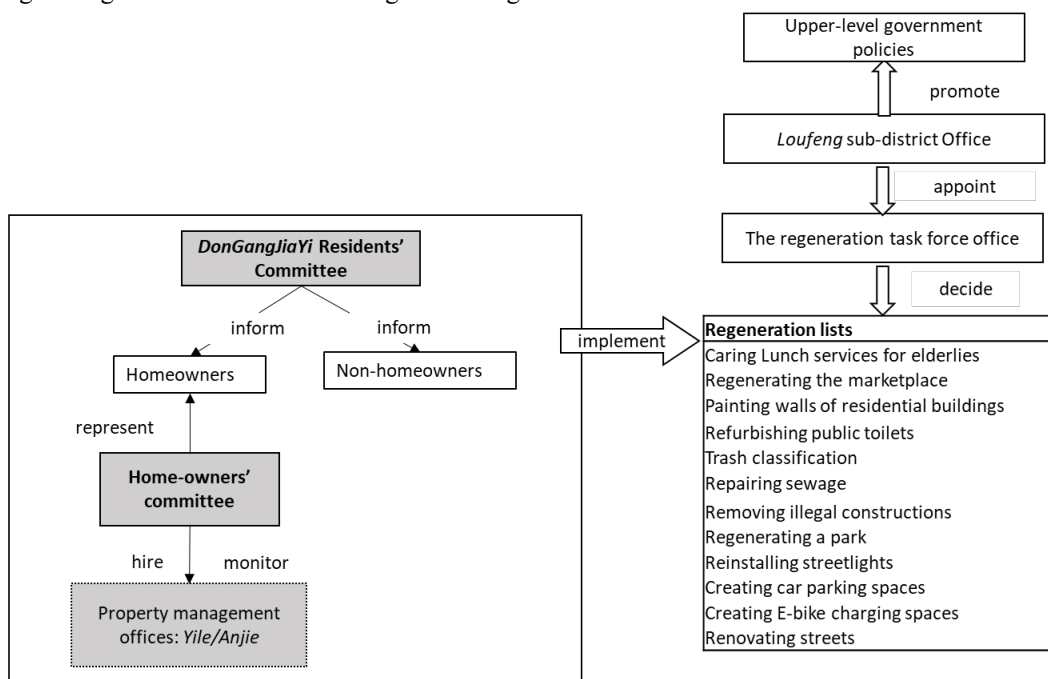


Renovation of public toilets

Smart use of vacant lands

Increasing street accessibility

Fig.6 Organizations involved during DGNT regeneration.



