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Keywords

China, decentralization, neighborhood governance, the state.

Abstract

In a context of global moves towards decentralization and neighborhood governance, this paper focuses on neighborhood governance in Nanjing, China. Drawing on interviews and observations in 32 neighborhoods, the paper asks how neighborhood governance is working out in different neighborhoods. Four modes of neighborhood governance are identified and described: collective consumption, service privatization, civic provision, and state-sponsored governance. The paper argues that neighborhood governance works out on the ground in diverse and complex ways, such that scholars need to be cautious when seeking to generalize about neighborhood governance (at the scale of the city, let alone the nation-state or the globe). With appropriate caution, the paper also argues that: relationships between actors are important units of analysis when considering how effective governance is achieved in different neighborhoods; diversity and complexity in neighborhood governance partly reflect the role of the state in these relationships; and the role of the state partly reflects, in turn, processes of policy evolution in particular neighborhoods.

Introduction

Across the world, over the last three decades, there have been moves towards decentralization and neighborhood governance. The reasons for this ‘global drive’ towards decentralization have been many (Ezcurra and Rodríguez-Pose, 2013). A ‘revisionist liberalism’ sees a need to supplement market deregulation with ‘good governance’ (Mohan and Stokke, 2000), including ‘sound institutions’ at the national but also the regional and local scales (Hafteck, 2003). In democracies, local institutions have been viewed as more likely to engage citizens (Blakeley, 2010) and to deliver services responsive to citizen-consumers (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). International governmental organizations have seen decentralization to local governments, private-sector firms, and third-sector organizations as one means of promoting democratic participation and accountability, and ultimately governmental effectiveness (Batterby and Fernando, 2006).

These moves have been accompanied by debates about whether decentralization and the rise of neighborhood governance reflect developments in ‘global policy’ (Cochrane, 2007) – especially neoliberalization – or more national, regional, and local processes. Brenner and Theodore (2002) assert that ‘the new localism’ should be viewed as the ‘spaces of neoliberalism’. Decentralization should be seen as a response to the absence of a sustainable regulatory fix at the national scale in the context of globalization. Within the literature on neoliberalism, there have been debates between ‘Marxists’ and ‘Foucauldians’ (Peck and Tickell, 2012). The former imagine an upper-case Neoliberalism: a class-based ideology, characterized by fixed attributes, hierarchical power, and global reach (Ong, 2007). The latter imagine a lower-case neoliberalism: a logic of governing and technique of administration, characterized by contingency and hybridity (ibid). These debates have generated a range of useful concepts for thinking about policy developments around the world. Brenner and Theodore (2016) distinguish between ‘neoliberal ideology’ and ‘actually existing neoliberalism’. For Peck et al (2009), we should focus on neoliberal ideology but also the ongoing process of neoliberalization, which happens across uneven institutional landscapes and produces ‘varieties of neoliberalism’ or ‘localized neoliberalizations’ (see also Brenner *et al.*, 2010).

Such concepts have not been enough for some scholars, however, for whom the frame of neoliberalism, however well-developed, obscures too much of contemporary urban policy development. For these scholars, cities may find or place themselves in global networks of (neoliberal) policy circulation, but they are also territories with histories that make them

distinctive places (Robinson, 2005). Furthermore, where cities do find or place themselves in policy networks, these networks are multiple and not just global but regional too (Parnell and Robinson, 2006).

Widespread moves towards decentralization and ongoing debates about neoliberalization provide the broad context for the present paper. It is based on a study of neighborhood governance in urban China and makes the following contributions. First, it reports on recent developments in the Chinese case, which is an interesting case because phenomena like the rise of private neighborhoods and the emergence of networked governance at the neighborhood scale remind some commentators of developments in global or Western urban policy commonly interpreted as expressions of neoliberalism (Lee and Zhu, 2006; He and Wu, 2009; Wu, 2010, 2016). However, the continued presence of a strong and interventionist national state in China has led some to recommend caution in the making of such interpretations (Cartier, 2011; Wu, 2018; Zhou *et al.*, 2019).

Second, the paper reports on recent developments in neighborhood governance in the case of Nanjing, which is an interesting case because Nanjing is both an ‘ordinary city’ of the kind often neglected in the construction of urban theory (Robinson, 2006), and a ‘prototypical’ city in the terms used by Brenner (2003) and the context of China. For Brenner, prototypes are the first cases of something likely to become more generalized. When focusing on neighborhood governance in China, Nanjing appears to be such a case. In 1999, it was selected as one of 12 Experimental Cities for Neighborhood Governance and Community Reform. Between 2012 and 2019, it hosted eight National Experimental Zones for Community Governance and Service Innovation.

Third, the paper takes a mid-level view of neighborhood governance. The focus is on neither national or city-wide policies (a view from altitude that overlooks diversity on the ground), nor just one or two neighborhoods (a narrow focus that makes generalization and theory-building difficult). Rather, the study compared neighborhood governance on the ground in 32 different neighborhoods of Nanjing. What was made visible by this view? Neighborhood governance is working out in Nanjing in diverse and complex ways. We should be cautious when generalizing about decentralization – at the scale of the city, let alone the nation-state, let alone the globe. Still, beyond a general claim about complexity and diversity, four modes of neighborhood governance can be identified in Nanjing. We derive these four modes from critiques of existing frameworks – generated from both Chinese and western contexts – and analysis of empirical material collected in Nanjing. The alternative framework we present distinguishes modes of neighborhood governance by their dominant relationship (as opposed

to their dominant actor or rationale) and captures better how neighborhood governance is achieved and the different governance arrangements currently found in Nanjing's neighborhoods. These arrangements are both relevant to global debates about local governance and the role of the state, and, at the same time, firmly embedded in the particularities of Chinese urban society.

Neighborhood governance in urban China

'Neighborhood', in this paper, is taken to mean *shequ* in the Chinese context – 'the collective social body formed by those living within a defined geographic boundary' (Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2000). Defined in this way, neighborhoods often cover one or more residential estates (*xiaoqus*) and coincide with the administrative territory of the Residents' Committee (RC) – an important institution of Chinese local government (Yip, 2014).

These associations with *xiaoqus* and the RC bestow the neighborhood in urban China with a triple identity. As a spatial entity with clear boundaries, the neighborhood is a platform for material exchange based on contractual relationships and clearly defined property rights. As a social entity, the neighborhood is where social ties develop and collective actions get organized on the basis of shared values and common goals. By these first and second identities, some observers have been reminded of neoliberal policies emphasizing private property and market exchange alongside social capital and community self-governance. However, the Chinese neighborhood is also a unit of administration. RCs are vehicles for party leadership at the neighborhood scale. Through them, policy interventions are made, access to resources is provided, and opportunities for participation are selectively offered.

The development of neighborhood governance can happen by quick and violent imposition from outside or more gradual and peaceful internal processes (Thurston, 1998). The following section reviews existing studies of neighborhood governance in China along these two lines. First, the top-down promotion of neighborhood governance by way of strengthened state agencies is considered. Then, we consider the bottom-up shaping of neighborhood governance by civil-society organizations.

Promoting neighborhood governance from the top down

The retreat of the Chinese state in the 1990s, witnessed in cities particularly in the demise of state-owned enterprises and the privatization of housing, left a vacuum in urban governance at

the neighborhood level (Wu, 2002). The top-down perspective on neighborhood governance in China focuses on the actions of the state in filling this vacuum (e.g. Tomba, 2014; Wu, 2018). Since the 1990s, the local state has been ‘reorganized’ in China (Sigley, 2006) through a national Community Building program and various neighborhood governance innovation projects. The principles of Community Building, as summarized by Shieh (2011), include: state retreat from welfare responsibilities; maximizing the contribution of societal actors to service provision; and strengthening of neighborhood-based self-governance.

This process of decentralization has been ‘fragmented’ and ‘ambiguous’ (Zhou, 2014). In some communities, RCs, although legally defined as ‘autonomous mass organizations’ (National People’s Congress, 1989), have been revitalized as ‘nerve tips’ of the state with new powers and responsibilities (Read, 2000). New neighborhood service systems have been established, made up of party secretaries, outposts of government departments, professional community working stations, and RC-led civic groups. RCs have been vertically integrated into the governance networks of local and super-local authorities (Ohmer, 2007; Heberer, 2009) focused primarily on maintaining social stability and enhancing state legitimacy (Yip, 2014). However, in other communities – especially gated communities – RCs have been relatively marginal figures (Min, 2009). Furthermore, where decentralization has failed to find new social and private actors capable or willing to participate in neighborhood governance, there has been a ‘return of the state’ in the form of direct intervention by state bureaucracies (Wu, 2018) and ‘micro-governing’ by local authorities (Tomba, 2014).

