Ageing Population and Slum Resettlement in Guryong Village, Seoul, South Korea

Jacquelyne D. Sunwoo
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Jacquelyne D. Sunwoo

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate if the elderly population of Guryong Village is receiving adequate provision of services to mitigate their resettlement process. Located in Seoul, South Korea, Guryong Village is the last illegal shantytown in the city that has survived a tumultuous history of aggressive urbanization policies. Although the squatter community has been under development pressure ever since the turn of the 21st century, the Seoul Metropolitan Government finally made a public announcement of its proposal for redevelopment in 2011. The issue at hand, however, is not only the threat of displacement for current residents, but also that the majority of the Guryong population are senior citizens of low socioeconomic status. Recognizing that persons of older age require more proactive and committed policy interventions, this thesis highlights: first, if the elderly population of Guryong Village is receiving adequate provision of services, and second, if the government has communicated and provided additional services to facilitate their relocation process. Findings indicated that senior citizens of the shantytown were generally content with the current living conditions and services available to them. Moreover, majority of interview participants either did not want a redevelopment or were not aware of the project at all. Thus, this study recommends that the urban planners first, proactively inform elders regarding the redevelopment; second, establish settings for storytelling that encourage active participation; third, extend current services to the resettlement process; and fourth, consolidate stability post-development.

In the midst of two paramount demographic shifts happening on a global scale, namely rapid urbanization and growth of the ageing population, this research intends to inform future urban planners how to assess the changing circumstances and consequent needs of the elderly in an urban environment.
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INTRODUCTION

Many countries are undergoing two major international changes in the 21st century: rapid urbanization and exponential growth of the ageing population (Apt, 2000, p. 3). As of 2014, 54 percent of the world’s population was living in urban areas and the United Nations (2014) further estimates that by 2050, the number will be 66 percent, indicating a significant population increase in cities (p. 1). Parallel to urbanization, the proportion of elderly population is increasing at an accelerated pace; by 2030, one in every eight persons, more than one billion people, will be of age 65 or older (National Institute on Aging, 2007, p. 2). Such demographic transition inevitably carries political-social implications and presents challenges for urban areas (UN, 2015, p. 5).

This thesis positions itself in the convergence of rapid urbanization, ageing demographics, and slum resettlement by investigating the last illegal shantytown in Seoul, South Korea, called Guryong Village. Given the urgency to plan for senior citizens in urban contexts as well as older persons’ sensitivity to physical and social environments, this study examines whether the elderly residents of Guryong Village are receiving adequate provisions of services. Thus, the purpose of this research is to inform city planners and policy makers of the specific welfare needs Guryong’s senior residents have, but also to recommend planning solutions to resolve the general struggles that urban elderly of lower socioeconomic status face today. The specific research question is “is the ageing population of Guryong Village receiving adequate provisions to mitigate the resettlement process?” I will assess this question by exploring current welfare assistance for elderly residents, their concurrent needs, and the availability of services during their relocation process resulting from the recently proposed “Guryong Redevelopment Plan.” My research design focused mainly on interviews with Guryong elderly residents, but also with stakeholders relevant to the welfare system and redevelopment.
BACKGROUND

Introduction

Modern cities struggle with issues of urban poverty and informality. Beginning 1970s, they experienced serious instability in housing supply and demand due to worldwide rural-urban migration. City governments also failed to properly provide shelters for the influx of low-income persons (UN Habitat, 2016, p. 14; Ooi & Phua, 2007). This lack of accommodations consequently led to the development of informal settlements, widely known as “slums,” which UN Habitat (2016) defines as “contiguous settlement[s] that lacks one or more of the following five conditions: access to clean water, access to improved sanitation, sufficient living area that is not crowded, durable housing and secure tenure” (p. 57). Despite the fact that much progress has been made and the number of urban slums has decreased since 1990, the international community concedes that urban poverty remains an “unfinished business” (ibid.).

In facing persistent urban poverty, one of the most dire concerns is whether the residents of informal settlements receive adequate welfare services. In 2015, UN Habitat asserted that slum dwellers are likely to be victims of discrimination, excluded from provisions of basic public services, such as housing, water supplies, electricity as well as other ancillary services like maintenance of public spaces (p. 94). To make matters worse, slum residents are also constantly vulnerable to threats of eviction.

As cities became increasingly more expensive, the competition of urban resources and land inevitably became intensified, putting poor communities under development pressure (ibid., p. 97). Due to past criticisms of forced evictions equating human rights violations, recent redevelopment projects are often accompanied by well-intended resettlement programs. Nevertheless, these initiatives do not always serve displaced individuals sufficiently (ibid., p. 98).

While these notions - urbanization, ageing population, urban informality, and resettlement - have certainly been examined separately, there remains a lack of thorough inquiry that situates itself at their intersection. Urbanization and ageing population have separately received ample attention in the field of academic research, and recently, more scholars have combined these two investigations (Apt, 2000, p. 3). It is also not surprising that the issues of urban slums and resettlement processes have been steadily explored and analyzed considering their prolonged presence in metropolitan areas. Yet, in this epoch of significant demographic shifts and persistent resettlement challenges, there is a critical need for planners and policy makers to rigorously inquire into the growing interrelationship amongst them.

What is a Slum?

The first published definition of the term
“slum” was in 1812, when the writer James Hardy Vaux used the term synonymously with “racket” or “criminal trade” to describe an act rather than place (Davis, 2006, p. 21). During the 1820s, however, “slum” was more generally utilized to mean poor quality housing and unsanitary conditions. Then in the late 19th century, the definition expanded to mean “a street, alley, court, situated in a crowded district of a town or city and inhabited by people of a low class or by the very poor… where the houses and the conditions of life are of a squalid and wretched character” (UN Habitat, 2003, p. 9).

Although social stigmatization and negative prejudice eventually resulted in a social movement to substitute the term for more polite vernaculars such as, “neighborhood” and “communities,” the term “slum” is still widely utilized with a more loose and deprecatory meaning. Furthermore, perhaps due to the lack of consensus on a particular definition, agencies and authorities continue to use the terms - slum, shanty, informal housing and low-income community - interchangeably (ibid, p. 9.).

Early theorists attempted to distinguish the meaning amongst these words with an acknowledgment that slums are heterogeneous (Gilbert, 2007, p. 704). For instance, UN Habitat categorized shantytowns as subsection of squatter settlements because of their inherent nature of illegally occupying land (2003, p. 117). Moreover, Mangin (1967) differentiated shantytowns from slums, calling shantytowns “slum[s] of hope” since squatters - or shantytown residents - exhibit less depression and alienation than slum dwellers (p. 82). This earlier definition, however, was refuted by subsequent scholars who consolidated the term shantytown more aptly as “slum of despair.” Their reasoning was that even after an extended period of time, shantytown tenants lacked economic opportunities and endured social problems such as addictions and assault (Gilbert, 2007, p. 705.).

These terms are defined and utilized differently in every city (ibid., p. 699). In Korea, there are many terms to describe “slums” or substandard housing conditions, which include panjajib, panjachon, binilhaus, daldongnae, or jjogbang (Ha, 2004, p. 124). Panjajib means temporary housing with a timber-framed structure, and a settlement of panjajibs is referred as panjachons (Ha, 2001, p. 387). This thesis will use the terms “slums;” “shantytowns;” “urban informality” and “panjachon” interchangeably.

**Seoul’s Urbanization & Slum Development**

It is impossible to fully comprehend the character of Guryong Village without recognizing the history of Seoul’s urbanization. Seoul, the capital city of South Korea, is located in the northwest of the country, with the Han River flowing east-west. (See Figure 1.) The city’s area is approximately 233 square miles and as of 2015, the total population was 10,297,138, putting its population density at 6,569 person per square miles (Statistics Korea, 2016). Today, Seoul is considered one of the densest cities in the world.

It was particularly during the 1940s to 1980s that the urban population of Seoul exploded. (See Appendix C, Socioeconomic and Housing Profile
in Selected Years.) Through a much tumultuous history, Seoul’s urban fabric was adjusted at a rapid pace, often times through mechanisms of displacing citizens of the lower social strata.

The formation of the city’s urban squatter settlements began in 1945 just after the Japanese colonialism (Ha, 2001, p. 387). Returning refugees as well as unexpected migrants from surrounding cities of Japan and China started building shantytowns in Seoul by illegally settling in open spaces without government approval and self-constructing houses with low quality materials. Then in the 1950s and 1960s, rural to urban migration, as well as the end of Second World War and the Korean War contributed to an even greater influx of settlers. The aftermath of multiple wars put the city in great disorder. Nevertheless, “despite the conditions, Seoul offered a better chance of survival than any other city...[and] because a fair number of these people built dwellings on hills or vacant land, shantytowns formed all over Seoul” (Kim, 2003, p. 4).

Flood of migrants and the inundation of unauthorized housing left Seoul with many problems including poverty, unemployment, sanitation as well as extreme shortage of housing (Kim, 2003, p. 4). But the in-migrants during this time had no other choice than to occupy vacant land and build homes in the midst of unhygienic conditions because of the exponential increase in housing costs (Kim & Yoon, 2003, p. 545; Greene, 2003, p. 170). While shantytowns were prevalent in the city, simultaneous construction of luxury apartment complexes further exacerbated class segregation, creating a lasting physical and social fracture in the fabric of Seoul (Lee, 2003, p. 81).

Federal and city governments responded to squatter settlements with a policy that viewed them as “an urban illness, visual eyesores and obstacles to orderly urban development” (Kim & Yoon, 2003, p. 547). Therefore, in the mid-1960s, the main objective
of Seoul’s policy was to relocate slum dwellers to undeveloped areas, where they were allowed to build whatever they could afford (Sohn, 2003, p. 258). Such disorderly resettlement strategies, however, were the government’s intrinsic approval of slums and resulted in an even more careless expansion of shantytowns (Sohn, 2003, p. 259; Greene, 2003, p. 171). This phenomenon was largely due to the fact that slum dwellers had become an essential component of the low wage labor force that buttressed social stability. Under the government’s acquiescence, informal shantytowns proliferated haphazardly throughout the city and the residents were confirmed as a vital ingredient to the city’s industrialization (Ji, 2012, p. 187).

In spite of resettlement failures, Korea’s strong central government in the 1970s pushed with military-like drive, a national growth strategy through the means of urban development projects (Kim, 2003, p. 5). Since the priority of the government was to increase housing, it implemented mass demolition of *panjachons* and built high-rise apartment complexes in their place (Ha, 2001, p. 388). In the 1980s, the seriousness of overcrowding and housing shortage was so grave that the government could no longer condone illegal settlements (Ji, 2012, p. 187). For instance, between 1960 and 1983, the urban population in South Korea leaped from 36 percent of the total population to 72 percent, majority concentrated in Seoul (Greene, 2003, p. 169). The 1988 Summer Olympics hosted in Korea further triggered the government to proactively “beautify” the city through renewal projects and in order to live up to the standards of a globalized city, the municipal government invested almost 3 billion US dollars in infrastructural improvements while pushing low-income residents to the outskirts of the city through militant evictions. According to Greene (2003), “Seoul’s forced eviction programs during the 1980s is estimated to be one of the largest government-sponsored eviction programs of any city in the world in recent decades” (p. 170).