Research Methods

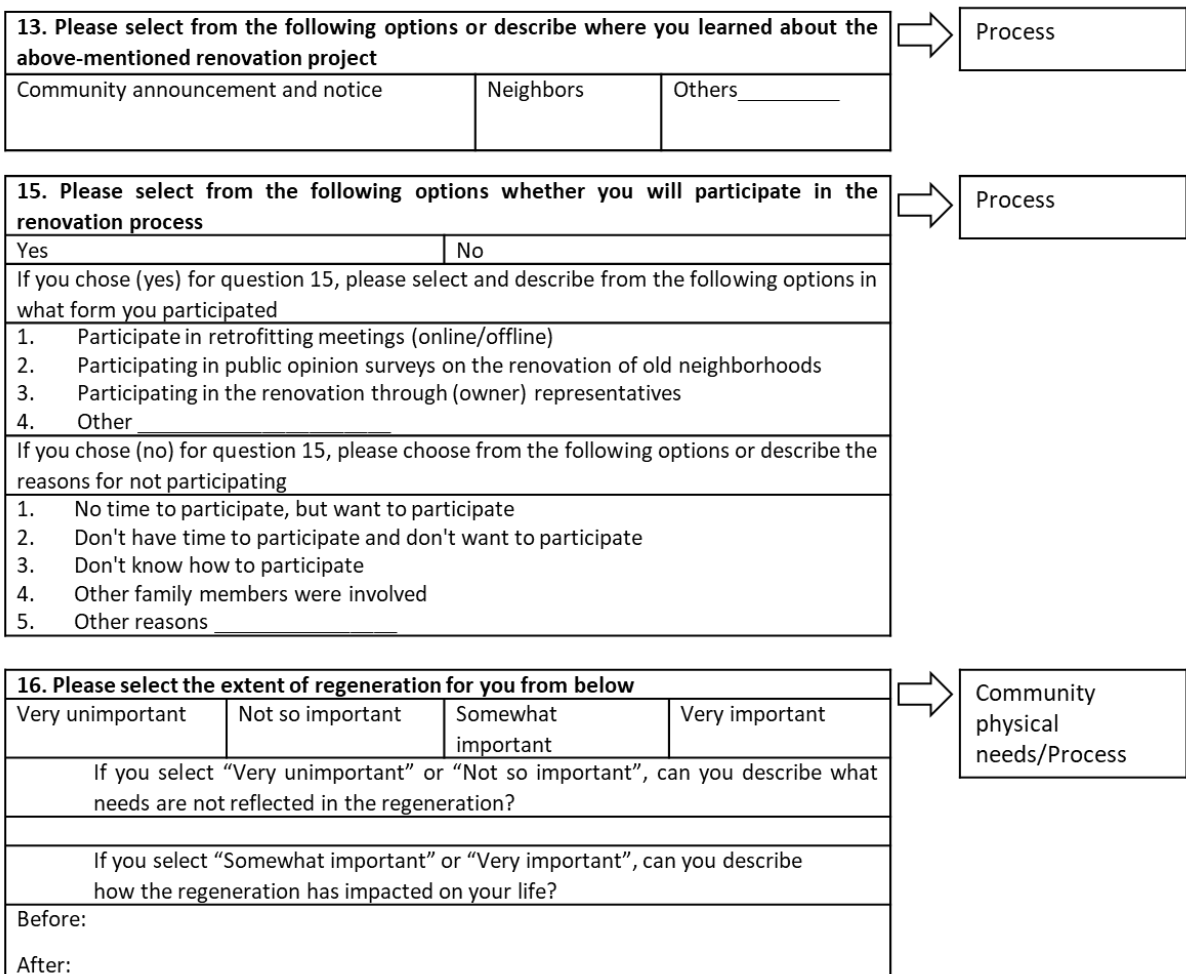
Data collection methods

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data through random sampling (Bryman, 2012) and residents were asked about the regeneration process. For instance, about information source regarding their knowledge on regeneration, and their attitudes towards the regeneration. Figure 7 shows the survey questions that were used for analysis. Regarding to the extent of importance of the regeneration in the survey question, participants were asked a following question based on their answers. Although often participants seemed to be reluctant to choose whether they think it is important or not, they liked to express their opinions. Therefore, both sub-questions were asked despite participants choice. The open questions were written down by the author as exactly as possible and memos was taken to describe perceived participants’ emotions during interviews (see Appendix). Data collection ended at 98 participants due to considering no more new information seemed to be gained by further investigation (Bryman, 2012).

Fig.7 Questionnaires as the survey instrument

Survey questions used in the analysis

Analytical framework



Data analytical methods

Community physical needs are analyzed in terms of regeneration achievements and its impact on residents physical and natural environmental needs. Regeneration achievements are categorized into positive and negative change to community environments, questioning the regeneration process and impacts on residents' physical environment needs. Positive and negative classification focused on comments on existing projects comparing before and after the regeneration. Then frequency analysis was conducted, and thematic analysis was also conducted for analyzing impacts on residents' needs. In terms of regeneration process, univariate analysis and thematic analysis were used. In addition, unmet needs, which also derived from analysis of survey question No.16. Taguette is a coding software used for thematic analysis and Excel was used for quantitative analysis. Overall, data analysis utilizes quantitative and qualitative methods. unit of data analysis in determining interaction/integration, friendship-making levels between different social groups within the studied communities (see Table 1).

Findings

Assessing the regeneration for improving community environment.

The comprehensive results on assessment are shown in Figure 8. Comments are categorized into positive or negative when it is related with environmental aspects. For instance, increased food price by regenerating the marketplace was not included in this assessment because it is not a description of environment, but it will be discussed as an impact towards physical needs in section 5.2. The below paragraphs present evaluation on each regeneration projects via statistical presentation and quoting participants comments.

Six participants stated that regenerating the marketplace brought positive change to the community environment from dirty, messy to clean, sanitary, and tidy. Many participants also stated that painting external walls of residential buildings, refurbishing public toilets, repairing sewage, reinstalling streetlights improved community environment from dirty, messy to clean, functional, sanitary, and safe. Regarding to trash classification, two participants stated that it changed community environment from rubbish everywhere to a tidier environment. Regenerating parks provided residents more choice for leisure, but some existing pocket parks are removed for creating car parking lots.