Constructing neighborhood governance from the bottom up

In addition to local state reorganization, and in dialectical relationship to it, this period also witnessed changes in homeownership, the rise of homeowners as a social force, and new institutions of neighborhood governance reflecting these developments. The most important of these new institutions are the Property Management Company (PMC), a professional provider of ‘territorial collective goods’ (Foldvary, 1994), and the Homeowners’ Association (HOA), a coordination system for collective consumption (Chen and Webster, 2005).

Taking the PMCs first, one way to understand them is using Buchanan’s club theory (Buchanan, 1965). In this view, privatized neighborhoods become ‘consumer clubs’ where welfare services are not provided by the state but are allocated by the market as ‘club goods’ to homeowners who can afford them (Wu, 2005). Such clubs are efficient in theory because membership by homeownership limits free-riding while membership fees (property management fees) structure collective consumption (Chen and Webster, 2005). In practice,

however, there exist numerous reports of homeowners' disputes (*weiquan* – literally right-defending activities), often related to poor performance in the area of property maintenance by PMCs (Tomba, 2005; Yip, 2014).

This brings us to the HOAs. These often emerge from homeowners' disputes as a social mechanism for the protection of property rights. As such, they possess two main identities. First, they act as representatives of homeowners in the negotiation and implementation of property management contracts. In doing so, they counterbalance the power of PMCs in the governance vacuum left by retreat of the state (Tomba, 2005; He, 2015). Second, for individual homeowners, HOAs are platforms for collective decision-making around collective consumption. Free-riding problems are managed by formal covenants or norms circulated through social networks (Shi, 2010; Fu and Lin, 2014). However, in neighborhoods where social networks are weak and associated levels of trust and sense of community are low, collective action problems can raise transaction costs in the area of property management and also lead to disputes among neighbors themselves (Shi, 2008).

In summary, neighborhood governance in urban China has been characterized in recent decades by expansion in both the number of actors and the complexity of power relations between these diverse actors (He, 2015). Multiple actors now compete, conflict, co-operate, and compromise in the everyday governance of neighborhood life. What we need to know more about is how this plays out in different neighborhoods, which are different because each has its own relationship to a spatially uneven state (Gui *et al.*, 2009) and each has its own social character (Shi, 2010) and civic capacity (Chen, 2016). The next section describes the research design, which sought to make visible the diversity of neighborhood governance arrangements and experiences in Nanjing – and to make sense of that diversity.

The research

Nanjing is one of the largest cities in the East China region with an administrative area of 6,512 km² and a permanent population of 8.34 million (Nanjing Statistical Bureau, 2018). Of this population, 6.81 million urban residents are organized in over 3,500 *xiaoqus* and 937 RCs (ibid). As mentioned in the introduction, Nanjing is particularly interesting from the perspective of neighborhood governance. Alongside the RCs can be found around 600 HOAs (He and Wang, 2015). The city as a whole has been an Experimental City for Neighborhood Governance and Community Reform (1999) and has played host to eight Experimental Zones for Community Governance and Service Innovation (2012-2019).

Within Nanjing, a sample of 32 neighborhoods was constructed, focusing on the six inner-city urban districts of Xuanwu, Qinhuai, Jianye, Gulou, Qixia, and Yuhuatai, and the newly urbanised areas of Jiangning District – which together make up 18.48% of the land area and 80% of the population of Nanjing (Figure 1). Sampling involved two stages. First, neighborhoods were stratified into four groups used by the Chinese General Society Survey and other studies (e.g. Yu and Tang, 2018; Zhang, 2018). In this typology, ‘traditional neighborhoods’ refer to lane- or courtyard-based housing, usually built in the inner city by the private or public sectors before the housing reform of the 1990s. ‘Work units’ refer to state-owned, self-contained ‘micro-regions’ with juxtaposed spaces of workplaces, residential areas, and social service areas, usually built during the socialist era before the 1980s and privatized during the 1990s. ‘Commodity housing estates’ refer to gated and guarded housing with private amenities built after the 1998 housing reform. ‘Affordable housing’ refers to welfare housing for relocated residents, migrants, and low-income residents, provided by either the public sector or private developers with a subsidized price controlled by the government. Stage 2 then involved random sampling of 6-12 neighborhoods from each of these four groups.

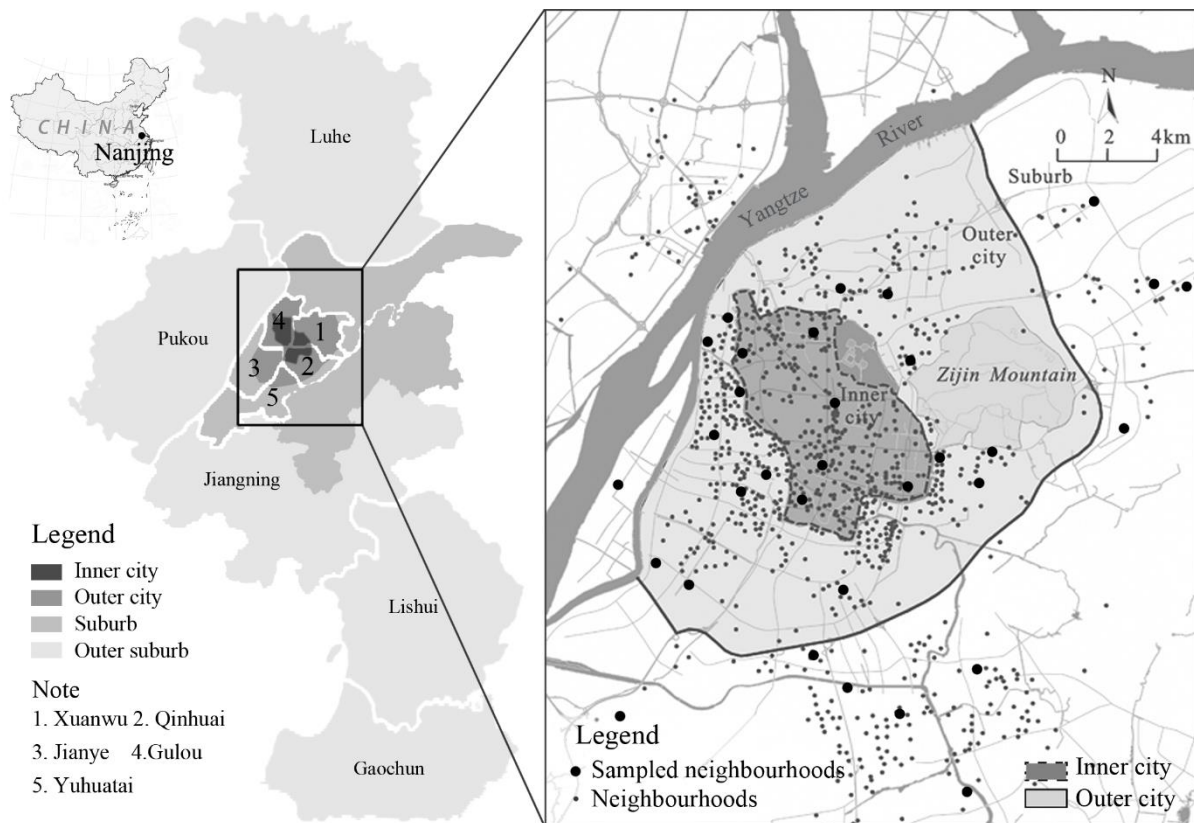


Figure 1 Locations of sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, China

The research involved eight months of fieldwork in Nanjing during 2017 and 2018. Four methods of data collection were adopted: interviews, site visits and observations, participant observation in neighborhood meetings, and reading of relevant policy and other documents. The primary method was interviews. With the help of the Nanjing Civil Affairs Bureau, one of the authors was introduced as an independent researcher to local RCs and community-based organizations. A total of 60 interviews were completed with government officers (4 interviews), community directors and party secretaries (22 interviews), social workers (7 interviews), property managers (2 interviews), members of Homeowners' Associations (2 interviews), and residents (23 interviews – see Appendix for details). Interviewees were offered anonymity in return for access. Therefore, all interviewees and their neighborhoods have been anonymized in the paper. The interviews focused on the rationales for neighborhood governance (effective service delivery, participation/self-government, social control etc.), the key actors involved (RCs, HOAs, PMCs etc.), their roles (as decision-makers, service-providers, consumers etc.), and the relationships between them (collaboration, contracting, integration etc.). These points of focus provided a framework for coding of the transcripts produced from interview recordings. During data collection and analysis, four modes of neighborhood governance gradually became apparent, distinguished by the central relationship in the governance network.