After staging the Olympics, Seoul’s municipal government continued to develop and brand Seoul as a global city; thus, by 1990, most substandard settlements had been relocated to satellite cities or suburban areas. At the turn of the 21st century, it was estimated that over 100,000 shantytowns in the city were replaced by new units of middle-income or high-income residential housing (Ha, 2001, p. 395; Kim & Yoon, 2003, p. 544). (See Appendix C, Socioeconomic and Housing Profile in Selected Years.) Over time, extensive slum clearance and evictions effected by private investments became a necessary and distinctive attribute of Seoul’s redevelopment policies (Kim & Yoon, 2003, p. 587).

**Ageing & Korean Values**

Although Seoul’s urbanization and population growth has plateaued since the beginning of 21st century, its demographic changes are parallel to the rest of the world, which is experiencing a significant increase in the ageing population. Early researchers claim that worldwide industrialization and modernization position senior citizens in a dependent standing, often dispossessing them
Nevertheless, despite the fact that becoming old is a universal phenomenon, the meaning of old age varies from place to place and from time to time (Kim, Bengtson, & Eun, 2000, p. 3). Therefore, given the intricate nature of ageing, it is pivotal to analyze ageing in the specific socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural context (ibid., p. 3).

The shift in circumstances for elderly and family structure have been most dramatic in Asian societies that underwent rapid industrialization and urbanization (Sung, 2000, p. 41). Particularly in Korea, household size is decreasing and number of women in the labor market is increasing. (See Figure 2.) At the same time, ageing population is increasing and fertility rate is lower than ever (ibid., p. 42). Still, according to Sung (2000), “the most vexing, if not disgraceful, problem in the case of Korea is the purported decline of family support for ageing parents, which is seen to undermine the status and security of the parent” (p. 42).

The notion of hyo, or filial piety, has traditionally been a core value that secured family and social structures (Yoon et al., 2000, p. 127). Families have always been organized on patriarchy and the eldest sons typically lived with and looked after their parents. In fact, adult children’s support still remains a vital component for elderly parents’ well-being; over 90 percent of Korean elderly individuals claimed that their primary source of assistance was their family members (Sung, 2000, p. 42). And although the proportion of senior citizens living alone or only with a spouse has increased from 7 percent to 53 percent between 1975 and 1996, as of 2000, over 50 percent of aged persons still live within an hour distance from their adult children (ibid., p. 43).
Present-day values of Korea, however, have become an amalgam of both Western values which emphasize individualism and traditional Korean belief of *hyo*. While a majority of adult children, particularly the eldest sons, still feel the responsibility to live out *hyo*, modern attitude towards the concept differs greatly from the traditional way (Yoon et al., 2000, p. 127). First, the tendency of aged parents living apart from their children implies a degree of neglect, since there is a decrease in interaction and support (Sung, 2000, p. 43). And this lack of support is found to affect the senior people directly; “especially those living distant from their children, have economic, health, social and psychological problems” (ibid.). Second, the notion of *hyo* no longer correlates to financial or moral assistance for parents, but the ability of adult children not to put any burden on their parents (Yoon et al., 2000, p. 127). This consequently indicates that there is less emphasis on dependency between parents and their children (ibid.). Another potential aspect that exacerbates circumstances for the ageing population is dearth of social programs to help them. As Yoon et al. (2000) note:

The current generation of elderly persons has not prepared for their postretirement life, only having sacrificed themselves for their families... they worked hard and for long hours during the period of rapid industrialization and committed themselves to the education of their children. However, when they reached retirement age, in the absence of the traditional practice of *hyo*, they found that they had hardly prepared for their own well being. To make things worse, it became very difficult for them to expect emotional and material support at the societal level, as well as on the familial level. Among the peripheral consequences of industrialization and modernization are weaknesses in many sources of material and normative support for the elderly population and the negative social concept that elderly persons are a burden both at the familial and societal levels (p. 129).

Social welfare policy in Korea is relatively immature compared to Western cultures and severely lacks institutional support. Federal policies in the past decade have centered on restoring the value of filial piety and family’s support system rather than directly providing public services; thus, causing a significant lag in the development of welfare provisions for senior citizens. (Sung, 2000, p. 48). Moreover, studies have found that even current policies in place were unsatisfactory for elderly persons (Yoon et al., 2000, p. 130). Therefore, in the context of Korea’s altering social values, there is an even greater need to reinforce public commitment of the government to provide welfare services and formal support systems for the ageing population.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The relocation of elderly people has received ample attention due to its potential hazards, often referred to as “transfer trauma” or “relocation stress” (Castle, 2001, p. 291). These widely studied risks include psychological distress, depression, and mortality. Despite sufficient research, however, according to Shulz and Brenner (1977), the topic has yielded contradictory results; some findings indicate harmful psychological and physical conditions, while some deliver benign or even positive effects (p. 323). In general, the majority of the evidence reveals that resettlement is detrimental to older persons’ health and at times even increases the mortality rate. Furthermore, there is abundant evidence that the elders’ ability to cope with relocation is much more limited than younger age groups (Castle, 2001, p. 295).

Previous research on elderly relocation has considered a wide range of resettlements from institution to institution, home to institution, and home to home. These categories additionally divide into either a voluntary relocation or an involuntary one, whether it is due to deterioration of health, natural disasters, or forced relocation. The most frequently investigated resettlements tend to be voluntary and involuntary moves from institution to institution or home to institution. Therefore, there is a lack of data on home to home relocation for the elderly (Shulz & Brenner, 1977, p. 326).

Impacts of Relocation

Brand and Smith (1974) utilized a life satisfaction index to observe the relationship between involuntary relocation and its impact on health as well as life adjustment of the ageing population. They gathered social and psychological data on subjects 65 years of age and older with low socioeconomic status, who experienced forced relocation due to urban renewal. Although there was no difference in the health status between relocated older persons and non-relocated ones, the study found that a significant number of relocated seniors exhibited a lower life satisfaction (Brand & Smith, 1974, p. 338). In fact, an earlier study by Fried (1963) had already revealed that many persons countenance serious depressive reactions after resettlement by urban renewal (ibid., p. 399). Additional research has also shown that the general population of elderly Koreans are already struggling with depression. The

Studies on elderly resettlements also focus on the post-hoc; or after-the-fact examination of the subjects’ conditions and often emphasize subjective variables such as happiness, loneliness, and life satisfactions. Despite the subjectivity of these evaluations, however, Shulz and Brenner (1977) assert that the discursive nature of the analysis should not detract from studying the major aspects of adjustment (p. 339).
World Bank (2016) noted that the suicide rate among elderly Koreans is one of the highest in the world "at 80 per 100,000 in 2011... [and] the rate has increased fivefold in the past two decades" (p. 53).

Furthermore, the relocated residents had less contact with friends and family or less involvement in the social milieu (Brand & Smith, 1974, p. 338). Social relationships have been acknowledged as an indispensable factor in aged individuals’ lives; they ease the population’s adjustment in a new environment, lessen stress, and root them in place (Becker, 2003, p. 145). Thus, forced resettlements that result in reduced interaction within the elderly’s social network are seriously deleterious (Brand & Smith, 1974, p. 336; Oswald & Rowles, 2006, p. 131). For example, Wu, Prina, Barnes, Matthews, and Brayne (2015) found that relocating at an old age requires greater support from family and friends as this change directly impacts physiological or psychological conditions of the senior person, especially when this alteration is involuntary (p. 480).

Nevertheless, other studies have found that an elderly individual’s functioning ability, social contacts, morbidity, and mortality were not adversely affected in the midst of frequent relocations he or she had to endure in a brief period of time. In a study by Cohen and Poulshock (1977), the researchers measured the impact after a natural disaster - Hurricane Agnes - in Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania and found that the disaster actually generated more support and contact from family and friends, who provided shelters for the victims for a prolonged period of time (p. 265).

Relocation Processes & Support

Despite varied findings, the general consensus is that relocation processes are difficult and that victims need active support. After all, regardless of context or reason, resettlement is a major change in an individual’s life that imposes psychological and physical stress.

For instance, Chui (2001) found that elderly tenants who were forcefully removed from Hong Kong’s public housing due to urban redevelopment incurred considerable stress (p. 163). More than half his research participants noted that they had experienced “very serious” or “considerable” stress during the relocation process. Furthermore, the elders from this study appeared to subscribe a ‘self-reliance’ belief, where they restrained to seek help from others proactively. More than 70 percent of his respondents alleged that their family could not provide sufficient support and 40 percent revealed they had no one to turn to to discuss the issue (ibid.). The fact that removal from the original environment cause significant pressure on elderly people and that they repress themselves from seeking help highlight the need for active and stable assistance.

A study by Cohen and Poulshock (1977) supports this claim. They found that in facing an unexpected natural disaster and relocation, elderly victims benefitted greatly from active interventions and services provided by various agencies (ibid., p. 265). In this case, agencies such as Department of Housing and Urban Development or the President’s Task Force played a critical role in monitoring and maintaining quality control of post-disaster
resettlements. Moreover, even with dire short-term problems, respondents were found to seek “hard services,” which include housing, financial aid, health care, and income assistance, rather than “soft services,” which provide temporary and immediate provisions.

In conclusion, in resettlement processes, senior citizens “regard the provision of housing, health care, loans for home repair, and similar services of much greater utility than friendly visiting, counseling, or so-called mental health services... that in the face of disruption of the life situation, it is ‘hard services’ that count most” (ibid., p. 265). Even so, culture and context also play a tremendous role in how the ageing population perceive their most important needs.

**Summary & Implications**

Brand and Smith (1974) postulate that with increased mobility and prevalent changes, forces of isolation for the elderly are gaining momentum in urban areas (p. 339). Further, it is clear that involuntary relocation is a stressful incident especially for older persons despite the provision of community services (ibid., p. 340). Early studies in this research clearly elucidate the potentials of lower life satisfaction for elders post-development, which consequently calls for better planning and preparation for a successful and secure relocation process in the case of Guryong Village as well.

Amongst many factors that define a successful resettlement, Castle (2001) found that timing was crucial (p. 325). When relocation is planned ahead of time, elders are able to adapt to a new environment and minimize detrimental impacts. In other words, when the perceived duration of relocation is longer, the ageing population is less susceptible to the social, physical and psychological externalities of the change (ibid.).

Similarly, Shulz and Brenner (1977) found that when an individual has choices and can predict the new environment, adverse impacts of relocation decrease (p. 324). Notably, one’s past experience with similar circumstances also greatly influences his or her resiliency. They note that “the idea that the aged should have the opportunity to retain as much autonomy in their lives as possible is not new” (ibid., p. 331). Yet, how the notion is practiced and how much provisions are in place to allow it will be more essential than mere acknowledgement.