"Before the transformation, Having recreations at the outside of apartment complex. A new pavilion and paths within apartment complex, more entertainment and recreation place. Using pavilions quite frequently." (Participant #31)

"Before the renovation, dirty. After the renovation now a little better, concrete park was demolished. It is public place, now a parking lot instead, but no welfare." (Participant #40)

Four participants stated that creating car parking lots solved the problem of chaotic parking space, but some of parking space are too narrow to use.

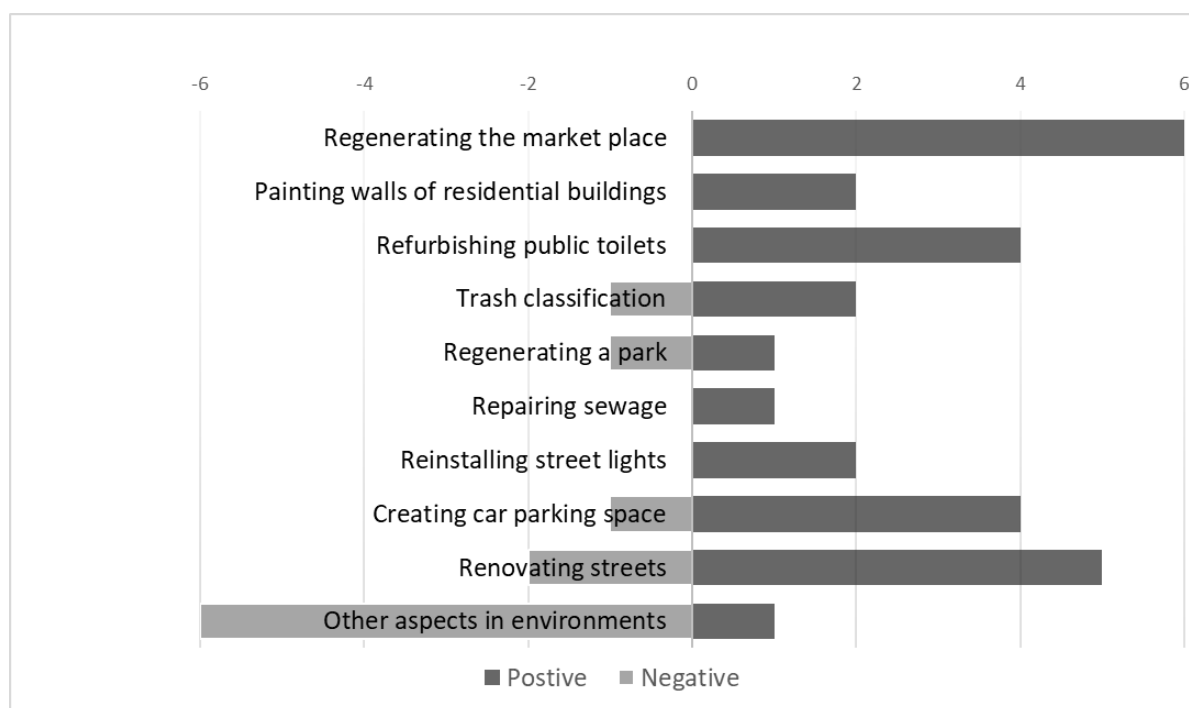
"Clean parking environment, parking spaces increased, the phenomenon of chaotic parking is basically gone." (Participant#1)

"The parking space was more comfortable before the renovation, but after the renovation, the parking space is too narrow, the door is not easy to open, and it would bump into other people's cars." (Participant#29)

Five participants stated that the environment improved due to the renovating streets solved traffic congestion, and widened streets, while some stated that it became dangerous due to the on-street parking space narrowed streets for moving vehicles. In addition, six participants stated that community environments deteriorated by decreased green space area due to the regeneration.

“After the renovation, less greenery, and no more birds. 5 years ago, there were many birds, very large trees, 5 stories high, but were cut.” (Participant #45).