Four modes of neighborhood governance

Existing frameworks for viewing neighborhood governance in China have tended to focus on which actor is dominant – what might be termed ‘the ‘who’ question’ – and to classify neighborhoods according to whether their governance is led by the RC (representing the local state), the HOA (representing society), or the PMC (representing the market). These three organizations constitute a tripartite actor-based classification of neighborhood governance arrangements, which has been widely adopted in Chinese literature on the subject.

An alternative framework for viewing neighborhood governance can be found in Lowndes and Sullivan (2008). Drawing on the English case, but also political economy theory of more general relevance, they identify four rationales for neighborhood governance: the civic rationale (emphasizing participation), the political rationale (emphasizing accountability and responsiveness), the economic rationale (emphasizing efficiency and effectiveness), and the social rationale (emphasizing joined-up local action). These rationales are guiding principles for organizing neighborhood practices. Compared with the actor-based framework that

dominates the existing Chinese literature, Lowndes and Sullivan's rationale-based framework is focused less on the 'who' question and more on the 'why' question, i.e. the justification for neighborhood governance. The Lowndes and Sullivan framework may be drawn from the English case and may not be appropriate to the Chinese case in many respects, but it does suggest that alternative ways of viewing neighborhood governance in China might be possible.

To develop our own framework – a framework that best captures the diversity of neighborhood governance on the ground in Nanjing – we drew lessons from the existing actor-based framework, Lowndes and Sullivan's rationale-based framework, and the empirical material we collected in Nanjing. Diverse governing practices and hybrid forms of governance were observed, which cannot be fully explained through the lens of either the dominant actor or the dominant rationale. On the one hand, if we were to classify the observed governance arrangements according to dominant actors, we would find that most sampled neighborhoods would fall into the market-led category, leaving a few led by the state and almost none led by society. This is because, as Wei (2008) has noted, the state-society-market framework fails to distinguish adequately between different neighborhoods, since it only takes into account variation in the dominant actor and overlooks interactions between dominant actors and 'ordinary' organizations in the ongoing process of neighborhood governance. On the other hand, if the rationale-based classification was applied, a number of the sampled neighborhoods (particularly affordable and traditional neighborhoods maintained by local state agencies) would not fit into any categories, since they are not dominated by concerns for, say, participation or accountability or efficiency. This is because Lowndes and Sullivan's framework does not accommodate China's strong state power and weak civil society at the grassroots level (Ohmer, 2007; Heberer, 2009), and is thus not 'directly applicable' to urban China (Yip, 2014, p. 4).

Given these considerations, we propose a relationship-based classification of neighborhood governance. This typology not only addresses the 'who' question by specifying the key actors involved in each governance network, and the 'why' question by considering the interests of these actors, but also emphasizes the 'how' question – how neighborhood governance is achieved – by specifying the key actions in neighborhood governance and identifying the interrelationships between key actors on which these actions depend. Four key inter-organizational relationships were identified from the sampled neighborhoods in Nanjing: the relationship between the PMC and the HOA, between the PMC and homeowners, between the HOA and homeowners, and between local government and residents. These relationships

and their place in the governance network gave us our four ideal types of neighborhood governance (Table 1).

Neighborhoods characterized by a dominant PMC-HOA relationship are managed by the *collective consumption* mode, where collective decision making and collective consumption are organized by a fully-functioning HOA that is able to contract out neighborhood service provision to a professional PMC. All the sampled neighborhoods fitting into this mode are commodity neighborhoods (Column 2 in Table 1). When there is no effective self-governing mechanism for collective decision making, individual homeowners have to act on their own to negotiate with the market institution about neighborhood service delivery. In such a situation, the PMC-homeowner relationship becomes the dominant relationship in neighborhood governance, leading to the emergence of the second mode: *service privatization*. This mode of governance arrangement can be found in some commodity neighborhoods and other neighborhoods where neighborhood goods and services have been fully commodified (Column 3 in Table 1). The third mode – *civic provision* – arises when homeowners actively participate in their HOAs (or other forms of self-governing organizations) and take full control of neighborhood service provision. HOAs act both as the primary decision maker and the service provider in neighborhoods fitting this mode of governance. In these neighborhoods (normally privatized work units and traditional neighborhoods, Column 4 in Table 1), neighborhood governance effectiveness is conditioned by the relationship between homeowners and the HOA, where public services are provided directly by a civic organization governed by residents themselves. When either the civic organization (e.g. the HOA) or the market actor (e.g. the PMC) fails to govern effectively, the local government may intervene directly in neighborhood issues. This is often the case in dilapidated neighborhoods suffering from varying degrees of social crisis (Column 5 in Table 1). In these neighborhoods, collective goods are not fully commodified – instead, they are provided, at least partly, as state welfare. The relationship between local state agencies and their constituents is therefore the key relationship dominating this *state-sponsored* mode of governance.

In the rest of this section, neighborhood governance in Nanjing is viewed in this framework, which is demonstrated to work well in making sense of the diversity and complexity of neighborhood governance in the city. All sampled neighborhoods can be classified using this framework and each classification consists of at least five neighborhoods and can be distinguished adequately from the others. Having said that, let us add two caveats. First, this typology presents ideal types of neighborhood governance arrangement that accentuate one or more common points in the synthesis of ‘a great many diffuse, discrete, more

or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena' (Weber, 1997, p. 90). These ideal types are different from 'working models' that correspond to all characteristics of some particular cases. Second, the classification is not static, since the neighborhood is a multifaceted entity situated in open networks shaped by internal dynamics and external forces. Governance arrangements in a particular neighborhood may fit one mode at this time, and evolve to fit a different mode in the future. Therefore, some sampled neighborhoods were not included in Table 1 because they were less typical of particular modes of governance at the time of the fieldwork, and only those fitting closest to these ideal types are included in the following discussion.

Table 1 Four modes of neighborhood governance in Nanjing

	Collective consumption	Service privatization	Civic provision	State-sponsored governance
Primary relationship	HOA-PMC	PMC-homeowners	HOA-homeowners	SO/RC-residents
Main approach(es)	Bringing together key service providers and decision makers for collaboration	Empowering frontline managers	Promoting citizens' active participation	Welfare provision and social control
Actors' primary roles				
Residents' Committee (RC)	Intended as a broker and coordinator, but often marginalized in reality	Intended as a broker and coordinator, but often marginalized in reality	The broker and animator	The service provider (of welfare)
Property management company (PMC)	The service provider and collective property manager	The service provider and collective property manager	No commercial PMCs	The state-sponsored service provider
Homeowners' Association (HOA)	The collective decision maker and implementer (representing homeowners), monitor of the PMC	No HOA or dormant HOA	The collective decision maker and implementer, and the service provider in some neighborhoods	No HOA or dormant HOA
Homeowners	Collective consumers and decision makers (indirect, as voters for the HOA)	Individual consumers, direct decision makers, negotiators with and monitors of the PMC	Collective consumers and decision makers (indirectly, as voters for the HOA)	Individual consumers and voters (for the RC)
Institutional design(s)	Joint conferences and double-edged governance networks based on property management contracts and homeowners' conventions	Multi-edged governance networks based on property management contracts, and negotiations between homeowners and the PMC	Horizontal integration between the decision maker and service provider	Vertical integration of the property manager into local state agencies
Example neighborhoods in Nanjing (housing types in parenthesis)	Neighborhoods B, J, SD, T, Y and YY (commodity neighborhoods)	Neighborhoods F, H, JC, R, S, Q and Z (commodity neighborhoods) and Neighborhood W (traditional neighborhood)	Neighborhoods A and C (traditional neighborhood), Neighborhoods D, G, WT and X (privatized work units)	Neighborhoods DS, GT and YX (traditional neighborhoods), Neighborhood JM and N (affordable neighborhood), and Neighborhood SY (privatized work unit)

Collective consumption

The collective consumption mode is the ideal mode of neighborhood governance according to the club theory (Buchanan, 1965) and theories of networked governance (Rhodes, 1996). It provides a possible solution, at least theoretically, to the optimal provision of public goods on the provider side and the enabling of democratic decision making on the consumer side.