While Guryong Village has started to receive growing attention from government, media, architects, and developers due to its impending redevelopment, few studies exist that evaluate the lived lives and roles of the village’s elderly. But given the changing circumstances for older persons in cities and their reliance on the physical environment and active support, it is pivotal to address their situations. Focusing specifically on the current welfare services senior residents receive and how they perceive or participate in the redevelopment, this thesis strives to look more deeply into the daily discourses of an excluded population and recommend planning solutions and practices that will result in a more sustainable neighborhood.
METHODOLOGY

Guryong Village: an Overview

Guryong Village is a prime location to conduct this research because first, the city of Seoul, where the village is located, experienced one of the most rapid urban growths and is considered a relatively large urban agglomeration (Greene, 2003; Ha, 2004; Shin, 2009). Second, Seoul is notorious for its aggressive methods of forced evictions and slum clearance, which provides insight into its attitude when relocating poorer residents (Greene, 2003; Kim, 2010). Third, while there is lack of census data of the shantytown residents, anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of Guryong Village’s population is of old age and of lower socioeconomic status. Lastly, Guryong is located in the wealthiest and most resourceful region of South Korea, revealing the prominent physical and social inequality endured by its residents but also suggesting hope for an advantageous resettlement for elderly slum dwellers.

Guryong Village is the last illegal shantytown, or panjachon, remaining in Seoul. It was founded in 1988 on the hillside of Mt. Guryong, which is located in Gaepo-dong of Gangnam District, the wealthiest area of Seoul Metropolitan Region (Ji, 2012, p. 191). (See Figure 1 & Figure 3.) The village is nested between the hillsides of Guryong Mountain to its south, and residential skyscrapers and high-rise developments to its north, consequently revealing a stark contrast and exclusion etched in the physical fabric of Seoul. (See Figure 4.)

Before 1980s, Guryong Village was farmland...
with approximately 40 households. But towards the late 1980s, as Gaepo-dong underwent major residential development and experienced an inundation of population, Guryong Village also began to change (Lee, 2012, p. 21; Ha, 2007, p. 126). At this time, the hillsides of Mt. Guryong were protected by a greenbelt, shielding the village from physical construction. Thus, a large number of incoming squatters began to settle in the area, expanding the shantytown without government consent.

Guryong’s greatest population growth happened between 1987 and 1990, when the government aggressively bulldozed other slums in Seoul prior to its hosting the 1988 Summer Olympics (Ji, 2012; Greene, 2003). (See Appendix B, Slum Distribution.) A majority of squatters who moved to Guryong village during that period were from other illegal settlements within or near the city. The various informal settlements that the residents migrated from were Ha-ahn dong, Chang-shin dong, Shin-dang dong, and many more (Ji, 2012, p. 193). These early slum dwellers had no other option than to search for an affordable sanctuary because the government provided no compensation in the midst of massive demolitions (ibid.). Yet, it was not only slum migrations that caused an increase in Guryong’s population. During the 1980s and 1990s, Gangnam District also underwent an exponential rise in housing
costs that forced more people to substandard shelters, including Guryong Village. (See Appendix D, Housing Transaction Price Index.)

As Guryong Village started enlarging in early 1990s, Gangnam District government established an office, or a situation room, to maintain and repair the shantytown. By that time, however, Seoul had been criticized by the international community for its aggressive demolitions which bordered on human rights violations, and the village had expanded to a point where the government could not simply evict its residents. Consequently, since 1995, Guryong village has stabilized. As of 2012, the shantytown consists of 9 different zones with approximately 2,500 residents (Ji, 2012, p. 193).

Research Design

My study is an explorative, qualitative research that examines the question of whether elderly persons of Guryong Village are receiving adequate provision of services. Major tasks included background research, literature review, interviews, and analysis. I first assessed what welfare assistance is currently in place for the elderly, what they perceived as lacking, and if the government has indicated improvements of these services during the resettlement process.

This thesis borrows the dimensions of services from a study by Cloos, Allen, Alvarado, Zunzunegui, Simeon, and Eldemire-Shearer (2010), which documented the perceptions of ‘active ageing’ from elders in six Caribbean countries. ‘Active ageing’ is a theoretical framework that was first introduced by the World Health Organization in 2002 to guide policy makers in implementing policy changes. It defines active ageing as “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (Cloos et al., 2010, p. 80). Since achieving active ageing has been considered to require various interventions both socially and physically, the assessment of multiple services for the elderly will inform whether or not the city is an inclusive, or an ‘age-friendly’ environment for the ageing population (Buffel, Phillipson, & Scharf, 2012, p. 599).

Furthermore, this research design integrated storytelling as a method of exploring the voices of Guryong’s senior residents. According to Beauregard (2003), storytelling “enables people of all backgrounds and abilities to frame a sense of what is, reflect on what needs to be done, and then engage with others about the sensibilities of their stories” (p. 65). Applying this logic, Bulkens, Minca, and Muzaini (2015) also argue that stories of residents can clearly show how citizens perceive their living environment and express the important roles of physical and social dynamics in people’s lives (p. 2313). Thus, I utilized this metric to listen to individual narratives, understand their personal experiences that interweave with the social and structural constructs for senior residents, and reiterate these stories in larger societal contexts for public significance and purpose.

Data Collection

The first task was background research. Information and data reviewed included general
history of Seoul’s urbanization and its pattern of evictions and renewal projects, the notions of shantytowns and ageing, development of Guryong Village, as well as factual statistics from Seoul government census data and reports. In order to assess shifting cultural values on a national level, I investigated census data such as the size of the elderly population, average household size, and female employment from Korean Statistical Information Service. This was supplemented by extensive literature review on characteristics of relocations and the impact these physical and social changes have specifically on the ageing population. For instance, Shulz and Brenner (1977) provided insight into the effects of relocation on the aged persons, and research by Cohen and Poulshock (1977) revealed the services that senior citizens value in the aftermath of a natural disaster and relocation.

In the second phase of data collection, I endeavored to capture the actual village life by conducting field study, which was held between December of 2016 to January of 2017. (See Appendix E. Field Research Schedule.) Field study comprised casual participant observation and conversations, as well as in-depth interviews.

These methods of data collection informed the principal metric of the study - provision of services. As Stewart and King (1994) suggest, it is necessary to have a systematic approach in selecting indicators and questions because they vary depending on the “purpose of the study, the setting, and the nature of the population” (p. 47). Thus, while this study borrowed the principles of ‘active ageing’ from Cloos et al. (2010), it also built on its framework to answer the primary research question. The services Cloos et al. (2010) looked at are: health and home care services, social activities, and economic status. This thesis, however, incorporated built environment, or housing, and social relationships as significant components of services, not only because the target population are slum residents who may lack these amenities, but also because senior citizens tend to be more reliant on their physical environment and because neighborhoods are acknowledged to be key elements in their social lives (Burns et al., 2012; Skinner, Cloutier, & Andrews, 2014; Cho & Kim, 2016). Furthermore, considering Korea’s culture of adult children’s supporting their parents and Guryong’s tightly knit community, social relationships were indispensable in understanding the elderly residents’ well-being.

The sample population who participated in interviews were Guryong residents over the age of 65 since that is the minimum retirement age in Korea. All the elderly interviewees were encountered through “friendly visits,” which is a hybrid methodology that integrates narrative research with regularly scheduled visits (Gardner, 2003, p. 264). An interviewee of Guryong Hope Community Group referred me to districts within the village with a high proportion of senior residents, where I was able to converse with numerous individuals. (See Figure 5.) I conducted interviews with ten elderly residents to gather an anecdotal account of their lives and their anticipation of the resettlement process. Respondents began by filling out a checklist of services that illustrated a clear
indicator of provisions, but the rest of the interviews were semi-structured; or in other words, consisted of structured questions and open-ended questions. Yet, given the age of participants, interviews were more casual. (See Appendix F, Interview Questions.) Each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes to an hour, the majority of which were recorded and transcribed.

All senior resident interviews were broken down into two broad topics. The first section focused on what services they have and what services they perceive as lacking. These questions addressed a wide range of physical and social services including housing maintenance, healthcare, recreational activities and economic opportunities. The discussions resulting from these questions segued into the second section of the research which asks, “what services is the local government providing for you in order to mitigate the resettlement process?” Through this discourse, I intended to learn if there was sufficient communication between the government and Guryong residents and if the redevelopment program was addressing the potential struggles endured by older persons of lower socioeconomic status.

Additional interviews were held with five individuals, including three city officials, an associate from a religious welfare facility named Neung-In Seonwon, and a resident of Guryong Village who is...
the director of its community organization - Guryong Hope Community Group. Interviews were mainly conducted in person, with the exception of Ms. Lee from the Gaepo 1-dong community service center, whom I spoke with on the phone. These interviews were intended to provide a more comprehensive viewpoint on the background of this research but more importantly, conversations with city officials contributed to varying perspectives on the ageing population in substandard environments as well as public services available for them during the redevelopment. In an effort to hold more enriched conversations, I conducted interviews with non-resident individuals subsequent to speaking with Guryong’s elderly residents.

**Data Analysis**

First, I built my qualitative content analysis from field study in context of the first phase of the research, background and theoretical studies. I utilized the findings from qualitative discourses to the larger social and physical dynamics of the urban fabric in order to inform Seoul’s city planners and policy-makers of pivotal components they potentially overlooked. Furthermore, I reiterated and organized interview narratives to delineate the lived experience of Guryong Village’s ageing population. (See Figure 6.) According to Becker (2003), as people tell stories about themselves, these narratives illustrate the person’s experiences in the midst of larger social forces, consequently providing a window onto “how

![Figure 6. Senior Residents of Guryong Village (Photo by. Nam-Joon, Jung)](image)
the individual is embedded in culture and situated in society” (p. 133). Therefore, the availability of various services investigated in conjunction with the anecdotal accounts of the ageing population evaluated if they are being adequately served.

Second, by inviting senior residents of Guryong to express their opinions regarding the redevelopment plan of the village, I offered a useful way to portend their feelings and relational dimensions of being in regards to the planning process. This method of storytelling and narrative interviewing shed light on the elders’ everyday encounters with their surroundings, which served to destabilize dominant discourse of the government that had historically been shaped by urbanization and capitalism serving higher-income strata of its citizens (Bulkens, Minca, & Muzaini, 2015, p. 2324).
FINDINGS

Introduction

Not every aged persons received the same services, nor had similar outlooks on the recently proposed Guryong redevelopment project. Nevertheless, there was a clear theme that emerged in my conversations regarding both welfare services and redevelopment. All aged resident interviewees said they felt they were receiving adequate welfare provisions and a large portion of them also expressed that they did not want redevelopment of their neighborhood.

Although exact statistics was unavailable, according to Mr. Kim of Guryong Hope Community Group, who has resided in the village for more than twenty years, approximately thirty percent of current residents are elderly with female majority. This gender proportion was also reflected in the interviewees; three of them being male and seven, female. (See Figure 7.)

Provision of Services

Financial Provisions

As regards to financial conditions of residents, out of the ten elderly individuals interviewed, only one elderly male had a job; Mr. Choi, who owns his own supermarket within the village. The rest of the respondents were either unemployed or retired. Given their age and status of employment, most aged residents of Guryong were heavily reliant on financial assistance from the government or family.