Fig.8 Participants attitudes of environmental regeneration



Regeneration impacts on community physical environment needs

It impacts differently on residents' physical environmental needs (see Appendix 6). It motivated participant#76 to move closer to the marketplace. The participant stated there were many people before the renovation. Moved here because the food market is close. Less people

However, six participants also stated that they use Su'an marketplace instead of Donggang marketplace due to cheaper food price. Figure 9 shows the location of two marketplace, in which Su'an marketplace is 1.5 kilometers away from Donggang marketplace located in Su'an community, which took about 10 minutes with E-bikes

“After the renovation, never go there, buys food at food market near Su'an New Village. It's too expensive, a little Hong Kong.” (Participant #86)

“Before the renovation, Donggang food market is expensive to buy food, after the renovation, the food is even more expensive. Buying in food market around Su'an New Village is 3.5 yuan, here they sell it at 6, 7 yuan.”(Participant#59)

“The price is too high in the food market. Going to the food market around Su'an New Village by bike. they gave shopping cards, but not cost-effective.”(participant#38)

After the renovation, the food is too expensive. I don't go to Donggang food market but ride a E-bike or tricycle to the food market around Su'an New Village. 3, 4, times a week. It took me about ten minutes.

Some stated the high food price is the problem of tenants in the marketplace while some stated that they are due to high rent.

"After the transformation, the Food market is expensive, in addition to the satisfaction and comfort. The problem is tenants, do education. I ride an e-bike to the food market around Su'an New Village. The government has invested so much, but not affordable and convenient."(Participant#50)

"Before the renovation, the food was already expensive. After the renovation, the food is even more expensive. The reason is the high stall fee, I think."(Participant#73).

Fig.9 Locations of Su'an and Donggang marketplace.



Unmet needs

Figure 10 shows the frequency of participants statements on new problems or solutions, regeneration triggered problems, needs for extending regeneration actions by categorized needs. If the contents of comments are about regeneration, but residents express the needs of further implementation, it is regarded as needs for extending regeneration actions. The summary of regeneration triggered problems and extending regeneration actions will be spared here because they have been similar to the findings on regeneration assessment (section 5.1) and impacts of regeneration (section 5.2), and civic participation during the regeneration in latter section (section 5.4). In addition, new problems or solutions are those not related with the DGNT regeneration. And these new problems already exist before the regeneration, thus, they are also neglected problems.

Table 1 shows the frequently demanded needs. Public space for elderlies is one of most demanded needs by ten participants. Participants commented “the property company is responsible for building a senior room, but there isn't one yet. Playing cards outside in the winter by following the sun (Participant #18)”.

The second most frequently mentioned needs were problems related with residents' committee or neighbors in general. In terms of residents committee, a participant stated, “The residents committee is too bureaucratic, playing cards in the neighborhood wanted to go to the bathroom, but not allowed to go to the neighborhood committee internal bathroom, and then it was locked up” (Participant #25). “The residents committee has less communication with the people below, and there are policies that we don't even know about. Can't see the notice, they need to find ways to communicate with the public, now we all go to ask ourselves (Participant #92)” In addition, participants complain about their neighbors such as “Many tenants, aggressive landlords, many problems (Participant #66).”

Fig.10 Unmet needs after the regeneration.

