

The State Of Neighborhood Relations and the Absence of Social Capital in Chinese Urban Neighborhoods in Recommendations Moving Forward

Boyu Jin
Princeton High School

Abstract: *Urban neighborhood is the most common form of neighborhood around the world. Compared to non-urban neighborhoods, urban neighborhoods are often organized in different apartment buildings because they need to contain more residents in a smaller area of land, which will undoubtedly shorten the physical distance between the residents and make the contact between them more frequent. This increase in mutual interactions, if practiced properly, can be turned into useful resources, commonly referred to as social capital. This research will base on this idea of promoting social capital within urban neighborhoods and conduct a survey based social investigation in Nanjing, China to measure the current neighborhood relation in Chinese urban neighborhoods and suggest approaches that will promote better neighborhood relation and more importantly, establish social capital within Chinese urban neighborhoods.*

Keywords: *Chinese Urban Neighborhood, Community Events, Neighborhood Relations, Online Communities, Social Capital.*

I. Introduction

This paper aims to measure the current status of neighborhood relations in a Chinese urban neighborhood using a survey-based social investigation in Nanjing, China. This paper will also promote methods that can encourage more neighborhood interactions and advise approaches for establishing social capital within these neighborhoods.

Urban neighborhood is the most common form of neighborhood around the world. It is a result of industrialization: the demand for human capital to work in industries encourages urbanization, and this process marks the formation of neighborhoods in urban areas. Compared to non-urban neighborhoods, urban neighborhoods are often organized in different apartment buildings because they need to contain more residents in a smaller area of land, which will undoubtedly shorten the physical distance between the residents, which can make contact between residents more frequent. This increase in mutual interactions, if practiced properly, can be turned into useful resources. This is commonly referred to as social capital, which is the result of beneficial interactions between individuals in a society that can both increase the efficiency of resource allocation and prevent the waste of resources. However, such social capital can only be established within a well-constructed neighborhood environment.

Neighborhood relations is an overview of interactions between neighbors. This relationship is always indefinite since it is vulnerable to almost every aspect of a society, including languages, norms, rules, technologies, customs, organizations, etc. For instance, America during the late nineteenth century attracted a large number of immigrants from Europe and Asia because of its economic advancements and opportunities. These immigrants often decided to settle in areas with common ethnic groups, such as the culturally distinct districts (e.g. Chinatowns) in major American cities including New York City and Boston. The reason for such decisions was the share of similar dialects, traditions, and habits among common ethnic groups, and these similarities, to a large extent, guaranteed a stable neighborhood relation among these immigrants. Under this neighborhood relation, they were able to communicate smoothly and provide help for each other whenever needed. This can be seen as a basic form of social capital.

This research paper will focus on the Chinese urban neighborhood, which in fact are a fairly recent development. The economic reformation since 1979 broke the original structure of living for most Chinese residents, and the most significant factor of change was freedom. Before the transformation, Chinese citizens were grouped by the government into working units, and they had to live with others who were in the same working unit. This changed completely after 1979, as Chinese people who could afford travel fees were able to freely migrate to different parts of China for work and opportunities, and this shuffled the pre-existing order of Chinese neighborhood relations. As a result, new Chinese urban neighborhoods contain greater regional diversity and a weaker realization of their neighborhood community. These factors can certainly hinder the

development of neighborhood relations and social capital in modern Chinese urban neighborhoods. Therefore, this research paper uses a survey-based investigation in three selected neighborhoods in Nanjing to measure the current neighborhood relations in Chinese urban neighborhoods.

II. Literature Review

Social Capital

The discussion about social capital exists with society itself. Back in ancient times, the philosopher Confucius proposed the idea that multi-interpersonal interactions and corporations are essential for a society to function. However, the term was not really invented until the 20th century, when American education reformer John Dewey used this term multiple times in his book *The Elementary School Record* to emphasize the importance of connecting school to society. [5] Moreover, Dewey emphasized the importance of sympathy between individuals in a society, in which people should help others with disabilities. [1] In his book *The School and Society*, Dewey also proposes the idea that school shall become the center for social activities, which first sets the understanding that social capital can be better processed under a certain organization. [6]