The federal government provides financial help for senior citizens who are 65 years of age or older, have a Korean nationality, and whose income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Socio-political</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Housing</th>
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<td>Ms. Lee</td>
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<td>Ms. Jung</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Rhee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Yoon</td>
<td>81</td>
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o: interviewee does receive/partake in relevant services
x: interviewee does not receive/partake in relevant services
is less than the standard household income of the elderly (Ministry of Health and Welfare, Korea). While the amount of pension differs depending on circumstances such as marital status, spouse’s employment, and offspring’s income, all respondents from this study were receiving aged pensions. Two elderly individuals, Mr. Choi, owner of the supermarket, and Ms. Jung, were not receiving the standard monthly pension amount of 204,010 won (≈ 175 US dollars). Mr. Choi’s pension was cut in half because his wife, who is younger than 65 years old, earns approximately 800,000 won (≈ 695 US dollars) a month. He expressed his frustration while showing me his bankbook:

I should be getting around, more than 200,000 won, but just because my wife goes out as a housekeeper, works all day at a hard job and makes only 800,000 won, my pension gets cut in half? It makes no sense. Look here. Every 25th of the month. Here. I’m only getting 120,000 won.

Four elderly interviewees noted that they receive additional financial assistance aside from aged pension. Two elderly women were receiving “Living Pensions” for households below standard income from the Ministry of Health and Welfare and two male residents were receiving “War Pensions” for being in the Korean War.

Ms. Nam is 98 years old and has lived in Guryong Village for more than twenty years. She initially moved to the village with her son, who passed away in a car accident five years ago, and has lost contact with her daughter for more than ten years. She said her only family are the daughter-in-law and grandson, who live far away on a southern island called Jeju and cannot visit. Because she is a senior citizen living alone, she receives the living pension which is around 250,000 won (≈ 210 US dollars). When I asked if she feels like she receives enough financial assistance, she responded:

I would die if it weren’t for the country. Government gives me money. Monthly they give me money so I just use that. They give pensions.. But it’s not a lot. Barely 400,000 I think. I can’t spend a lot of money. I can’t even work now because it is too tough. I just use the money the country gives me, pay electric bills, water bills, and eat.. I just live like that.

Or, consider Mr. Shin, who is 83 years of age and lives by himself. His reaction to the amount of welfare pension was a little different:

Government gives, I think around 140,000 won. They give that. That.. and 6.25 War Pension, that too. The war veterans. That is separate and about 180,000 won. 200,000 for aged pension too. Yeah. it’s enough. I can totally live off that much. I mean how much can one man eat? Electric bills, water bills, it’s enough.

Although Ms. Nam and Mr. Shin noted that they solely depend on financial assistance from the government, the majority of respondents told me that they also rely on their family for monetary support. Many of the elderly residents of Guryong Village were in fact, not “alone.” Anecdotal accounts confirmed that they have family members who live in close proximity, support them financially but seldom visit. For example, Mr. Choi, who owns the supermarket, said that although he does not depend on his son for financial help, his
son still gives him monthly allowance and pays for any additional or unexpected costs such as medical bills. (See Figure 8.) My conversation with Ms. Choi, an 85 year old elderly resident, reinforced the notion that family still remains as one of the main sources of income and support for senior residents.

Ms. Choi walked into Ms. Nam’s shantyhouse as she and I were having coffee and began expressing her frustration at other residents who had borrowed money from her and never paid it back. She told me that she had resided in the village for approximately fifteen years and because she has a rich daughter, many people take advantage of her, then never reimburse her. She also said that she only began receiving aged pensions in September of 2016 because her daughter had listed her as an owner of an apartment she had purchased and only deregistered her in 2016:

Yeah, of course I live alone! My daughter here, she lives here. She lives in Gaepo-dong but it’s been years now, around twelve years I think. She bought an apartment in Mapo. Before the area was redeveloped. It was cheap. Then it got redeveloped! And new apartments came in. 31 pyeong (≈1103 square feet) apartments.. But she [daughter] did not sell it and put it under my name. At the time it was almost 800 million won (≈700,000 US dollars). I was living here while having an apartment like that. The apartment was registered under my name. So I never got any money from the government. Of
course they would not! I have millions and millions under my name. Mapo apartment that is mine. But last year my daughter re-registered it under her name. So now I get aged pension. Starting September. Before aged pensions, my daughter gave me money every month.

Regardless of mild discontentment regarding the amount of financial support, none of the residents indicated complete insufficiency. And according to Mr. Kim of Guryong Hope Community Group, this may be due to the fact that there is no rent, only small expenses on utilities, and family help.

Social Relationships

Even though Korean adult children still cite respect and sacrifice for aged parents and family harmony as reasons for taking care of their parents, Guryong’s aged residents frequently indicated insufficient support from their families. The rare family visits and decreasing number of elderly residents receiving financial support from adult children illustrate that the culture of hyo is only minimally intact in Korean culture.

Given the significance of family especially for aged persons, family dynamics can be telling of the social and emotional circumstances of elderly individuals. For instance, Ara (1994) found that among institutions which impact behaviors of people, none is more important than family, particularly for older persons (p. 63). The narratives from interviewees attested to this notion.

Ms. Yoon is an 81 year old senior resident who has been in Guryong Village for eight years. While her son and daughter-in-law send her monthly allowance, she does not feel emotional support. She related an account that had happened a few years back:

It was... Maybe it was two years ago? I was really sick. Not a disease or anything but a severe cold. When you’re sick it’s hard, you know? You feel sorrowful for no reason... I felt really sick. So I missed my grandson so very much. That little kid.. 7 years old. I missed him so much you know? I can’t even see him often! So I got on a bus, dragging my sick body, it’s so hard. I have no physical defects, but I mean, it’s not easy for an elderly to get around you know? So I went to my son’s house, and my daughter-in-law says, ‘why did you come? If you need money, we’ll give you money; if you need something, we can give it to you’ and basically kicked me out the door. I didn’t even get to see my grandson.

The potential conflict amongst family members was an emerging theme throughout my conversations. For instance, Mr. Im, a 73 year old man, refused to answer to the question, “do you have family members you are in contact with?” Instead, he angrily responded “there is no such thing as true family. It’s pointless having kids.” Furthermore, Ms. Choi said that her reason for moving to Guryong Village was due to frictions with her daughter-in-law while living with her son’s family. After years of conflicts with her, Ms. Choi was diagnosed with depression and had to take medicine, finally deciding to leave.

Three of the female interviewees expressed their relationships with daughters-in-law as central conflicts. It has been a cultural norm that Korean daughters-in-law are often under the strain of caregiving that results in discords with in-laws. Sung
(2000) found that this cultural norm has recently been shifting with women’s increased labor force participation and trends of parents’ living separately (p. 50). Mr. Kim, who is a director of Guryong Hope Community Group, reaffirmed that aged individuals of Guryong may not receive the *hyo* as commonly understood. When asked why there is a large population of ageing population in Guryong Village, he answered:

Regarding elderly... it’s a social problem. Not many of the aged persons live here because they’re actually without family. Not because they are actually senior citizens who are alone; family lives elsewhere, but only aged parents live here. During holidays, they come and go... Why this happened was... around 1988, there was a rumor that this area was going to get developed so people wanted houses here. They want to buy it but they can’t dare to live here. So they say “mom! dad! Stay there just for awhile. The area will get redeveloped soon.” So they come. They stay. Soon, they find out there’s another grandmother living next door, another next door, and so many more. They have a lot of friends. You don’t spend money here, and since they think ‘if I live here, I can give my kid an apartment,’ so they just stayed. And after years, they can’t adjust to an apartment living. Of course, there are people who are really alone and struggle. But... there’s a lot of reasons. Trouble with in-laws, saying the house is stinking up with old people smell.. There’s a lot of different reasons.

As Mr. Kim alludes, in the midst of their family’s poor support or possible neglect, many of the elderly residents found friends and a community at Guryong Village. While family is still identified as the most important informal support for the ageing population, Ara (1994) found that the role of neighbors and friends become more important in an elderly individual’s life and results in active ageing (p. 94). Gardner (2011) also noted that there is “increasing awareness of the important role of non-family support and in particular friends and neighbors, to the well being of older adults” (p. 264).

Similar to Gardner’s observation that the old adults in his study had reciprocal and mutually supportive relationships within neighborhoods, Guryong’s aged residents relied on each other or on their neighbors too. Ms. Nam, who is without family, explained that although she is lonely, she is grateful for neighbors who take care of her:

I’m lonely, because I’m alone. But my neighbors always bring something when they make it [food]. When I tell them not to bring it, ‘since you always cook and eat alone, when we make something we always think of you.’ So when I try to give them some money for it, they do not even take it (laughs). They say they will take the food back if I give them money.

In fact, I met with Ms. Choi when I was in Ms. Nam’s *panjajib*, because she was bringing Ms. Nam food that she had made that morning. (See Figure 9.) On a separate day, a younger female neighbor visited Ms. Nam to give her warm clothing for winter. In addition, on warmer days, aged residents were outside conversing with one another and sharing fruits in public spaces.

Research by Buffel, Phillipson, and Scharf (2012) found that especially in areas of economic deprivation, senior citizens identify strongly with their neighborhood and have high levels of support (p. 605). Similarly, in this study’s interview conversations...
and casual observations, it was undisputable that neighborhood social networks in Guryong community reassure and comfort many of its senior residents.

The proposed redevelopment thus poses a problem, particularly in such a tightly-knit community. For instance, Mr. Kim of Hope Community Group expressed his concern that it will be difficult for the senior residents once they have to scatter and relocate to other housing or their children’s apartments. As Ms. Nam said:

I briefly heard [about the redevelopment]. They are sending us. To different places.. but living alone. If I live somewhere they send me.. I have people I know here. If my neighbors and friends get scattered.. how can I survive alone at such places?

**Health Services**

Health is another important concern for the ageing population and since poverty is known to exacerbate health conditions especially for the elderly, it is critical that they receive adequate medical services. All interviewees said they do not have serious health issues and nine out of the ten noted that they receive proper health care. While no one was experiencing serious diseases or disabilities
that impede their mobility, Ms. Nam and Ms. Rhee said they often suffer from severe migraines. Ms. Jung, the only interviewee who claimed to not be receiving health care, said “I’m healthy right now so I do not worry. I do not really know how insurance.. Insurance policy works. I am okay for now.”

Respondents receive regular medical care either from volunteers or a nearby health center. Ms. Rhee noted:

There are two people who come. If one person comes this day, another comes another day. That person comes and goes two or three times. The neighborhood office [public community service center] sends them. It says ‘go take care of this grandmother,’ and designates one. So they come and see me. They came two days ago.

Community service centers that Ms. Rhee mentioned are located in every neighborhood, or dong, within districts of Seoul and serve the residents for their social benefit and welfare. Gaepo 1-dong community service center is responsible for Guryong Village and often supervises its residents. Ms. Lee, a director of its welfare team said they try to maintain intimate relationships with its senior citizens and provide necessary services. When I asked if the team regularly visits the elders, she said:

Yes, because they are our responsibility, we visit almost every day. For example, if they are pensioners but aren’t receiving adequate care, or if it’s a person with disability, having a tough time and need help... then we go and speak with them, ask them questions and try to assist. Let’s see.. We go once a day or once every other day.

Out of the interviewees, Ms. Nam, Ms. Rhee and Ms. Kim were receiving regular health check-ups from the community service center, while other residents said that they either rely on medical volunteers or go to the Gangnam District Health Center, which is approximately thirty minutes away by public transportation. Mr. Shin said that a city bus takes them near the free health center, does not require any transferring, and that the trip is very convenient. He said “it’s all free. They give you medicine. They know which person has to pay and which person does not have to. When you go to the health centers. I go there to get medication for blood pressure.”