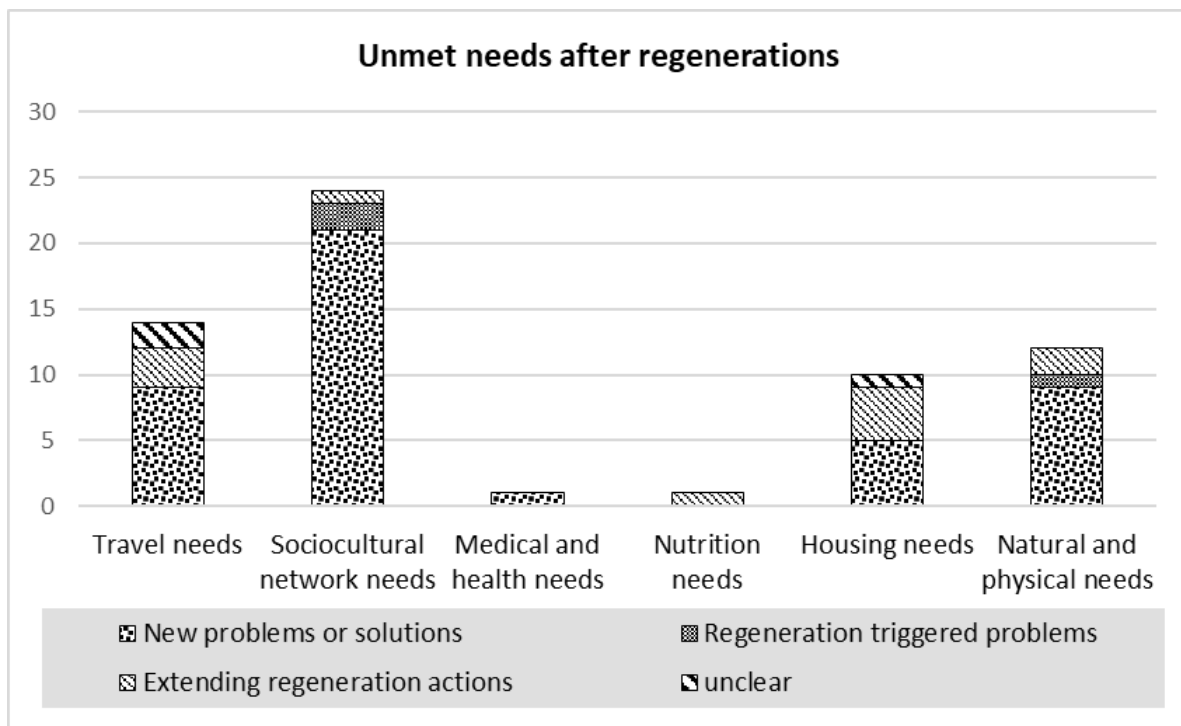


Table 1 : Frequency of new problems or solutions.

New problems or solutions	Total counts
Need public space for elderlies	10
Problems related with neighborhood committee or property management or neighbors in general	10
No hallway lights	5
Installing elevators	4
No exercise or activity place	3
Parking garage renewal	2
Less green space	2
Others	8

Civic participation during regeneration

Seventy participants stated that they did not participate in the regeneration process and ten participants stated that they participated (see Appendix). Among the ten participants who stated there were civic participation, five of them stated that they were engaged through surveys by government sectors and two of them stated that they participated through owners' representatives (see Appendix). One of participant stated that he had been a CCP member and knew the project through local CCP meetings. And he said that grid members are responsible for detecting problems in grid-based residential area. Among non-participants, thirty-five said that they had not known how to participate, and 11 also stated that they did not want to participate. Three participants gave health problems and their old age as reasons for not participating in the regeneration process (from memos taken during interviews). Most participant reasoned that it is not their jobs to regenerate their communities (see Appendix).

In addition, many participants questioned the process of regeneration. For example, some participants questioned the transparency of parking fees distribution. In addition, some participants suspected that the regeneration mainly focused on areas that can be seen, thus it is superficial. For instance, participant#25 stated that the roads at the outside of the apartment complex is renovated, the inside of the apartment complex, such as greenery, is still poor. Participant#84 stated that after the walls in stairways were painted, the paints all fell. Furthermore, participants also questioned caring lunch services due to narrow and prioritized targets. For instance, participant#64 stated that caring lunch service is needed, but only it is only applicable to elderlies whose children do not live in Suzhou and do not live together. You see he is also 80 years old and cannot apply. When it's snowing in winter and it's not convenient for me to get groceries. Moreover, participant#72 stated caring lunch service is important, it is for municipal labor model citizen and free of charge. For special, narrow targets. Participant#13 also questioned the role of homeowners' committee when the participant was asked the civic participation process.

Discussion and conclusion

As shown in Figure 1, DGNT neighborhood regeneration is analyzed based on neighborhoods,

socially innovative neighborhood governance and social capital. Overall, the evaluation of the data collected in DGNT suggests that the linking social capital was not strong and consequently the process was not emancipated. Residents stated that the membership of residents' committee fluctuates frequently, and they are not well connected with residents. In addition, resident stated that they do not know if homeowners' committee exists. Furthermore, the property management office was not transparent in terms of collected car parking fees, which residents consider as income for public. Consequently, the level of civic participation is rather low, and the case study shows that the implementation of old neighborhood regeneration policies has limited effect on the emancipation process.