James Coleman, a sociologist and empirical researcher at the University of Chicago, analyzed the purpose and value of social capital in 1988. Coleman believes social capital is “a resource for persons” and it “is valuable in facilitating [and limiting] certain actions”. [4] He also promotes the idea that social capital functions in a reciprocal structure, in which it requires both sides involved to follow obligations, to have expectations, and to share trustworthiness. [4]

American political scientist Francis Fukuyama believes that social capital comes from the cooperation between individuals in a society, and that the origin of the corporation is the shared values between the individuals. He also emphasizes the importance of fulfilling expectations on both sides, because by doing so, trust can form between two sides, and trust is a crucial catalyst for constructing social capital. [2]

Neighborhood Developments

The neighborhood, in general, is an independent society; it contains a group of people who share the same geographical territory and interact through persistent relations. (Society, Science Daily). Moreover, each neighborhood is unique from others because it is made up of individuals with their own unique cultural background. Therefore, past research on how to construct and consolidate social capital within a neighborhood often differs due to the different circumstances faced by the researchers.

A major difference within this research can be categorized by the country examined. Country, or nation, is not simply a representation of a certain geographical location, but also represents the economic development and the social norms of the area where neighborhoods existed. This often makes researchers from different countries focus on different questions and offer different solutions. For instance, American researchers of social capital focus more on consolidation while Chinese researchers place more emphasis on construction, and this is caused by the different economic development and neighborhood structures of these two countries.

The bases of modern American neighborhoods were set in the 1950s through the process of suburbanization, which after more than 50 years of exploration, had already developed multiple formal associations such as homeowners' associations and crime watch groups. [9] Therefore, American researchers on this topic are mainly making suggestions as to how to consolidate this system or how to make this system mature. For example, Martin Ruef suggests that a stronger interpersonal connection between the associations and the residents is necessary [9], and Robert Putnam, in his work *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, warns the American people about the declining social capital and weakening community network within American society. He points out that formal membership in social organizations is falling by “perhaps 10-20 percent” and “active involvement in clubs and other voluntary associations has collapsed at an astonishing rate” during the “last third of the twentieth century”. [12]

In contrast, due to a much younger history of urban neighborhoods, Chinese studies on social capital in neighborhoods focus more on emphasizing the importance of social capital in a society and finding a suitable approach to construct social capital within the current Chinese urban neighborhoods. As early as 1992, Chinese scholar Yang Zhongfang realized that trust needs to be built before constructing social capital in Chinese neighborhoods because it is capable of simplifying many complex social interactions by ensuring a predicted result between such interactions. [16] On the other hand, Zhao Tingyan, from AnShan Teachers College, points out that due to cultural traditions and previous institutional transformations, Chinese neighborhoods are lacking an autonomous mindset, in which the residents are not spontaneously socializing with their neighbors. Tingyan believes that this phenomenon is the reason for the lack of social capital within modern Chinese neighborhoods, and he suggests the administrators of the neighborhood to indoctrinate a sense of community awareness into their residents in order to improve this situation. [18] In addition, Sun Lu, a professor from YangZhou University, points out the importance of constructing social capital in a neighborhood. Sun Lu believes the purpose of constructing social capital is to prevent risks, decrease transaction costs, and use and allocate

resources efficiently. Moreover, she also states that the extent of social capital development in a neighborhood can determine that neighborhood's vitality, cohesion, and the performance of neighborhood governance. [14]

III. Methodology

The survey-based social investigation takes place in Nanjing, China. Nanjing is an appropriate representation of a standard Chinese city because it is relatively affluent and has a developed regional culture. After forty years of economic transformation, the overall wealth of the Chinese people has increased significantly, and the wealthy are often concentrated in cities or large urban centers because of the flow of human capital into these areas. In fact, Nanjing has a relatively high GDP per capita compared to other Chinese cities—around \$24,000 per person in 2019 [17]—which makes it closer to modern cities around the globe such as Liverpool, which had a GDP per capita of around \$28,000 in 2012 [3]. With a comprehensive development in different industries including primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, Nanjing is able to develop its own unique regional culture, since the development of regional culture has to base on a steady economic performance [8]. Nanjing's unique urban culture will help this research to better understand the overall neighborhood relation in modern Chinese cities.