Housing Provisions

Dilapidated housing structures, however, may exacerbate the elderly’s health conditions. The shanty houses of Guryong Village were haphazardly built during its inception in the late 1980s. As the term shantytown, or panjachon, indicates, these shanties were also built with substandard materials and lack sanitary accommodations. A typical shanty, for example, is constructed with thin wood board layers or with vinyl covering on the exterior (Ha, 2002, p. 197).

Basic services such as water supply, sewage system, electricity, heating and general maintenance are also deficient. Before 1997, residents used to draw underground water from a nearby well. But the groundwater was seriously contaminated after construction of roads adjacent to the village. As a result, Seoul City’s Water Facilities installed water pipes to the entrance of the village, which the residents extended to their homes or utilized water
tanks for storage. This system is terribly inadequate because the water pipes often go above the roofs of dwellings and are vulnerable to strong wind and snow.

For heating, Guryong residents rely on what is called ondol, a floor-heating system. This system uses fuel “under the floor, through which the hot gases from coal briquettes burning in the kitchen pass to the chimney” (Ha, 2004, p. 129). According to interviewees, they never run out of coal briquettes because so many non-profit organizations provide them. In fact, Mr. Kim of Hope Community Group criticized volunteer activities that come to deliver coal briquettes:

The funny thing about volunteer groups in Korea is that.. They’re all for ‘show.’ They come, put posters up, paste coal ashes on their faces and take pictures... like I said before, they should be giving residents what we desperately need the most, but they do it to take pictures and show off. This isn’t volunteer work and in fact, no help. When people contact me, saying they want to come volunteer, I tell them that since it’s getting cold, elderly would appreciate thick blankets.. I tell them these things. I mean at least toothpaste, toothbrushes... We have too much coal briquettes, it’s a hassle to clean the ashes.

Furthermore, because the village does not have a sewage system, the stream that flows through the village is always full of trash, manure and stench, causing a health hazard. (See Figure 10.) According to Mr. Choi, as many as five to seven households share squat toilets that were self-constructed. He also explained that Gangnam District sends “dunny carts” when requested and paid by residents, to clean out sewage.

While these conditions are clearly substandard, the elderly interviewees expressed contentment of their living conditions. Nine out of ten interviewees said that they are satisfied with the housing conditions and do not experience discomfort. Only one out of ten, Ms. Kim, said that she is unhappy with the lack of a steady roof and walls that keep her warm in the winter. (See Figure 11.) When I asked “what is the worst inconvenience in regards to housing?” Ms. Lee, a 72 years old resident said, “Most inconvenient? Well.. just that I would get sick and not be able to move around. I worry about that. But I’m okay. It’s not like that right now.”
In fact, the residents did not focus on the substandard housing conditions. Rather, the elders’ primary concern seemed to be that they can no longer make large-scale repairs or modifications to their shacks because the government prohibits it. When I asked why, this is what Mr. Choi said:

Repair... Well it’s basically impossible. Gangnam District has a situation room set up here now, with officers patrolling the village. And their attitude is ‘since it is an illegal shantytown anyways, just live the way it is.’ So then, big repairs are completely prohibited. Even little changes to housing has to have a ‘logical’ reason behind it and we need approval from the situation room too.

Mr. Choi noted that the banning of rehabilitation has gotten worse since the announcement of the redevelopment. Mr. Kim of Hope Community Group concurred,

You can repair stuff I guess. But I mean after 2000, you can’t even drive a nail in the wall, can’t fix your roof even when rain is leaking.. Since that year, we, residents, have been victims of basic human rights.

Socio-political Activity

Buffel, Phillipson, and Scharf (2012) found that compared to rural regions, urban areas allow elderly individuals to develop more social networks through cultural, religious, social and economic participation (p. 605). Similarly, despite the constraints that poverty may have on the senior residents of Guryong Village, interviewees noted that living in a city has provided ample opportunities to enrich their daily lives through various amenities and services. Not only do they receive sufficient services and frequent visits from volunteers, but diverse activities are also nearby.

Senior residents indicated that they frequently engage in religious activities through church communities and Buddhist groups within the village. Six out of ten resident interviewees said they regularly attend either church services or Buddhist activities. Interestingly, none of the three male aged persons were a part of religious groups, while six out of seven of female elderly were. This gender pattern was almost identical in maintaining social networks as more female interviewees attributed more attachment to neighbors and friends. For example, Ms. Choi told me that “all grandmothers here [Guryong Village] are close,” while Mr. Shin said
“those [different social groups] are useless. I just roam around the village by myself.”

Mr. Shin was, in fact, answering a question I had asked regarding Neung-In Seonwon, which is a large Buddhist institution located less than a mile away from Guryong Village. According to Mr. Kim of Hope Community Group and Mr. Choi, Neung-In Seonwon is one of the most dominant of the organizations that provide social activities and send volunteers for the senior residents. Three out of the six female interviewees said they had either received food and services or visited the institution to exercise and take crafting classes. Ms. Jung who has lived in Guryong Village for a little over ten years said, “yes, Neung-In.. Well I go there to exercise sometimes.. They give us kimchi and side dishes too.”

An associate from the welfare team at Neung-In Seonwon noted that the facility does not target activities or services only to Guryong Village residents:

We want to be discrete in how we empower the people we work for. We also want the elders to meet each other; for instance, if we isolate Guryong residents, they will have difficulty meeting other members from the community. People assume that because Neung-In Seonwon is in Gangnam District, it is in an affluent place. It is. But there are still many people, especially the ageing population, who are struggling and are in need of help.

She said that Neung-In Seonwon holds free health check-ups, haircuts, and programs to prevent dementia. It also provides rice and have events with free meals. Although she could not disclose specific numbers or names of Guryong residents who participate in their activities, she noted that “a lot” of Guryong’s elderly take advantage of their location and services.

Nonetheless, although many leisure and social activities are available for Guryong senior residents, there was clearly no sign of political engagement. The main indication was their lack of knowledge regarding the redevelopment plan of their own village or indifference towards it.

**Anticipating Redevelopment**

At the entrance of Guryong Village were banners that said “Congratulations on Guryong’s Redevelopment Plan!” (See Figure 12.) In fact, in other neighborhoods around Seoul were also banners announcing that the revitalization of the last shantytown in Seoul is just around the corner. In contrast, as soon as I stepped into the village, I could see posters from the community, opposing the redevelopment and announcing project-opposition community meetings.

Most of the findings regarding the recently proposed redevelopment plan of Guryong came from Mr. Kim of Guryong Hope Community Group or government officials. Six out of the ten elderly interviewees either did not know about the proposed redevelopment or avoided the topic altogether. On the other hand, the remaining four interviewees were against the redevelopment. Mr. Choi, who refused to be vocal about the redevelopment, said that aged individuals are not in a position to hold a stance regarding the project. Nevertheless, a few of the interviewees who indicated “no” to the
redevelopment described how they felt. Consider what Ms. Choi said:

For me, not doing it [redevelopment] is the best. For us [elderly]! I mean if they don’t go through with it, we don’t have extra expenses. We don’t need to pay. I mean we basically just sleep and eat. What do we do. We just age. For us, just living here right now, like this, is the best. If we go somewhere else, it’s all money, no? [Other places] you have to pay for bathrooms, trash, you need to buy recycle bags. Here, we don’t pay for trash, or any of those. They even throw out the coal briquette ashes for us! All we need to is what, television cost, phone costs, electricity and water, that’s it.

When I further asked if she does not want a cleaner and more pleasant living environment, she responded:

[Living conditions] it’s not hard. We have clean air and it’s nice here no? There’s a mountain behind us. I mean Guryong village has such a terrible reputation, saying it’s an illegal shantytown and what not, but the air is good and it’s nice here. And what. This is still Gangnam! Because it’s Gangnam, they have so many services and volunteers for elderly. They bulldozed the village center years ago, but when it was there, rich people, all of them, were so good to us grandmothers. They would cook for us during the day, cook for us at night. We used to get food from them everyday. Never ate at home.

Mr. Shin also noted that a redevelopment project would be “useless” and Ms. Yoon expressed similar sentiments. When I pointed to the “congratulations” banner hanging near the entrance of the village and asked her what she thought she responded:

They’ve been talking about it [Guryong’s redevelopment] for years now. Always. They’ve been saying it forever now. It’s been so long, I’m honestly sick of it. Really. The residents here, they would never listen or comply! We have nowhere to go. I mean you need money to go elsewhere... it’s
comfortable here. It’s better to just stay put. If they put a roof over our head and clean it up a little and continue living, that’s better. That [redevelopment] is such a hassle. It’s supposed to be..what do you call it. Green area? Here it is! It’s supposed to be protected by Gangnam keeps trying to get in our way.

She viewed the redevelopment as a way for government to make profit from building high-rise apartments and firmly believed that the project would not be achieved easily.

Despite the few elderly residents who had opinions on redevelopment, Ms. Choi said that it is difficult for elderly residents to be outspoken about their objection.

For young people. Them young people. It’s urgent for them. They need this redevelopment. They have kids, and so embarrassed and ashamed to live here, no? I can say that I like living here because I’m old; we can’t say those things in front of the young ones. Young people do need to leave this place.. We old people are just waiting to die, so for us, to us, living here is the best, that’s what I mean.

One of the “young people,” Mr. Kim of Hope Community Group highlighted the complexity of the issue. He noted that amongst the 984 households that are a part of the community group, 832 households, or 85 percent are against the redevelopment. When I asked why, he said no one from Seoul Government or SH Construction Company (which is in charge of the project) had visited the village and spoke with any of the residents. He expressed his irritation at the fact that while the primary goal of the project is supposedly to resettle the current Guryong community, they are not part of the dialogue.

So.. what the residents want. What we want is... not to repeat what, 1986? Or 1988 years. They [government] justified bulldozing lower-income, less powerful people by saying it is for revitalization. We don’t want to repeat that. What we want is for them to listen to what we, residents, actually want; a plan that is actually tailored for us. So don’t try to give us clothes that do not want or fit us. Give us clothes that fit... We are all people who have thoughts and opinions too.

In the course of redevelopment, elderly people are at a disadvantage because they are poor in physical, financial and social dimensions. Although a renewal of Guryong neighborhood may be justified on the ground of improving its living standards, until government policies proactively address the needs of senior residents and give them “clothes that fit,” the renewal project will subject this most vulnerable population to the threat of involuntary relocations.

**Summary & Discussion**

The general perception of which Guryong Village is illustrated in several academic accounts is as follows:

- The obvious inadequacy in housing and infrastructure of Guryong Village demonstrates the shadow of poverty cast on the everyday life of its residents (Ji, 2012, p. 197).

- This shantytown [Guryong] exacerbates inconvenient habitation, deterioration, and low quality of life (Lee, 2012, p. 1)

The physical environment of Guryong Village clearly reflects the above descriptions, but my conversations with elderly residents revealed a much more nuanced perception of their daily lives and of the provisions
of welfare services. As one elderly resident said, Guryong Village is a “heaven for welfare recipients.” He noted that the ageing population, in particular, has sufficient benefits such as financial support or provisions of food as well as daily essentials from non-profit organizations that make them content with the village life.