As consequence, the regeneration is not a complete success, although many initiatives for meeting community needs have been implemented in DGNT. Firstly, it seems that creating car parking space sacrificed community green space needs. Therefore, car-owning families' needs were prioritized through problematic ways and by taking away physical environment needs of other community members. This is in contrast to the local government's attitude towards the regeneration as a successful project as shown in Figure 5 and the local government may have neglected the community need of green space. Furthermore, the parking space was regenerated by a poor plan, which caused a dangerous walking environment for vulnerable groups such as elderlies and children. Some participants also heard that there will be an underground parking space, but the rumor disappeared into the air. Secondly, caring lunch service is demanded due to challenges in preparing meals for some elderlies, particularly in winter, but elderlies complained that the requirement of benefiting from this service are too high and that they are excluded. Thirdly, Donggang marketplace became a cleaner and modernized shopping environment as six residents stated, which led to increased food price. Six other residents stated that they use Su'an marketplace, which is 1.5 kilometers away from Donggang marketplace. Although, food price in Donggang marketplace was more expensive than Su'an marketplace, the neighborhood regeneration did not address the problem but accelerated it.

In addition, the findings on unmet needs show that senior needs for public space, a specific need for socio-cultural networks, are mostly neglected for profit-driven private spaces. Many elderlies gather in outside public space to play card games (Figure 11) and perhaps most elderlies would do other activities if there were senior rooms. Elderlies complain that they do not have in-door senior rooms because the property management office rented retail space within communities for commercial card playing purposes. Usually, such commercial card playing places charge by time and by providing relevant service such as meal services. According to the Law of Punishments in Public Security (The National People's Congress of P.R.C., 2012), it is not allowed to seek profit and facilitate gambling in commercial card playing places. Despite discouragement of gambling, commercial card playing spaces can be found in communities or high-end shopping malls. Probably, from the property management office perspective as a private sector, providing commercial card playing spaces did meet the need of seniors' in-door space and makes profits for themselves as well.

Furthermore, the findings on civic participation also indicate that the residents may not be empowered to take part into the regeneration. Some residents stated that it is not their job to

contribute to decisions about regenerating their community environments. Although these decisions would impact on their quality of life, they sounded like they have been talking about someone else's community. These opinions are different from those of residents who stated clearly that they did not want to participate due to personal reasons. This finding aligns with the statistical finding on low number of participations in the process.

The objectives of this article are to theorize neighborhood regeneration and to analyze neighborhood regeneration in China. Neighborhood regeneration is explained by concepts of functional neighborhoods, emancipation, and linking social capital. The case study shows that endeavors are made to improve the quality of life through improved functional neighborhoods. Furthermore, the findings also indicate weak linking social capital between residents, non-government organizations, and the local governments. Therefore, the regeneration is not a complete success due to weak social relations among residents and local non-government organizations. Overall, it can be concluded that local organizations in DGNT became the obstacles of emancipation during neighborhood regeneration. Neighborhood concept, socially innovative neighborhood governance, and social capital can be helpful to unravel social relations that are needed for successful regeneration. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that the argument is based on a single case study, thus more neighborhood regeneration projects in urban Chinese cities should be tested further to understand social relations among residents, local non-government organizations, and local government. In addition, this paper focuses on residents' perspective of social relations within neighborhoods, future studies approach social relations from local non-government organizations and local government might deepen the understanding of neighborhood regeneration process. For practical suggestions, this article suggests to strength the role of the homeowners' committee by acknowledging the diverse background of homeowners and the residents' committee memberships should be stabilized. In doing so, improving the quality of life of residents would become the priority of residents' committees. Overall, this article intends to contribute to the discussion on change in austerity urbanism for better governance by focusing on vertical social relations within neighborhoods in Chinese context.

Fig.11 Residents' playing cards in open space.



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Appendix

1. Photos of Public display on regeneration.



Figure5

Figure5

Figure5

1. Number of participants and their methods

Participation methods	Number of participated residents
Participated in government organized surveys	5
Participated through (Owners') representatives	2
Others	3
Total	10

2. Number of non-participants and their reasons

Reasons of non-participation	Number of not-participated residents
No time, but want to participate	8
No time, and don't want to participate	11
Don't know how to participate	35
Others	16
Total	70

3. Thematic analysis of opened answers for not participating.

Themes	Total counts
Government jobs, not residents	14
Didn't live here	1
Spontaneous involvement	1
Difficult to participate	2
Didn't know about civic participation	1