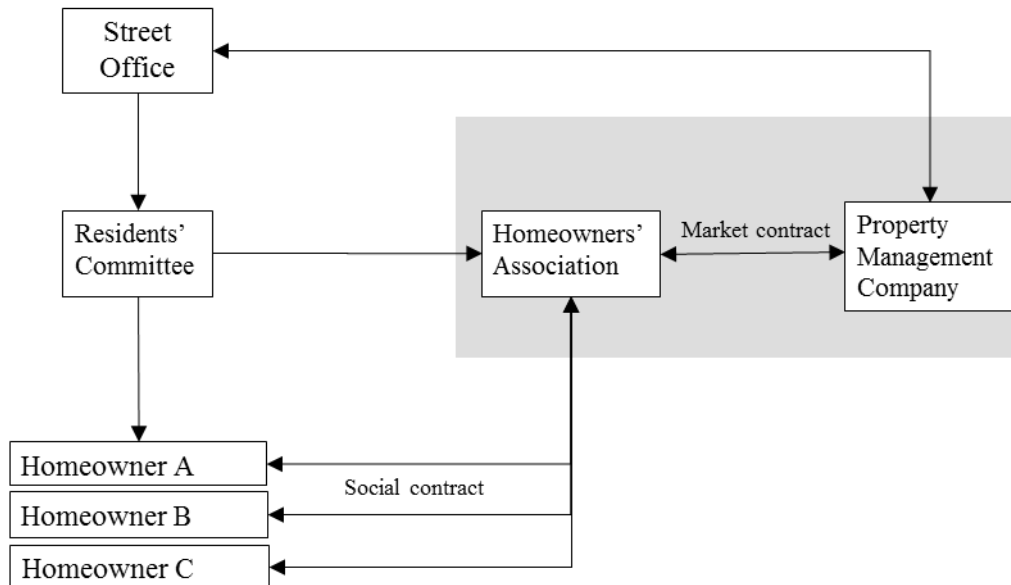


Figure 2 Collective consumption

In this mode of governance, a central relationship is founded and maintained between the key service provider (e.g. the PMC) and the key collective decision-maker (e.g. the HOA), as indicated by the grey box in Figure 2. The HOA usually lies at the center of this relationship. According to the Nanjing Regulation of Residential Property Management (Nanjing People's Congress, 2016), a fully functioning HOA should deal with homeowners and the PMC at the same time – leading to a double-edged governance structure. On the one hand, based on the 'association-membership' model (Foldvary, 1994), a responsible HOA formulates collective choices over neighborhood goods provision through norms and conventions circulated through neighborhood formal and informal networks. On the other hand, the HOA is authorized by homeowners to negotiate and establish contractual relationships with the PMC – a professional service provider with capacity to respond to the demands of homeowners.

The enforcement of the property management contract is regarded by many as the most important step in neighborhood governance (Fu, 2015). The extent to which such contracts are enforced determines the relationship between PMCs and HOAs, which varies considerably across Nanjing's neighborhoods. In some neighborhoods, such as Neighborhoods J and Y,

PMCs tend to respond best when external pressures are applied to them by HOAs and state agencies. In the former case, the HOA has the capacity to monitor the performance of the corresponding PMC and exercise its legal right to dismiss the PMC if it does not meet the expectations of most homeowners (e.g. for service quality, ownership of public facilities, and management of public spaces). In the latter case, SOs also supervise the property management enterprises. Rectification notices and blacklists are standard measures the SOs adopt to hold the PMCs accountable. These measures, however, are often regarded by local community workers as ‘too soft’ and ‘too loose’, since both the HOA and the SO lack enforcement measures to hold the PMC accountable on a daily basis. As one HOA member in Neighborhood T complained: ‘the PMC did not listen to us; sometimes, they even cheated on us’.

Where property management contracts are not enforced effectively, neighborhood conflicts and contentious actions tend to arise. In neighborhoods T and Y, for instance, the relationships between the HOA and PMC were found to be antagonistic, with the HOAs attempting to dismiss their PMCs due to the poor performance of the PMCs and their refusal to withdraw. A variety of measures were taken by the HOAs, including petitions and appeals to the media. In the most extreme case in Neighborhood T, conflict with the PMC spilled onto the streets, as Resident T recalled: ‘To cope with security guards from the PMC, we [homeowners] built up a team of “guardians of homeowners” (*yezhu huwei dui*) equipped with shields, helmets, and vests [...] We fought with the PMC’s security guards with water bottles and fire extinguishers’.

At the other end of the scale, the relationship between the HOA and PMC in some neighborhoods (e.g. Neighborhood SD) can be so close as to appear corrupt (to some interviewees in those neighborhoods), with certain HOA members apparently speaking up for the PMC in exchange for beneficial property management or parking fees. Resident SD described their HOA in the following disappointed terms: ‘The HOA is nothing as imagined. The activists have their own concerns and interests. They would rather be thought of as “inside men” of the PMC, rather than representatives of us [homeowners]’.

The social basis of the HOA-PMC relationship can be further undermined by internal conflicts among homeowners. The relationships between homeowners are governed by a social contract detailing rules to prevent free-riding. However, such contracts are more like voluntary agreements and contain more content about common visions and shared values than sanctioning procedures in the event of free-riding. Interviewees reported a lack of incentives for good conduct and a lack of enforcement in cases of wrong-doing. They also reported a lack of familiarity with such contracts and the responsibilities detailed within. In this context, much

rests on social networks and their potential for generating trust, loyalty, and reciprocity (Putnam *et al.*, 1993), which are often lacking, especially in newly established commodity housing estates. Furthermore, growing diversity among homeowners was observed in the sampled neighborhoods, which made the negotiation and enforcement of social contracts even more difficult. For instance, in Neighborhood YY, some homeowners preferred better property management services and were willing to pay more, but others cared more about holding down costs. For each group, activists would seek institutional space for articulating their demands, which upgraded differences among homeowners to the organizational level and led to contentious actions and faction politics.

Given these conflicts, the local state often attempts to intervene through the RC. Designed as a ‘meta-governor’, the RC can occupy a role as broker in the relationship between the HOA and the PMC, or the HOA and its members, through joint boards or joint conferences. However, our observations in Nanjing indicate that the RC has become a marginal figure in many neighborhoods, having largely withdrawn from direct service provision, and now often lacking in administrative resources. As such, the ability of RCs to monitor contracts and arbitrate between other actors tends to be limited. The RC director of Neighbourhood Z told us: ‘We don’t have any enforcement power, nor are we legitimate to intervene in social tensions among the people. We can only console residents, most of whom will not be that angry after some time.’ This limited ability of RCs was interpreted by some residents as prevarication and what some termed ‘sloth administration’. A resident in Neighborhood Y commented: ‘The RC or the SO? I would not turn to those jacks-in-office for help any more. They just sit in their office every day and do not care whether the PMC encroached on our rights’.

This section has described how urban neighborhoods are governed in the collective consumption mode. In its ideal form, this mode of governance involves active HOAs, responsible PMCs, cooperative homeowners, and facilitative RCs all acting in partnership to achieve good neighborhood governance. In reality, however, collective consumption in many neighborhoods in Nanjing deviates from this ideal form because one or more actors or relationships in the governance networks are absent or fail to work effectively. When this happens, neighborhood governance may take on one of three alternative forms.

Service privatization

The HOA is a central actor in the collective consumption mode, but a recent survey in Nanjing found that more than half of HOAs are in ‘hibernation’ (Liang and Xu, 2018). The situation appears to be the same or worse in other cities. Less than 10% of HOAs were found to be active

in Shanghai (Wang, 2014). On top of this, many urban neighborhoods do not have an HOA at all – whether active or inactive. In Nanjing, it is thought that only 47% of residential communities are covered by HOAs (He and Wang, 2015). Nationally, the corresponding figure is thought to be only 26% (China Consumers’ Association, 2019). In neighborhoods without active HOAs, many of the commodified neighborhood services and goods are consumed individually rather than collectively, providing a second mode of neighborhood governance: service privatization.

In the Chinese context, this mode privileges effective service delivery and professional management over community engagement and collective decision making. In service privatization, the PMC becomes the key actor and its relationship with homeowners determines the effectiveness of neighborhood governance. The PMC has been seen as a location for privatization of local government functions concerning public goods provision (Foldvary, 1994; Wu, 2012). It provides services – property maintenance but also security in poorer neighborhoods, housekeeping in richer neighborhoods, and much else in between – and takes responsibility for the effectiveness and efficiency of service provision. These services can be viewed as ‘clubbed goods’ available exclusively to the homeowners who buy into the neighborhood. In the absence of an HOA, the service provider and the consumers are linked directly (Figure 3). The link is not one-to-one, as when the PMC works in partnership with the HOA. Rather, it is one-to-many – with homeowners needing to perform numerous roles from consumer (of services) to negotiator (of contracts) to monitor (of PMC performance).