The narratives of other resident interviewees validated his claim. Prior to 2011, the rights of Guryong residents were disregarded because they were not registered under the Gangnam District Government. In other words, they were not only excluded from recognition as residents of the city, but also from public welfare services that are warranted for all citizens. Fortunately since 2011, residents have been able to receive at least the minimum, basic services from the federal and municipal governments.

In summary, senior residents of Guryong Village noted sufficient welfare services provided by various sources, including government, family, and volunteer organizations. Nine out of ten elderly were economically inactive, but all of them were receiving at a minimal, aged pension. Several of them also depended on additional financial support such as living pension, veterans pension, or assistance from family. Majority of senior residents said they maintain relationships with their adult children and were receiving health services, mainly from medical volunteers or by visits to the District Health Center. In regards to socio-political activities, while majority of female respondents were actively engaging with their surroundings and people through religious affiliations, exercising, or community events, none of the male interviewees actively partook in these pursuits. Furthermore, despite substandard housing qualities and public amenities, all interviewees noted that they do not need anything “fancier” than the homes they have had for many years. Consequently, they mentioned that they either do not want a redevelopment, or do not anticipate the project executing at all. The common assertion from all aged interviewees was not only that they were happy not having to pay monthly rent, but also that the neighborhood has become their home because of their friends and community. (See Figure 13 & 14.)

Through many years, the senior residents of Guryong put their identities in the place, making the village an ‘extension of themselves’ (Becker, 2003, p. 134). Therefore, in facing redevelopment, the distinction of the shantytown as space or place becomes of paramount significance. The space elderly people inhabit affect a range of critical aspects of daily life, such as security, health, independence, social support and comfort that manifests into “lived” space, or place (ibid., p. 129). And since elderly individuals form a kind of ‘dependency’ upon the social and physical environment in which they reside, an unfavorable uprooting of their living structures can cause serious stress to the affected senior people (Chui, 2001, p. 162).
Figure 13. Two elderly men of Guryong Village (Photo by Nam-Joon, Jung) - above
Figure 14. Elderly community of Guryong sharing afternoon drinks and food (Photo by Nam-Joon, Jung) - below
RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The redevelopment of Guryong Village was first publicly announced in 2011 by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the project eventually passed in November of 2016. The most recent proposal only comprises an architectural rendering of the future development and a general objective statement: to resettle current residents of Guryong Village. (See Figure 15.)

In regards to urban renewal projects, Roy (2005) states that what is redeveloped is physical space - the environment and tangible amenities - rather than people’s livelihoods (p. 150). This distinction also conveys the duality inherent in Guryong Village - its use value and exchange value. Harvey (1973) explains that use value of property or land is conceived in the everyday sense that “lies outside the sphere of political economy” whereas exchange value is commodification of the land’s value (p. 160). Focusing on the land value of Guryong will repeat Seoul’s historic property-led economic prosperity while at the same time, subjecting vulnerable populations, particularly the elders, to the damaging aftermats of community removal.

Therefore, I argue that Seoul’s planners and policy-makers must shift priorities their priorities. They must upkeep the village’s current conditions, change the dialogue, consult with current residents and “pay attention to the use value claims that constitute the right to the city” (Roy, 2005, p. 155). They must not only view themselves as part of the political power, but also as agents to reform society (Fischer, 2009, para. 6). The task is to appreciate the shantytown’s use value, represent all major points of view, level the information amongst all stakeholders, and allow democratic processes to be a deciding factor rather than one party’s status or power in an existing hierarchy (ibid.). These recommendations are intended to directly address inequality in the city as well as within the squatter settlement.
itself. By practicing these modes of planning and policymaking, planners can not only empower and advocate for senior citizens in Guryong, but also for ageing population in other cities who are also under threat of involuntary relocations or insufficient welfare services.

The following recommendations are ultimately three-fold: before, during and post relocations. Before the development, planners must make sure they provide cleaner and safer living conditions for the elderly residents. Next, during the decision-making process, planners must activate senior participation by establishing democratic processes and creating discursive spaces. Third, given that residents have to move away from the area during the construction phase, people-based services must be implemented rather than placed-based support. Lastly, planners and policy makers must establish stability for the ageing population after the project is completed.

**Before Redevelopment:**

**Recommendation 1: Provide Maintenance**

Despite the fact that the government has announced the relocation processes to begin in December of 2016, there had not been active measures to converse with the residents and discuss their moving. As of January of 2017, majority of residents were still living in the village. Whether it is due to delays in the political process or resident oppositions, Mr. Kim of Hope Community Group noted that the redevelopment will most likely not carry out in a punctual manner. After all, none of the government officials spoke with current tenants about the new project. But while it is critical to address the relocation process and the conditions of a newly built neighborhood, it is also important to recognize improvements that must be made in the interim, especially given the substandard living conditions residents must endure on a daily basis, as well as uncertainty of the project’s start date.

Guryong Village’s current environment poses health hazards for its residents, particularly seniors, and often results in dangerous fires. Just recently, in March of 2017, a fire in District 7 destroyed almost thirty households and caused serious injuries to its residents - all of whom were elderly. (See Figure 16.) Due to inflammable materials the shanty houses are built with as well as the narrow streets that put these structures in close proximity, the neighborhood is often prone to fires. And while it is costly and difficult to make major adjustments to the residential units in a short period of time, there are other practical services the government must provide for the welfare of Guryong residents.

First and foremost, the government should clean the stream that is running through the village. In fact, planners can organize an event, gather current and new volunteers to pick up trash and clean the water. This stream is currently infested with discharged manure, trash, and unsanitary waste. According to a Gangnam government official, this stream also caused several virus outbreaks in the neighborhood, particularly during summer. Drastic changes to the stream may require additional funds and infrastructure, but frequent clean-ups can lead to a mitigation of noxious outbreaks and lessen health
threats for elders.

Second, planners should advocate for weather-related amenities. For instance, residents of Guryong often struggle with lack of ventilation during summer and heating during winter. Ms. Kim, who expressed dissatisfaction with her housing conditions, described that winters are easier because they receive so much coal briquettes and they have thicker blankets; but that summer is more difficult because shanties do not allow enough ventilation and trap heat. This is more onerous for the elderly as it was found that heating puts them in a vulnerable position than any other age groups (Klinenberg, 1999, p. 250). Especially given that Guryong’s elders often live in isolation with poor conditions, government officials and planners must give attention to their dire realities in the face of detrimental weather conditions (ibid., p. 260).

Since making drastic repairs to housing units is forbidden in the face of a redevelopment, the government should consider providing portable air conditioning or fans for residents, but especially for seniors who live alone. Another method is to provide more open spaces with trees and sitting spaces where elders can escape the high temperatures on days with brutal heat. This will not only improve overall living conditions of the neighborhood, but also protect them from “silent deaths” that could result from heat waves in the summer (ibid.).

While it is ideal to make infrastructural
modifications to Guryong village because it lacks adequate amenities such as proper electricity, sewage system or water, such practical measures in the interim can make serious progress for the daily lives of the elders.

Recommendation 2: Increase Capability

Although it is relatively early in the process and the government has not established solid measures to address the relocation, it is critical to have the conversation with residents early on to prevent involuntary displacement and unwarranted hardships. An important factor that can minimize the plight of elderly people is providing controllability and predictability of the proposed redevelopment. Here, controllability is defined as the capacity to manipulate dimensions of the environment and predictability as the ability to anticipate and prepare for the future (Shulz & Brenner, 1977, p. 324). And evidently, these factors must be practiced prior to the decision-making process.

Mr. Kim from Guryong’s Hope Community Group told me that the residents, who occupy the place, know the village best, and will be most affected, were left to encounter the news of the proposed development via media. Rather than hanging banners congratulating the redevelopment of the village, the government and relevant stakeholders must inform and discuss the proposal with the residents.

Although younger people of Guryong Village, like Mr. Kim, are aware of the impending development and are struggling for their rights, majority of elderly residents are excluded from this matter whether it is voluntarily or involuntarily. In fact, a few of the aged interviewees from this study were hesitant to voice their opinions because they felt it was “not their place.” Further, as my study has found, many of the aged respondents were not even anticipating that the proposal will be implemented or were completely unaware of it.

A notion of predictability, however, is fundamental for aged individuals. Shulz and Brenner (1977) found that the more predictable a new environment, the less adverse the consequences of relocation (p. 324). In order to protect and prepare residents of a new environment, planners and policy makers must educate and inform senior residents of the project proposal. This factor must also be coupled by a sense of control that is essential, since loss of power attributes to feelings of depression and helplessness, as well as acceleration in physical decline that is frequently observed in elderly populations (ibid., p. 330). Thus, to reduce their uncertainty and stress, a constant dialogue that indicates more autonomy for senior residents is an absolute necessity. When elders perceive that they have more influence and can modify the conditions of a potentially threatening event, the devastation of losing their home will be relatively less.

Unlike younger people, aged population require a more patient and proactive approach to be informed about the future of their homes. Hence, this recommendation is not only pertinent to government officials and the redevelopment team, but also to younger generations of Guryong village. Whether senior residents voluntarily hang back from
the decision-making process or naturally due to lack of informational resources, they still hold absolute rights as current residents to know and prepare for potential changes and relocation. By addressing potential adjustments elderly people have to make, even younger residents can help in providing more controllability and predictability - or capability - that will mitigate deprivation. Capability “do[es] not describe how people actually function but rather what they have the opportunity to do... each person must be treated as an end” (Fainstein, 2009, p. 33).

As a result, when an elderly individual has an opportunity to be educated about the political process and imagine their new environment, adverse impacts of relocation will decrease. Nevertheless, this recommendation should be practiced, not merely with an intent to lessen stress for the elderly, but with an idea that the aged should have the right and the opportunity to retain their independence (Shulz & Brenner, 1977, p. 331).

**During Redevelopment:**

**Recommendation 3: Activate Participation**

While informing senior residents of the potential changes is important, extending that step to enable their political participation is more critical in building a sustainable neighborhood. A way to encourage Guryong’s elderly residents to voice their opinions and truly participate is first, by ensuring their rights to the city, and second, by establishing natural and comfortable settings for storytelling that leads to discursive and participatory democracy. In order to do so, city planners and policy makers must recognize that the redevelopment is not only a technical issue but a political process which demands a distinct set of experts, namely the residents themselves (Roy, 2005, p. 152).

Harvey (2008) defines right to the city as the following:

> The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization (p. 23).

My conversation with elderly interviewees of Guryong village indicated that they do not acknowledge the ability to change their neighborhood as a fundamental right. Thus, it is not enough to inform what the decision makers envision of Guryong’s redevelopment but to engage residents in the process to determine what they want and need in a newly developed village. While the voices of all people residing in the shantytown must be heard, given the senior residents’ perception that this process is “not their place,” it warrants reliable support and active stimulation from planners to let the elders know that their opinions are valued.