4. Memos.

#5	She is involved in meal delivery volunteer activities. There is a volunteer service platform in Suzhou Park, where you can see a wide variety of support recruitment information. I have also seen recruitment information for meal delivery volunteers, but only for people in my own community. I also saw information about volunteer recruitment for renovation of old neighborhoods. I applied and went to the community to talk to the staff. Then they said they would not let me go to the residents' homes. I could only do administrative work in the office, such as getting a senior citizen card. They also told me that the community has a temporary old neighborhood retrofit team. The team oversees the renovation, and the neighborhood committee is just carrying out the tasks given to them.
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#7	At first, I did the questionnaire with one participant, and then several people came over. It was later discovered that two of them were couples. The wife was loud and a bit emotional when she was giving her opinion.
#8	The participant had strong opinions about the new parking lot. He said that many trees were cut down. There was a talk of building an underground parking lot before, but then it was dropped. He didn't seem to be very much in favor of building a parking lot. The participant's opinion is linked to my article, but it is not reflected in the questionnaire.
#13	The participant says there should have been but wasn't, so it is slightly involved. Not involved or uninvolved. After living there for 18 years, I don't know if there is a homeowner's committee, and I don't know if it has played any role (This sentence is copied to memo from participant answers to survey question 15.1., which was not used in the analysis.)
#14	The people in the neighborhood committee change often and don't know each other. The previous person went to other surrounding communities. Now comes a new one.
#18	The property is considered responsible because it manages the common parts, including the stores. But all of them are rented to mahjong parlors and no senior activity rooms are built.
#20	When I confirmed whether he thought the green renovation was bad, he didn't answer directly. He said he was just giving an example of his opinion.
#28	As I approached the residents, there were four older women there peeling chicken head rice. When I asked how many cars you have in your home, one of them asked if tricycles count. Then everyone laughed
#34	Property owners take bribes. He spoke very fine, it is a cigarette, not a pack, and to China brand, to several hundred dollars.
#44	He explained the grid member is a party member is responsible for several buildings found problems doing inspections. Small area that a group, Dong Gang New Village is too large, divided into more than a dozen groups, into each group to brush look into the door.
#45	Property costs are not quite the same, 72 RMB per year is the price for demolished tenants.
#49	When I first asked him to do the questionnaire, he took me to the site and explained to me the difference between before and after the remodeling. In particular, he talked about the location of the mailboxes that were moved during the remodeling and said they were particularly obstructive. When he said it, he was so loud that he recruited two other military people to come. The other two also helped me make two questionnaires.
#50	The horse road refers to the main road within Dong Gang New Village.
#64	I asked if he understood the following renovation is, he said he was not satisfied with the lunch provided by the Love Kitchen. He looked at the old man walking by and said, "Look, he is also over 80 years old also does not qualify. I repeated that I was a graduate student in urban planning for my thesis. He said he had a problem that I couldn't solve and didn't continue to answer the rest of the questions.

5. The regeneration impacts on residents' needs.

Comments	Participants
Children was hit at the mailbox.	#48
Roadside parking in the area caused the danger due to the narrowed streets. I have seen the cars hit e-bikes many times.	#84
The environment of food market is good, and the price of food is expensive. Sometimes I go to Su'an New Village to buy vegetables.	#24
After the renovation, the food is too expensive. I don't go to Donggang food market, but ride a E-bike or tricycle to the food market around Su'an New Village . 3, 4, times a week. It took me about ten minutes. The price difference is about 1 yuan for vegetables and 2, 3 yuan for fresh meat.	#28
The price is too high in the food market. Going to the food market around Su'an New Village by bike. they gave shopping cards, but not cost-effective.	#38
After the transformation, the Food market is expensive, in addition to the satisfaction and comfort. The problem is tenants, do education. I ride an e-bike to the food market around Su'an New Village . The government has invested so much, but not affordable and convenient.	#50
Before the renovation, Donggang food market is expensive to buy food, after the renovation, the food is even more expensive. Buying in food market around Su'an New Village is 3.5 yuan, here they sell it at 6, 7, yuan.	#59
Before the renovation, the food was already expensive. After the renovation, the food is even more expensive. The reason is the high stall fee, I think.	#73
There were many people before the renovation. Moved here because the food market is close. Less people. But no food market parking lot.	#76
After the renovation, never go there, buys food at food market near Su'an New Village . It's too expensive, a little Hong Kong.	#86
There were benches on the main street before the renovation. And it was cool. After the renovation the main road trees were cut down	#53