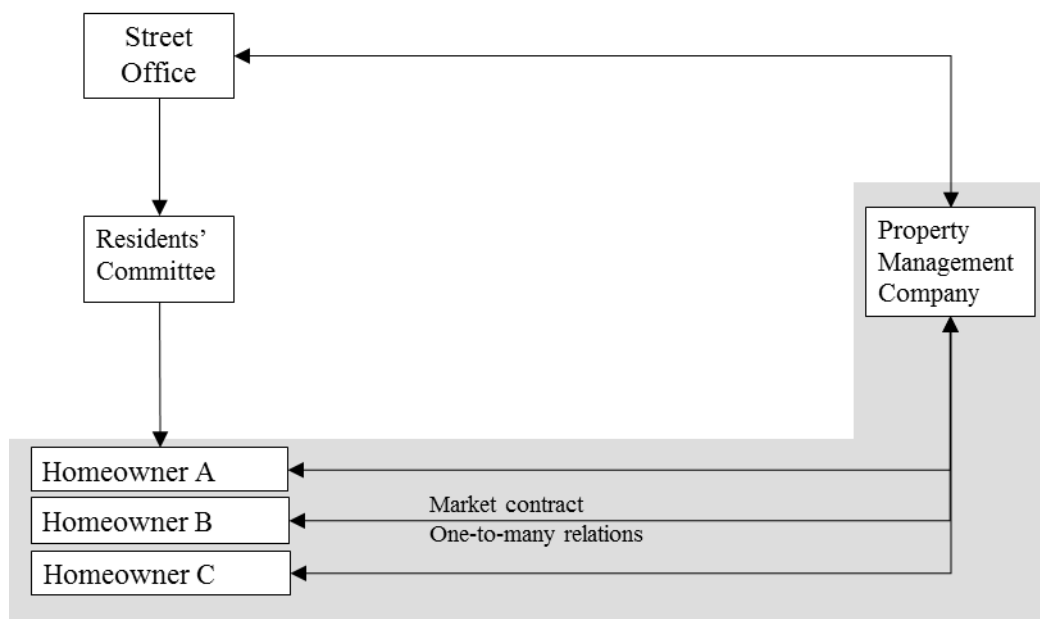


Figure 3 Service privatization

Such one-to-many relationships have been criticized for their low efficiency and lack of accountability (Chen and Webster, 2005). While a transaction must happen only once between a PMC and an HOA, it must happen many times between a PMC and multiple homeowners. With every additional transaction comes additional costs and increasing chances of encountering the ‘hold-up problem’. This problem, also known as the ‘commitment problem’, is an important category in contract theory (e.g. Grossman and Hart, 1986; Ellingsen and Johannesson, 2004). It describes the situation where, in a contractual relationship, one party makes a prior commitment that gives the other party bargaining power, thus positioning the former party as vulnerable to ex post exploitation, which ultimately is associated with generalized inefficiency and underinvestment. Deng (2002) introduced the hold-up problem to the study of urban neighborhoods in China. In his analysis, the consumption of real estate and the consumption of ‘territorial collective goods’ (Foldvary, 1994) provided by the PMC are bundled together. In such a situation, both the homeowners and the service provider can find themselves ‘held-up’ by the other party.

In the Nanjing study, there were only a small number of cases where the PMC worked acceptably well without an HOA. In most sampled neighborhoods, we found that homeowners find it difficult to govern the performance of PMCs as individuals. Consequently, their needs and desires for services may not be met by the PMC, but the PMC can withstand their complaints, knowing that the homeowners will probably not move away from the neighborhood for this reason alone. Such concerns were reported by many residents in the sampled neighborhoods, who described their PMCs as ‘powerful, rude and aggressive’ organizations that ‘own rather than serve the neighborhood’ (Resident H).

Conversely, PMCs interviewed complained about being ‘held up’ by irresponsible homeowners who were described as ‘self-serving and lacking in public spirit’, especially those ‘refusing to pay the PMC fees every month’ (The PMC manager in Neighborhood Q). A vicious circle could therefore be found in some neighborhoods, observed by the researchers but also identified by some interviewees. The party secretary of Neighborhood H told us: ‘Homeowners are not satisfied with the service the PMC provides and refuse to pay the PMC fees. Consequently, the PMC cannot function effectively due to financial problems. Some PMC members just washed their hands of the property management matters, which in turn aggravate homeowners’ dissatisfaction’.

Given all these difficulties, it is perhaps surprising that approximately one third of our sampled neighborhoods fitted the service privatization mode. Why should this be so? One plausible answer lies in a hostility to HOAs found among both PMCs, some of which regard

HOAs as the stereotypical ‘mother-in-law’ (commonly depicted as controlling, judgmental, and overbearing), and local state agencies, some of which regard HOAs as ‘trouble-makers’ (the RC director of Neighborhood YY). More generally, collective action theory (Olson, 1965) proposes that actors in some neighborhoods may perceive the costs of collective action required by the collective consumption mode to outweigh the benefits returned to them as individuals. We found some evidence for this in the sampled neighborhoods where there are relatively low levels of neighborhood social capital, which fails to counterbalance the relatively high levels of individual transaction costs in the establishment and operation of the collective decision making body (e.g. the HOA). One such transaction cost is the cost of bargaining in the establishment of an HOA. In Neighborhoods D and Z, for instance, hardly any residents were willing to contribute to community self-governing activities. Instead, inactive residents would rather ‘sweep the snow from their own doorsteps’ (a community worker in Neighborhood D). This is because, as Resident Z told us, they had ‘no trust in HOAs’ and ‘no spare time’. Even where some homeowners do volunteer to lead HOAs, whether they achieve accountable community representation (Chaskin, 2003) or effective entrepreneurial leadership (Purdue, 2001) is another matter. Studies in Neighborhoods H, S and Z all found a level of dissatisfaction regarding self-elected neighborhood activists. In Neighborhood S, such dissatisfaction centered on conflicts over different plans for community development. A lighting project proposed by some neighborhood activists was strongly opposed by some residents who viewed the project as ‘a trivial issue’ and ‘not worth investment’ (Resident S). Such dissent was even greater among residents in Neighborhood H, where some homeowner-activists ‘worked for the PMC and became its hardcore supporters’ (Resident H), while others sought to dismiss the PMC.

High transaction costs speak to the difficulty of organizing neighborhood collective actions and provide a plausible explanation for why the service privatization mode, given its low effectiveness in some respects, is widely found across the sampled neighborhoods in Nanjing. In some other neighborhoods, however, actors appear to recognize the alternative costs generated by the governance problems of the service privatization mode (including the hold-up problem) and seek institutional solutions to those problems – which provide our third and fourth modes of neighborhood governance.

Civic provision

One response to the hold-up and associated governance problems has been the (re)introduction of HOAs and/or strong local government to neighborhoods (via RCs and SOs), and then institutional integration within neighborhoods (Deng, 2003). This can take the form of

horizontal integration between PMCs and HOAs (the civic provision mode), or vertical integration between PMCs and Street Offices (the state-sponsored mode – see next section).

In the civic provision mode, residents get to participate in HOAs or other forms of self-governing organizations, such as Self-management Associations (SMAs) and Deliberative Councils (DCs), to influence service provision and other aspects of neighborhood governance. In some cases, where integration between the HOA and PMC is complete, residents may even be involved in providing their own collective goods – a complete integration of decision makers and service providers (Figure 4).