Establishing natural and comfortable settings for storytelling is particularly significant to engage elderly residents so that they do not regard their participation as a mere political act. A few interviewees from this study said they are uncomfortable with expressing their opinions because they regard themselves as outsiders in the
official planning procedures; yet, in a casual setting where they were surrounded by trusted neighbors and friends, they ardently communicated their thoughts. Therefore, Seoul government’s planners and policy makers must provide public spaces and times where these private stories can become public so that through storytelling, these narratives can enhance understandings amongst the stakeholders. These deliberation processes must be non-threatening since in the absence of mutual trust and reciprocity, elderly citizens could potentially recoil into silence (Beauregard, 2003, 68). When practiced correctly, however, the individual stories will be “experiential and expressive, relatively unformed and inviting. [And] as liminal, stories are sited discursively between personal claims and public significance” (ibid., p. 69).

The focus on storytelling can add up from personal experience and individual narratives to interweave with social and structural enlightenment that destabilizes dominant discourse (Bulken, Minca, & Muzaini, 2015, p. 2324). Seoul’s planning policies and urban redevelopment projects have been mainly top-down ever since its rapid urbanization. If the government truly intends to practice what it preaches, which is prioritizing resettlement of current Guryong residents, it must acknowledge that true democracy involves storytelling and accountable citizens. Consequently, an active public and engaged residents will confront public wrongdoings and give the government more legitimacy as well (Beauregard, 2003, p. 65).

This particular recommendation can be implemented by guiding senior residents through multiple platforms, starting from focus groups that can cover variety of ideas and experiences within a more intimate setting (Gaižauskaitė, 2012, p. 20). Although focus groups are usually conducted for research purposes, city planners can evaluate and discern concerns of participants more easily. These sessions must be open-ended and casual so that elderly residents can feel more comfortable and view them as interactions rather than one-way questionnaires. The participants must also be from close community networks so that the conversations can be more genuine and eventually build trust with city planners. The purpose of this approach is to provide “therapy” that allows the ageing population to recognize their coexistence in the neighborhood that translates not only to individual breakthroughs but collective growth (Sandercock, 2004, p. 139). This public deliberation amongst residents and planners can facilitate less technocratic and more democratic planning processes.

This “therapeutic” step must transition into an active public setting once the senior residents realize their opinions are of value in the political discourse. Whether it is at a public park, community center, or board meeting, all residents, including the elderly, must be able to congregate and speak out about their marginalization, endured injustices and future needs. Once personal narratives are public, these “widespread deliberations [will] connect civil society and the state at multiple points and provide the state with the support and legitimacy it needs to act” (Beauregard, 2003, p. 65). These spaces will
be for democratic deliberation that offers a way for discursive planning - to ask who is benefitting and who is excluded by existing political and power structures; to challenge the formal institutions that promise democracy in vain (Fischer, 2009, para. 37).

Encouraging the practice of the right to the city through the modes of storytelling will enable marginalized elders to reveal the services they need during and after the resettlement process. Beauregard (2003) notes that “the function of the public sphere is to take such stories and mold them into bases for collective action” (p. 70). Without the senior residents’ narratives, Guryong residents will only be able to tell less than the entire story. By acknowledging the value of the ageing population, their identities and stories, participatory democracy will be joined by discursive democracy, achieving true collective action that is characterized by mutual respect (Beauregard, 2003; Bulkens, Minca, & Muzaini, 2015). Only through such accountability and transparency can Seoul and Guryong residents address inequality that may result from the redevelopment of the shantytown.

Recommendation 4: Implement people-based services

The third recommendation is to implement people-based services. Senior interviewees from my study were generally content with the current welfare services in place. They said they are receiving adequate financial support from federal and local governments and a few elders, occasionally from family members. They also get regular medical check ups and were aware of nearby government-run health facilities. Though male respondents were not actively engaging in social activities, many female elders regularly partook in events and exercises by volunteer or religious organizations. Furthermore, Guryong Village had a strong neighborhood network that sustained the members of the community, particularly the elders. In regards to housing conditions, nine out of ten interviewees were happy despite the substandard amenities and mentioned the value of the village’s natural surrounding such as Mt. Guryong and pollution-free air.

Nonetheless, the key issue is that all these services, with the exception of financial pensions, are place-based. Gaepo 1-dong community service center, which assigns social workers and medical volunteers to senior residents of Guryong, is located in every neighborhood or dong. Thus, these centers do not have responsibility or the resources to attend to each elderly if they move out of the center’s vicinity during the construction.

Ms. Lee from Gaepo 1-dong community service center told me that as long as the senior residents are pensioners or disabled, they will receive the same welfare services whether they are in shanties or apartments. Yet, this condition only applies as long as their locations do not change to outside the neighborhood boundary. When I asked if they will continue providing welfare services while the construction is taking place, she said “no. Because that’s not under our jurisdiction. We simply cannot keep track of all the senior residents and follow them if they go to Seocho-dong or.. Any random place.”

It is clear that in the course of the development, Guryong residents’ needs and problems during the
process need special attention. Nonetheless, even within the shantytown, there are financial and social stratas and particularly for seniors, process matters. (Roy, 2005, p. 153). While younger people with families or with jobs could find ways to sustain themselves during the reconstruction, many senior residents may be forced to protect themselves with no assistance. Given that the senior tenants of Guryong are poorer and more reliant, they are the ones who will suffer the most if direct provisions are not set during the resettlement process.

In order to mitigate adverse effects of relocation on the elderly, there must be a designated unit within the Department of Aging or Guryong Redevelopment Team that can protect the welfare of affected senior residents. Studies have found that agency support plays a critical role in relocation processes. For instance, in the study by Cohen and Poulshock (1977), the President’s Task Force actively monitored and maintained quality control of elderly town residents in the aftermath of an unexpected natural disaster. This conscious care and attention, as a result, alleviated harmful consequences (p. 265).

Therefore, rather than relying on place-based welfare service centers, the government must establish a special unit that can provide people-
Ageing Population and Slum Resettlement in Guryong Village

Post-Redevelopment:
Recommendation 5: Establish Stability

While it is paramount to inform, engage, and provide for the elderly, it is as essential to establish their stability post-redevelopment. Studies have found that senior citizens are often further excluded after natural disasters or urban redevelopment. The city’s poor elderly often barricaded themselves in their units, had little contact with family and friends, and were unable to receive many basic services (Chui, 2001; Klinenberg, 1999; Doling & Ronald, 2012). When aged persons’ needs are not met in a new environment, they often retreat into seclusion “using their walls to protect themselves from a world they perceive as too threatening to enter, all but abandoning a society that has thoroughly abandoned them” (Klinenberg, 1999, p. 260).

Senior citizens already represent an emerging group of precarious and marginalized urban residents. But particularly for elderly of lower socioeconomic status, as Guryong’s senior residents, social and physical isolation can further aggravate the deterioration of their livelihood and security. Consequently, it should be reckoned that welfare services and provisions should not be limited to before and during the redevelopment process, but also post-construction. The government must take measures to consolidate the elders’ stability by accommodating to their housing needs, preserving neighborhood networks that had been cultivated over time, and supplying concomitant ancillary services (Chui, 2001, p. 164). Through this discourse, Seoul will successfully build an ageing-friendly
Scharlach (2012) defines an aging friendly community as one where senior citizens have the ability to continue familiar activities, develop new interests, and maintain social relationships that provide support (p. 28). He argues that there are five major concepts that make up this environment, which are: continuity, compensation, connection, contribution, and challenge. Continuity is maintaining established patterns of behavior and circumstances as well as preserving internal psychological structures. Compensation is meeting the basic health and social needs of aged individuals including in-home care, rehabilitation, transportation modes, and many more. Connection is encouraging or preserving meaningful interpersonal interactions that foster support and connectedness, which is more important for elderly citizens. Contribution is providing development tasks to ensure that an elderly feel he or she is having a positive impact on the environment. Challenge, on the other hand, is having age-appropriate opportunities for stimulation, in forms of physical exercise, intellectual demands, or social interactions (Scharlach, 2012, p. 29).

Thus, planners must make a conscious effort to keep previous patterns intact. For instance, the new development should maintain alleys for an afternoon stroll and view of the mountain that the current elderly residents enjoy. (See Figure 16.) All the present welfare services must also continue such as visits from social workers, medical volunteers, as well as easy transit to free health and recreational facilities. By resettling majority of the residents, the new community must preserve the interactions and support from neighborhood relationships and lastly, provide opportunities for elderly involvement and autonomy within the new development. When all these factors are met with the specific needs expressed by Guryong’s elders, they will have more security to recover from the process of relocation.

Another practical way to ensure more protection for aged residents is to secure housing provisions. Appropriating their homes will inevitably incur financial costs to the current Guryong residents. But because most elders are economically inactive and depend on pensions or family support, they have limited financial resources to secure property. But owning a home or even acquiring a clean, stable housing choice can sustain an aged individual’s self-reliance and happiness (Doling & Ronald, 2012, p. 475). Thus, policy makers should consider providing rent allowances to elders who cannot afford new rents or instituting community-based land trusts for Guryong elderly (Chui, 2001, p. 165; Roy, 2005, p. 154). These policies and assistance will lessen the burden for an individual to cope with payments and can place affected residents at a more advantageous position. As Chui (2001) emphasizes, it should be “reckoned that such a policy should be regarded as a remedial measure for the past negligence of instituting retirement protection and integrated housing policies for the elders” (p. 165).
LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

This research aimed to assess the provision of services for the elderly residents of Guryong village as well as the relevance of these assistance measures during the shantytown’s revitalization. Regardless of multiple site visits, observations, government data, and in depth interviews used to garner a holistic evaluation, this research had its limitations. For instance, given the small number of resident interviewees, the findings may not be fully representative of the senior population at Guryong village. Regardless, anecdotes from my conversation with the residents implied that many elderly have similar outlook on provision of services and the redevelopment.

Further, questions regarding social or political activities were not always understood by elderly respondents and when the question failed to signify specific dimensions of their daily experiences, answers often took a detour, prolonging the interview process. Therefore, questions needed to be more specific and practical in order to better understand the senior residents’ conditions and opinions.

The research was also limited due to time constraints and the ability to contact aged interviewees. There was only a month available for field research and none of the elderly residents of Guryong had cellular phones and rarely had home phones. Even if they did, they never picked up the phone calls. The only way to approach new senior residents or re-visit previous interviewees was to go to the site and casually strike up a conversation. Many residents were further enervated and hesitant to speak with outsiders due to many media reporters and researchers exploring the village. Lastly, inclement weather prevented meeting residents and observing the site. Only a few residents were outside in the duration of field research because of extreme cold, rain, or snow.

This field research was conducted a month subsequent to the development proposal’s passing, allowing in depth and ardent discussions with relevant stakeholders. But a longer study will definitely offer more insights as it will reveal the benefits and challenges elderly residents have to endure during and after the redevelopment. The potential study will also provide an opportunity to keep the government and stakeholders accountable for any repeated injustices towards the least well-off of Seoul’s last illegal settlement.
CONCLUSION

As urban planners and policy-makers in Korea strategize about the country’s ability to support future eldercare, this study on senior citizens of Guryong Village offers relevant insight to the appropriateness of services for the growing ageing population. The interviewees, to a certain extent, represented a precarious community that mandates significant action by governments to alleviate problems for the disadvantaged elderly. Acknowledging the change in demographics, unprecedented number of aged citizens, rapid urbanization, low fertility, as well as the shift in traditional family values, there has been mild progress in public services for seniors. Meanwhile, there still remains a great urgency for the Korean and Seoul governments to reinforce existing systems to assist this vulnerable population who continues to face rapid changes within the urban core (Sung, 2000, p. 48).