Moreover, Nanjing's high population mobility and well-constructed infrastructure, in addition to its identity as a historical city, are also crucial for the overall representativeness of this experiment because it consists of both an external floating population and native residents of the city. By 2019, Nanjing has 8.5 million permanent residents and 3.21 million floating population [10]. This abundance of demographic groups allows the experiment to search for differences between different groups over the same inquiry. As Nanjing undergoes economic transformation, the population also experiences a shift as more people are migrating in, and this reflects a common theme of struggle with nativism and regional discrimination.

The survey will be paper-based, and it will first ask questions about the personal information of the respondents, including age, income, gender, ethnicity, marital status, and educational background. This will allow for the analysis of different effects of each independent variable. The survey will also be sent out in three different neighborhoods covering different income levels (by the price of each meter squared of the apartments in each neighborhood), which makes the population more representative and at the same time allows for the comparison of responses by different income groups.

In the second part of the survey, respondents will need to answer questions regarding their knowledge of and perception of their neighbors. These questions will be able to determine the fluidity of social interaction between neighbors and can paint an overall image of current neighborhood relationships in a modern Chinese city. The survey will also consist of questions asking the frequency of moving, and the responses to this question can be used to explain the amount of social interactions between residents.

The third part of the survey contains many questions addressing the respondents' opinions about their neighbors, including questions asking about their neighbors' trustworthiness. As mentioned in the literature review section, many scholars believe that trust is crucial for the development of social capital. Therefore, these questions can determine the level of trust between neighbors and use this to approximate the possibility of social capital formation in Chinese urban neighborhoods.

The fourth part of the survey will ask for the specific interactions between the respondents and their neighbors. Each question will provide many choices of different types of interactions, and the respondents will select the type of interactions they have experienced with their neighbors. This can help the research to see what the most efficient and popular ways of neighborhood interactions are and think of methods to boost these certain types of interactions to improve neighborhood relations. There are also questions asking about the conflicts between the respondents and their neighbors, which can help to expose the common obstacles that exist in interactions between neighbors.

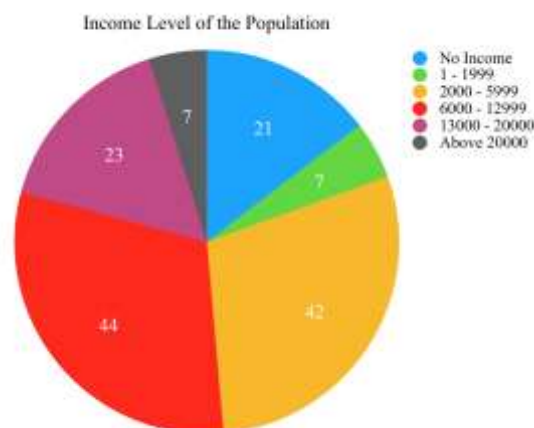
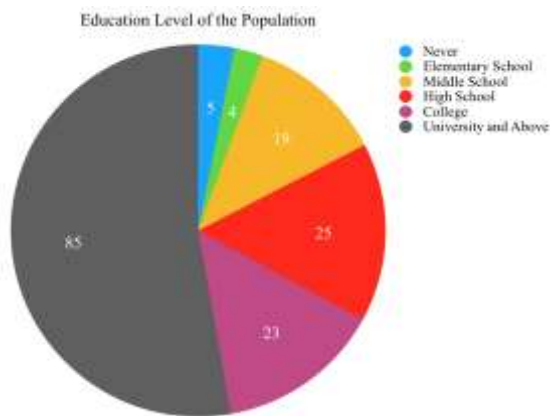
The final part of the survey will have questions asking the respondents about the community events that their neighborhood had held in the past. This can reveal the attitude of the administrators of the neighborhood and analyze the effects of these events, whether they are useful or not. The final question of this survey will ask the respondents about their own opinions regarding the change of neighborhood relations over time, which can provide a more natural point of view of the current status of neighborhood relations in Chinese urban neighborhoods.