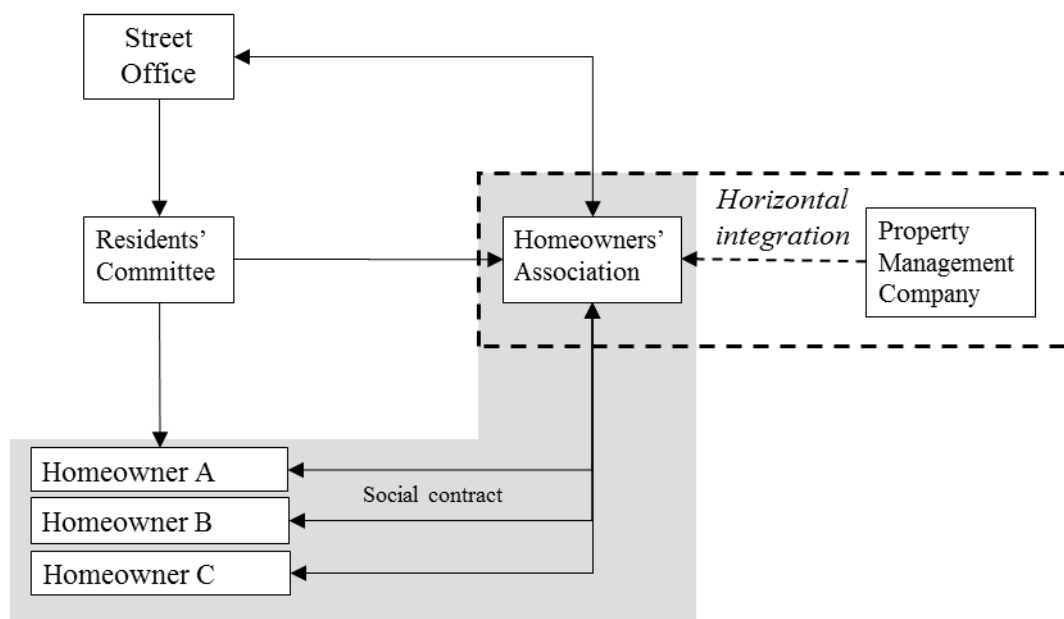


Figure 4 Civic Provision

There are a variety of institutional pathways by which residents might participate in neighborhood governance, from HOAs (more institutionalized and democratic) to SMAs (less institutionalized) to DCs (under the guidance of local RCs). The powers and responsibilities devolved to these participatory bodies can vary significantly across neighborhoods, which influence their abilities to promote neighborhood participation and to enable horizontal integration.

One of the most common approaches to horizontal integration is the empowerment of neighborhood self-governing organizations in neighborhoods where a professional PMC is absent or incapable of providing necessary neighborhood collective goods. These bottom-up initiatives often take the form of the HOA, such as in Neighborhood G, or the SMA or other neighborhood civic groups, such as in Neighborhoods C, D and X, where the legal requirements

for establishing an HOA or recruiting HOA members have not been satisfied. Empowerment of these civic organizations is achieved through specially designed participatory mechanisms, which pass more political power to individuals and enable them to exercise greater ‘choice’ and ‘voice’ over local service delivery (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008).

The effectiveness of these participatory venues was found to vary significantly across the sampled neighborhoods. The involvement of local residents was found to be important and to be relatively higher in privatized work units compared with other sampled neighborhoods. One resident in Neighborhood X, where an SMA was established to replace the poorly-performing PMC, provided a convincing explanation for why this might be the case: ‘We had a fundraising campaign for the SMA. Each household was asked to pay 15 CNY a month [...] most residents here used to work for the same work unit. They could hardly resist doing such a small favor for their former colleagues when approached for the fees.’

Apart from self-organization and participation, the effectiveness of horizontal integration also depends significantly on the power and responsibilities devolved to neighborhood civic groups. According to our interviewees, in some neighborhoods (e.g. Neighborhoods N and BS), SMAs were no more than ‘window-dressing’ organizations that ‘cannot fully satisfy our daily needs’ (Resident WT). In other neighborhoods, such as Neighborhoods WT and X, civic groups were granted decision making powers for some neighborhood issues. In yet other neighborhoods, such as Neighborhoods C and D, there was a further step for self-governance: not only decision making powers but also rights for enforcing those decisions were transferred to HOAs/SMAs. The functions of HOAs and PMCs were thus completely integrated into these empowered civic groups, which could have wide-ranging responsibilities, from collecting fees to hiring staff (security guards, cleaners etc.) to delivering services (e.g. property maintenance). Such horizontal integration was often well-received by local residents. A community worker in Neighborhood D commented: ‘Not just our residents, but those living nearby spoke highly of our mode, saying that they would pay less [in property management fees] but have more say in neighborhood issues. Inspired by our success, two adjacent neighborhoods recently dismissed their PMCs and set up SMAs’.

Another means by which horizontal integration can be achieved is through the neighborhood council system established by local government. In such a system, the DC provides reliable institutional spaces for conflicting parties to negotiate a solution for neighborhood issues. In some neighborhoods, a further step has been made under the name of ‘union of deliberation and execution’ (*yizhi heyi*). In Neighborhood A, for example, we observed how those who proposed matters during DC meetings were made directly responsible

for implementing the decisions made by the DC. In this way, some responsibilities that once belonged to the PMC (e.g. managing neighborhood properties) were transferred to the DC (and further to citizens), and empowered DCs could thus be regarded as a form of horizontal integration. Local RC members interviewed all spoke highly of the multiple roles empowered DCs played in civic provision, since they ‘significantly relieve the fiscal and administrative pressure on the RC’ (a RC member in Neighborhood W) and ultimately serve as an alternative to public spending.

A final point on the civic provision mode, demonstrated by the Nanjing case, is that the civic provision of neighborhood goods and services can hardly succeed without the assistance of the local state. Never mind the RC-led DCs, even for the HOAs and SMAs, neighborhood civic groups seek self-governance in a way that is in accordance with, and sustained by, the local state. Take the recruitment of volunteers as an example. A community worker in Neighborhood D, preparing for the SMA election, complained that ‘nobody wants to serve the neighborhood [...] We have approached many residents, but no one wants to do some real work [...] If no volunteers can be found by the end of next month, the last thing we can do is to turn to the RC. They are good at “ideological works” (*sixiang gongzuo*) and may persuade existing members to serve for another term of office’. Where the RC provides support to HOAs and other self-governing organizations in this way, but HOAs still exist to make decisions and provide services, we have the civic provision mode of neighborhood governance. However, in some neighborhoods state intervention extends beyond support for HOAs, with HOAs bypassed – if they exist at all – as state agencies deal directly with PMCs and absorb responsibilities for decision making and service provision. Here, we have state-sponsored neighborhood governance.

State-sponsored governance

If the civic provision mode seeks to solve the hold-up problem by horizontal integration of PMCs and HOAs (or other participatory bodies), then the state-sponsored mode seeks to solve the problem by vertical integration of PMCs and Street Offices (SOs) – local centers of administration (Figure 5).

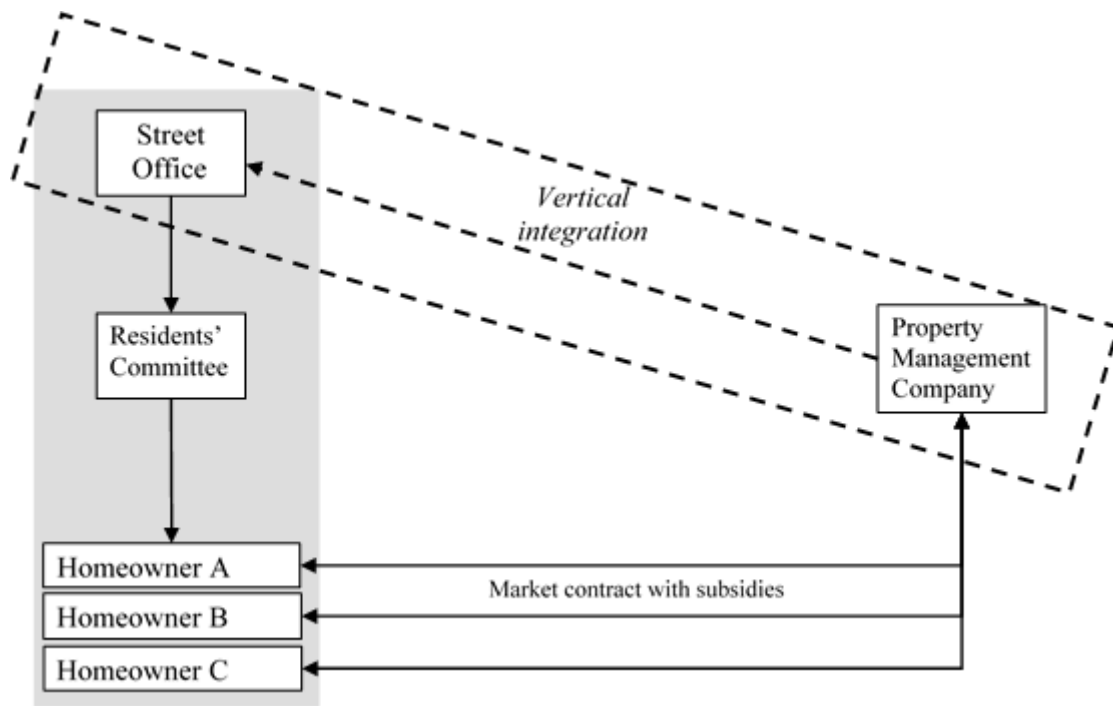


Figure 5 State-sponsored governance

In this mode of neighborhood governance, service delivery is no longer contracted out to commercial organizations. This is because, echoing Wu’s (2018) study in Nanjing, our study found that privatization does not always lead to effective provision of neighborhood collective goods, especially in poorer neighborhoods where PMCs are held-up by residents unable to afford service fees. In our study, such neighborhoods included traditional neighborhoods in dilapidated inner-city areas (e.g. Neighborhoods DS and GT), degraded work units (e.g. Neighborhood SY), and affordable and resettlement neighborhoods (e.g. Neighborhoods JM and N). When privatization fails, the state often intervenes, leading to state-sponsored neighborhood governance. By incorporating neighborhood service delivery into local administration, local state agencies attempt to ensure essential services (e.g. cleaning of blocked sewage or fixing of broken windows) are provided at affordable rates to residents so that, as one interviewed officer from Street Office M put it, ‘none would be left behind’.