Many Korean scholars concur that the role of public support for the elderly will become more important than ever in the past; consequently, expanded state resources and public commitment to their welfare become all the more essential (Sung, 2000; Kim, 2000; Yoon, Eun, & Park, 2000). Yet, this issue is not only pertinent to South Korea. Ageing has become a worldwide concern because it demands reshaping of demographic, economic and social factors that protect older persons from adverse impacts (Apt, 2000, p. 1). For instance, UN Habitat (2015) argue that the “elderly could become the new urban poor in the Asia and Pacific region” (p. 105). Especially in cities that compete in the global market, older populations feel stigmatized and excluded by the quick progress and changes which rob them of stability (Buffel, Phillipson, & Scharf, 2012, p. 601).

Therefore, programs and policies should focus on maximizing the wellbeing of senior citizens, fostering social connectedness and empowering them to participate in decision making processes. Furthermore, every service should be tailored to the needs of each specific community. While this inevitably takes significant effort by both governments and planners, “developing new policies and approaches to involving older people in the social and economic life of cities will be a crucial task for urban development in the years ahead” (ibid., p. 612).

More importantly, advocating for inclusion and participation of older urban citizens is a critical part of achieving sustainable urban development and a just city, which begins by examining the everyday reality of city life and then seeks a means to reshape that reality and re-imagine that life. It beings with the injustices that have come with rapid urbanization - the violence, insecurity, exploitation, and poverty that characterize urban life for many, as well as the physical expressions of unequal access to social, cultural, political, and economic capital that arise from intertwined divisions... [a just city] is more than individualized responses to specific injustices. It requires the creation of coherent frames for action and deliberation.
that bring the multiple and disparate efforts of those fighting against unjust urban conditions into relief and relate their struggles to each other as part of a global orchestration improvised around the single tenor of justice (Connolly and Steil, 2009, para. 1)

Many urban elderly’s lives are manifestations of past injustices bred out of rapid urbanization and there is a high possibility that their conditions will exacerbate without proper provisions. In today’s global demographic transitions, there is a renewed sense of urgency in the notion of ‘the right to the city’ for the ageing population; the need for new modes of thought and practices to shift what was once natural and ordinary.

Older people provide great advantages to the urban environment (Buffel, Phillipson, & Scharf, 2012, p. 600). They are knowledgeable and committed to their community. They also offer diversity and vivacity. By engaging them in the urban conversation, cities can adapt an intergenerational view of development and finally move towards growth that is founded on justice and equity (ibid., p. 600; McGraw Hill, 2016, p. 1; Sandercock, 2004, p. 136).
APPENDIX

Appendix A. Demographic Statistics: Korea, 1995 - 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Population</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Size</td>
<td>3.317</td>
<td>3.111</td>
<td>2.897</td>
<td>2.682</td>
<td>2.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertility</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>61,229</td>
<td>41,096</td>
<td>42,936</td>
<td>41,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Employment</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Korean Statistical Information Service

Appendix B. Slum Distribution: Seoul, 1950s - 1990s

Source: Seoul Metropolitan Government

Appendix C. Socioeconomic and Housing Profile in Selected Years, 1950 - 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Housing Units</th>
<th>Illegal Units</th>
<th>GNP/capita (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1,693,224</td>
<td>318,673</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2,445,402</td>
<td>446,874</td>
<td>275,436</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5,433,198</td>
<td>1,096,871</td>
<td>600,367</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>8,364,379</td>
<td>1,849,324</td>
<td>968,133</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>1,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>10,612,577</td>
<td>2,820,292</td>
<td>1,430,981</td>
<td>94,974</td>
<td>5,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10,595,943</td>
<td>3,448,466</td>
<td>1,863,466</td>
<td>73,500</td>
<td>10,037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Seoul Metropolitan Government
Appendix D. Housing Transaction Price Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Housing Transaction Price Index (January, 2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoul (Overall)</td>
<td>104.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jong Ro</td>
<td>102.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joong Gu</td>
<td>102.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yongsan</td>
<td>103.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seong Dong</td>
<td>105.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwang Jin</td>
<td>104.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dongdaemoon</td>
<td>105.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joong Rang</td>
<td>103.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seong Book</td>
<td>103.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Book</td>
<td>103.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Bong</td>
<td>104.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Wan</td>
<td>106.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eun Pyung</td>
<td>103.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seodaemoon</td>
<td>103.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapo</td>
<td>104.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YangChun</td>
<td>104.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Seo</td>
<td>106.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goo Ro</td>
<td>105.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geum Chun</td>
<td>103.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Deung Po</td>
<td>105.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dong Jak</td>
<td>104.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwan Ahk</td>
<td>104.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seo Cho</td>
<td>105.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangnam</td>
<td>107.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seong Pa</td>
<td>103.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Dong</td>
<td>104.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Seoul Metropolitan Government

Appendix E. Field Research Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.16</td>
<td>1st Field Visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.19</td>
<td>Interview with Mr. Kim from Guryong’s Hope Community Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.26</td>
<td>Guryong Resident Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.30</td>
<td>Interview with Gaepo 1-dong Community Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.2 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Guryong Resident Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.6 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Field Visit &amp; Guryong Resident Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.10</td>
<td>Interview with Gangnam District Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.13 &amp; 16</td>
<td>Guryong Resident Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.16</td>
<td>Interview with Neung-In Seonwon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F. Interview Questions: Residents

Basic Information
• How old are you?
• How long have you lived in Guryong Village?

• Are you currently working?
• What do you consider your main source of income?
• What pension benefits are available to you?
• What other sources of income or financial assistance are available to you?
• Do you think Seoul/Korea has adequate financial provisions for the ageing population?

Provisions: Health Services
• How do you perceive your health?
• What health services are currently available to you?
  • Which organizations provide these provisions?
• Do you think Seoul/Korea has adequate health provisions for the ageing population?

Provisions: Sociopolitical Activity
• Are there any social activities for the ageing population, or yourself? Such as church events, arts, educational activities, physical exercise, etc
  • Which organizations provide these provisions?
• Have you ever participated in a government or community meeting?
• Do you think Seoul/Korea has adequate sociopolitical opportunities for the ageing population?

Provisions: Social Relationships
• Do you have family members?
• Do you live close to your family?
• Do you and your family members keep in contact?
• Are you close to the neighbors in the village?

Provisions: Housing Services
• How do you perceive your basic housing amenities to be?
• How easy is it to get improvements at home?
• Do you think Seoul/Korea has adequate housing options for the ageing population?
  • What could improve?
• Has the government provided adequate provisions for the neighborhood? (Street lights, waste management, public facilities, etc.)

Relocation
• Has the government communicated to you about new housing provisions in context of the redevelopment plan?
• What about any economic opportunities, health services, or sociopolitical activities?
• Are you guaranteed a home?
APPENDIX F. Interview Questions: Government Stakeholders

- Have you heard of Guryong Village?
  - If so, what do you know about the place?
  - Have you been there?
- What responsibility do you or the urban regeneration department have in the Guryong Redevelopment project?
  - What are its main objectives?
  - What phase are you guys in right now?
  - What are some of the major obstacles?
- How will the relocation be implemented?
  - Is there enough security for the current shantytown residents?
- Have you had the chance to communicate with Guryong residents?
  - Why or why not?
- Are you aware of the high number of elderly in the village?
  - If so, do you know if they receive adequate provision of welfare services?
  - Do you know which organizations provide these services?
- What services will be available to the elderly in the resettlement process?

APPENDIX F. Interview Questions: Welfare Organizations/Neighborhood Community Centers

- Have you heard of Guryong Village?
  - If so, what do you know about the place?
  - Have you been there?
- Are you aware of the high number of elderly in the village?
  - If so, do you know if they receive adequate provision of welfare services?
- Do you provide these services?
- What kinds of services do you provide for Guryong residents?
  - What about the elderly in particular?
- What do you think about the Guryong Redevelopment Plan?
- Will you continue providing welfare services to elderly residents during the reconstruction?
  - Why or why not?
Appendix G. People of Guryong [Photo by. Nam-Joon, Jung]
Appendix G. People of Guryong [Photo by. Nam-Joon, Jung]
Appendix H. Summary of Guryong Village Redevelopment Plan

Development Outline

- **Name:** Gaepo Guryong Village Urban Development
- **Duration:** 2016. 12. 8 – 2012. 12. 31
- **Location and Surface Area**
  Gangnam District, Gaepo-dong 567-1 / 266,304 square meters
- **Use Zoning:**
  Natural Green District -> Residential District 2 (136, 255 square meters), semi-residential area (52,648 square meters), and natural district (77,401 square meters)
- **Project Operator / Method:** SH Construction / 100% Method of Appropriation
- **Population Accommodation Program:**
  Proposed number: 7,279 people
  Proposed construction: 2,692 units (1,107 rental; 1,585 for sale)
- **Proposed Land Use:**
  Residential: 45.5%
  Basic facilities: 50.5%
  Other facilities: 4.0%
- **Total Expenses:** 941.2 billion won (~ 833 million dollars)

Proposal Progress

- 2011. 4. 28: Guryong Village Redevelopment Plan confirmed and announced
- 2012. 8. 2: Guryong Village designated as development area
  Appropriation method undecided (discussion around ‘Land Substitution method to Residents’)
- 2012. 11 – 2014. 6: Gangnam District Government raises concern around ‘Land Substitution method to Residents’
- 2014. 8. 4: Designation as Urban Redevelopment district lifted
  2 years after designation, development plan confirmed as ineffective
- 2014. 12. 18: Seoul City Government re-designate Guryong village as urban redevelopment area & Gangnam District Government confirm ‘Usage and Acceptance Method’
- 2015. 2 – 2015. 4: Meeting of Seoul Government and SH Construction stakeholders, site visit to Guryong Village, team formation of urban regeneration team, & confidential discussion amongst stakeholders
- 2015. 5. 15 – 2015. 5. 29: Re-designation of Guryong Village as development area and briefing for residents
- 2015. 6. 30: Urban Planning Team of Gangnam District Commission counsel
- 2015. 7. 10: Request for redevelopment plan approval from Seoul Government to Gangnam District
- 2015. 9 – 2016. 3: Establishing Guryong Village as development area and briefing for residents
- 2016. 4. 8 – 2016. 4. 21: Announcement of Guryong Redevelopment Plan
- 2016. 5 – 8: Guryong Village Redevelopment Plan’s stakeholder consultation
- 2016. 8. 17, 10. 19, 11. 2: Seoul City Planning Department defers development deliberation
- 2016. 9 12 & 9. 26: Seoul City Planning Department holds subcommittee
- 2016. 11. 16: 20th Seoul City Planning Department approves Guryong Redevelopment Plan
- 2016. 12. 8: Guryong Village Redevelopment Plan confirmed and accepted as cadastral information
- 2016. 12. 23: Project operation’s transition begins from Seoul City Government to SH Construction

Source: Gangnam District Government

Source: Korean Statistical Information Service
BIBLIOGRAPHY