Local SOs and RCs act as leading organizations in state-sponsored neighborhood governance. Through establishing PMCs or subsidizing commercial PMCs, SOs shape a welfare-oriented property management system to distribute essential services and reinforce social security in disadvantaged areas. Such a governance arrangement has its advantages, including the reduction of transaction costs for PMCs and the delivery of basic services where needed (Tomba, 2014; Wu, 2018). However, it can also produce new hold-up problems for actors in the network. Interviewees reported concerns among residents and community leaders

that service provision had become too dependent on local state agencies. They spoke of ‘waiting, depending, and wanting’ (*deng, kao, yao*). Such dependency can significantly increase the administrative burden on RCs, as articulated by the RC director of Neighborhood GT: ‘They [residents] are used to government rescues and lack the common sense of “paying for service”. Most of them refuse to pay PMC fees as they feel all services should be provided by the party [...] If they lack something, they just turn to the RC for help’.

Apart from service provision, the effectiveness of neighborhood governance is commonly evaluated against the RC’s capacity to guide community participation (Tomba, 2014). Our research found this capacity to be constrained in multiple ways in many of the sampled neighborhoods. Participatory platforms provided by RCs cannot really be interpreted as initiatives of self-governance or reflections of democracy, since they are guided, monitored, and audited by SOs and higher levels of government. What RC members do, stated a community worker in Neighborhood GT, ‘needs to satisfy the leaders [from the SO] first’. The RC route is thus not a realistic route by which residents can challenge SOs and express their own needs regarding service delivery. Furthermore, institutional spaces created by state agencies, as the Nanjing case shows, do not always transform into organizational sources for governance, unlike in the civic provision mode. This is because participation opportunities are constrained to ‘abler and more qualified people’ (CPC Central Committee and the State Council, 2010), able to convey ‘organizational intentions (*zuzhi yitu*)’. After careful screening, only political and social elites sharing intimate relationships with the state tend to be included in the RC governance system. Most RC-led participation was treated as tokenism by interviewees in the sampled neighborhoods, since limited decision-making was involved and limited opportunities were offered by such ‘democratic decoration’ (Resident JM).

Attention to the state-sponsored mode of neighborhood governance, then, helps to expand our understanding of ‘re-statisation’ in urban China (Sigley, 2006; Heberer, 2009). The vertical integration of neighborhood services and grassroots administration transforms neighborhood institutions into combinations of ‘authoritarian government’ – a government that provides controlled and constrained opportunities for collective decision making – and a ‘local welfare state’ where the availability of basic levels of neighborhood services is guaranteed to vulnerable social groups.

Conclusion

In a context of global moves towards decentralization and neighborhood governance, this paper has focused on the rise of neighborhood governance in China and how such governance is working out differently in different neighborhoods. The case of Nanjing has been presented because Nanjing is both an ordinary city (Robinson, 2006) deserving of more attention from urban studies, and a prototypical city (Brenner, 2003) deserving of attention because of its role as an experimental zone for neighborhood governance within the context of urban China. The study was designed to compare neighborhoods across Nanjing and involved interviews and observations in 32 neighborhoods.

The mid-range view from these 32 neighborhoods allowed for identification of four modes of neighborhood governance in Nanjing: collective consumption, service privatization, civic provision, and state-sponsored governance. This framework was generated from multiple sources. First, a critique of existing frameworks focused on neighborhood governance in China (especially the state-market-society framework), which recognize the specificity of the Chinese case but are focused narrowly on the question of who dominates the action in neighborhood governance (the answer to which does not address related issues, including how effective neighborhood governance is achieved). Second, a critique of existing frameworks focused on neighborhood governance beyond China (especially the Lowndes and Sullivan framework), which are focused more broadly, including on the multiple rationales for different forms of neighborhood governance, but are themselves context-specific and not easily translated into the Chinese case. Third, our framework was derived from the empirical material collected in Nanjing, where certain relationships between actors were found to be crucial in the shaping of effective neighborhood governance in different neighborhoods. The resultant framework, we argue, makes clear the most important features of neighborhood governance in Nanjing – more so than other existing frameworks – while at the same time making contributions to the literature on neighborhood governance in general.

One contribution of relevance to this broader literature is that relationships between actors are important units of analysis when considering how effective governance is achieved in different neighborhoods. In the case of Nanjing, it was the relationship between the HOA and the PMC, or the PMC and the homeowners, or the HOA and the homeowners, or the SO and the PMC that was important in different neighborhoods. In other cities/countries, it might be the relationship between citizens – perhaps positioned as homeowners, but perhaps positioned in other ways – and other state-, civil-society, and private-sector organizations. Another contribution, of particular relevance to debates on ‘global policy’ and neoliberalism,

is that neighborhood governance was found to be diverse and complex even at the scale of one city (Nanjing), let alone the scale of the nation-state or the globe. An implication of this is that scholars should be cautious when attempting to make generalizations about how recent moves towards neighborhood governance around the world are working out in practice on the ground.

Staying with debates on neoliberalism, a third contribution is that diversity and complexity in neighborhood governance reflects in part the varying role of the state in neighborhood governance. In Nanjing, the state – in the form of the SO and/or the RC – can largely retreat from service provision, support service provision by other organizations, or deliver services directly to homeowners. Moreover, the role played by the state in different neighborhoods is largely shaped by developments over time in those neighborhoods. The starting position in many neighborhoods is retreat (the collective consumption mode). The service privatization mode arises when HOAs are absent or have become dormant over time, making collective consumption less possible. Civic provision and state-sponsorship arise when PMCs and homeowners hold each other up, making ‘hold-up’ a problem to be solved by horizontal or vertical integration. So we have a process of evolution that in some neighborhoods eventually leads to state agencies stepping back in as facilitators of neighborhood governance and even direct providers of services.

How does this relate to debates on neoliberalism? On the one hand, we have argued that neighborhood governance is working out on the ground in complex and diverse ways, such that generalizations need making with caution. On the other hand, this process of evolution – from state retreat to state return – is reminiscent of what Peck and Tickell (2002) term ‘process-based analyses of neoliberalization’. Their own analysis in this classic paper focused on how neoliberalization proceeds through different moments: destructive and creative moments; moments when old forms of regulation are ‘rolled-back’ and new forms are ‘rolled-out’; the moment when ‘jungle law breaks out’, followed by the moment when new market rules get imposed. This is not quite what we have in the case of neighborhood governance in Nanjing, but we do have a process whereby the state retreats but then has to respond to the consequences of that retreat, as the situation develops, by adopting new and more active roles. The literature on neoliberalism, therefore, provides some categories and storylines that help to conceptualize neighborhood governance in China, even if the context of China is different in many ways from the context of North America and Western Europe where these categories and storylines were developed. And these categories are not limited to those of Peck and Tickell. Hay (2007) offers ‘depoliticization’ and ‘repoliticization’, where the former refers to delegation or privatization of responsibilities by the state, and the latter refers to reactions against those moves (whether

in government or the public sphere). Becker et al (2015) offer ‘remunicipalization’, where privatized companies are repurchased by municipalities. None of these concepts quite fit the particular case in this paper. They have been generated from other contexts – the UK for Hay and Germany for Becker et al. However, the point arising from the Nanjing case, which speaks to this broader literature, is that neighborhood governance evolves in response to global and national policy, but also the consequences of such policy in particular neighborhoods. Where those consequences involve the unintended breakdown of effective service provision, the state is pulled back into a more central and active role.

In addition to these main contributions, the paper raises at least two further questions for research. First, there is the explanatory question of why certain modes of neighborhood governance are found in certain neighborhoods? Or, put differently, why does neighborhood governance evolve in different ways in different neighborhoods? What are the path dependencies at play? One factor here may be neighborhood type of home ownership. We saw in the discussion above that commodity neighborhoods tend to have active and strong PMCs that lend themselves to collective consumption or service privatization modes of governance. However, we also saw that some modes of governance are found in multiple neighborhood types. Most notably, state-sponsored governance is found in some traditional neighborhoods, some privatized work units, and some affordable housing neighborhoods. What unites these neighborhoods is not a particular type of home ownership but a lack of resources among residents, meaning they struggle to form effective HOAs or to negotiate with PMCs as individuals.

It seems that other factors therefore need considering. One of these might be neighborhood wealth/poverty. In the sections above, we saw that PMCs get held up by residents more when residents are poor and struggle to afford service fees – making state sponsorship a more appropriate mode in poorer neighborhoods (especially where SOs sponsor PMCs and/or subsidize commercial service providers). Another factor might be neighborhood social networks and social capital. One suggestion from our study of Nanjing is that HOAs function best in tackling free-riding – and so the collective consumption mode functions best – where contracts are supplemented by norms circulated through well-developed social networks, especially when there are responsible neighborhood activists.

Finally, there is the evaluative question of whether certain modes of neighborhood governance have certain strengths and weaknesses. Here, we have suggested that the collective consumption mode is the ideal mode from the perspective of club theory. It involves collaboration between actors to maximize overall interests and minimize transaction costs.

Participation is achieved via the HOA. Service delivery is achieved via the PMC. The service privatization mode, by contrast, can exist in neighborhoods lacking HOAs (a strength), but makes heavy demands on homeowners who must govern PMCs as individuals, and requires a high number of transactions – between PMCs and individual homeowners – which is costly and inefficient. Such transaction costs are reduced by integration in the cases of civic provision and state-sponsorship (a strength), but in the latter case, at least, a corresponding weakness of vertical integration is constrained participation, which must happen via RCs. All these suggestions deserve further empirical research.

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Appendix: Interviews completed (March 2017 to January 2018)

Interviewee(s)	Theme	Month/year of the interview
<i>Government officers</i>		
Two officers from the Nanjing Civil Affairs Bureau (NJCAB)	The development of community building and neighborhood governance reform in Nanjing	03/2017
One officer from the Community-building Office in NJCAB	New trends in community policies in Nanjing	10/2017
One officer from Street Office M	Neighborhood governance in an affordable housing estate	03/2017
One officer from Street Office DS	How to promote participation and self-governance through the professionalization of community services	04/2017
<i>RC members</i>		
The RC director of Neighborhood GT	Neighborhood governance in old urban districts with a strong RC	03/2017
The RC director of Neighborhood WT	An experiment of participatory governance	03/2017
The vice RC director of Neighborhood N	Incorporating kinship networks into the governance network in an affordable housing estate	03/2017
The vice RC director of Neighborhood BS	Neighborhood governance in an affordable housing estate in the poorest urban area in Nanjing	03/2017
The vice director of Neighborhood X	A highly institutionalized Deliberative Council	03/2017
The party secretary of Neighborhood G	A highly institutionalized Deliberative Council maintained by the strong RC	03/2017
The party secretary of Neighborhood A	A highly institutionalized Deliberative Council with active participation	03/2017
The director of Neighborhood B	A platform for four-party talks of neighborhood governance	03/2017
A community worker in Neighborhood D	The success and failure of a self-governance program run by a social organization in old urban districts	04/2017
The RC director of Neighborhood YX	The difference of neighborhood governance in the urban suburb	04/2017

Interviewee(s)	Theme	Month/year of the interview
The RC director of Neighborhood DS	Social and voluntary activities in a traditional neighborhood	11/2017
The party secretary of Neighborhood S	The incorporation of property management into community administration	11/2017
The party secretary of Neighborhood R	A 'neighborhood of strangers' in a high-end residential community	11/2017
The RC director of Neighborhood SD	Social and voluntary activities in a commodity neighborhood	11/2017
The RC director of Neighborhood QX	Social integration in an affordable housing estate, where the PMC is supported by the local government	11/2017
The RC director of Neighborhood YY	The eight-year confliction among PMC, HOA and residents	11/2017
The RC director of Neighborhood C	Why the self-governing model succeed in some residential compounds but fail in others	11/2017
The RC director of Neighborhood Z	The involvement of the PMC and HOA in the neighborhood governance	11/2017
The party secretary of Neighborhood H	The internal differentiated HOA in a commodity housing estate	11/2017
The vice party secretary of Neighborhood J	The intervention of the CPC in community services	11/2017
The RC director of Neighborhood SY	The dense social networks in a traditional neighborhood and the RC as neighborhood government	11/2017
A RC member in Neighborhood W	How neighborhood civic groups assist the RC work	12/2017
<i>Workers and volunteers from community-based organizations</i>		
Three volunteers from neighborhood organizations in Neighborhood AT	How neighborhood organizations work in a commodity housing estate	03/2017
Social workers in XP organization in Neighborhood L	How the social service station operates and its relationship with the RC and higher-level government	03/2017
Social workers in Neighborhood DF	The relationship among social organizations, the RC and residents	03/2017
Social workers in Neighborhood DN	An experiment of self-governance at the building level	04/2017
Social workers in Neighborhood YS	The policy background of professional social organization in a resettlement neighborhood	11/2017

Interviewee(s)	Theme	Month/year of the interview
Five volunteers from Neighborhood W	The growth of the neighborhood group	12/2017
Neighborhood activists in Neighborhood W	The growth of an indigenous neighborhood organization	01/2018
<i>Employees of Property Management Companies</i>		
The manager of the property management company in Street Office M	How the RC cooperates with the property management company run by the street office	03/2017
The manager of the property management company in Neighborhood Q	The PMC's money issues	01/2018
<i>Members of Homeowners' Associations</i>		
An HOA member in Neighborhood SD	The HOA's attempts to dismiss the PMC	11/2017
A former HOA member in Neighborhood T	The confliction between the HOA and the PMC and right protection movement	10/2017
<i>Residents</i>		
A resident in Neighborhood N (Resident N)	Kinship networks in the resettlement housing estate	03/2017
A resident in Neighborhood A (Resident A)	How residents' representatives work and their relationship with local residents	04/2017
A resident in Neighborhood B (Resident B1)	The attitude towards the HOA	04/2017
A resident in Neighborhood B (Resident B2)	Whether there are any effective means to hold the HOA accountable	04/2017
A resident in Neighborhood G (Resident G)	Neighboring in a privatized work unit	09/2017
A resident in Neighborhood D (Resident D)	Studentification and the cultivation of social networks based on children	09/2017
A resident in Neighborhood T (Resident T)	The confliction between the PMC and residents and the right protection movement	10/2017
A resident in Neighborhood X (Resident X)	The self-governing practices in a privatized work unit	10/2017
A resident in Neighborhood WT (Resident WT)	The development of the neighborhood in 30 years	10/2017

Interviewee(s)	Theme	Month/year of the interview
A resident in Neighborhood DS (Resident DS1)	Why participate in voluntary activities in the neighborhood?	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood DS (Resident DS2)	The preparation of the establishment of the HOA	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood DS (Resident DS3)	20-years' experiences of being a member of the neighborhood security patrol	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood F (Resident F)	Attitudes towards the RC	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood S (Resident S)	Why no HOA in this high-end commodity housing estate?	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood R (Resident R)	Why homeowners hesitate in firing the current PMC	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood QX (Resident QX)	The formation of social networks in a newly built affordable neighborhood	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood SD (Resident SD)	The intervention of the PMC in the establishment of HOA	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood H (Resident H)	Complaints about the poorly performed PMC	11/2017
A resident in Neighborhood JM (Resident JM)	Property management committee supported by the RC	12/2017
A resident in Neighborhood Z (Resident Z)	The success and failure of collective actions in a commodity housing estate	12/2017
A resident in Neighborhood SY (Resident SY)	Social support and neighborhood watch in a traditional neighborhood	12/2017
A resident in Neighborhood YS (Resident YS)	The negative influences of kinship networks in neighborhood governance	12/2017
A resident in Neighborhood Y (Resident Y)	The operation of the HOA	01/2018