IV. Accumulative Data Tables

Independent Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
Male	86	55.50%
Age under 50	114	70.80%
From Northern China	27	17.30%
Han ethnicity	158	98.10%
Educated in university and above	85	52.80%
Married	133	83.10%
Income ¥6000 and above	76	52.10%
Lives with 4 or more family members	92	58.20%
Lives alone	17	10.80%
Has lived in this neighborhood for 4 or less years	106	69.40%

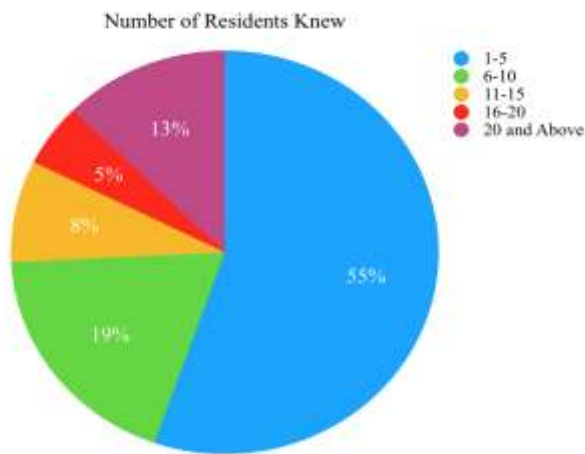
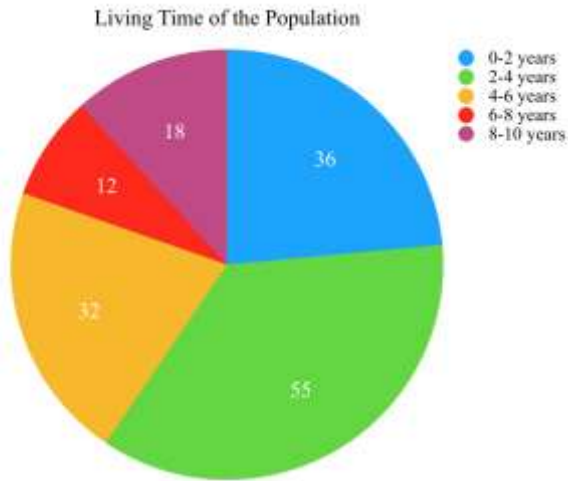
Dependent Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
Believes that the neighborhood has held a cultural festival	83	58.50%
Has participated in neighborhood events	65	78.30%
Knows less than 10 residents of the neighborhood	118	74.20%
Knows the amount of family members his/her neighbor has	88	55.70%
Knows the name of his/her neighbor	58	36.70%
Knows the job of his/her neighbor	66	41.80%
Knows the personality of one of his/her neighbor	57	36.10%
Agrees with "far relatives are less helpful than close neighbors in daily manners"	118	73.80%
Is willing to interact with his/her neighbors	123	76.40%
Believes that he/she maintains a great relation with his/her neighbor	93	57.80%
Frequently greets his/her neighbors	106	66.70%
Never borrowed anything from his/her neighbors	70	44%
Never borrowed money from his/her neighbors	141	88.70%
Never asked his/her neighbor to take care of other family members when he/she was out	96	61.10%
Never talked to his/her neighbor about frustrations or loneliness	104	65.40%
Never asked help from his/her neighbor when encountered difficulties	66	41.50%
Interacts with his/her neighbor through repairing public utilities	28	17.40%

Interacts with his/her neighbor through helps on daily needs	82	50.90%
Interacts with his/her neighbor at public areas	43	26.70%
Interacts with his/her neighbor through community events	40	24.80%
Interacts with his/her neighbor through social organizations	30	18.60%
Interacts with his/her neighbor through online communities	39	24.20%
Has many trustworthy neighbors	50	31.30%
Is not willing to let his/her neighbor take care of the house when he/she is out	77	47.80%
Is not willing to let his/her neighbor take care of his/her pet when he/she is out	84	52.50%
Is not willing to discuss with his/her neighbor on important decisions	97	60.20%
Is not willing to ask help form his/her neighbor when he/she is out	94	58.40%
Has had conflicts with his/her neighbor	9	6%
Has conflicts with his/her neighbor because of sanitary issues	2	1.20%
Has conflicts with his/her neighbor because of noise issues	6	3.70%
Believes that neighborhood relations had improved in recent years	53	34%
Believes that neighbors are helpful in daily life	39	24.70%



V. Result Analysis

The first significant finding is the diversity of residents in modern Chinese urban neighborhoods, and this diversity includes different levels of education and income. As mentioned in the introduction, this diversity is only a recent phenomenon. Chinese neighborhoods before the economic reformation were mainly organized by working units, therefore, residents of the same neighborhood shared similar educational backgrounds and income levels. A study by Kimberly Goyette in 2017 shows that “[people] with similar educational profiles tend to share similar values, beliefs, and tastes.” [7] Sharing similar values, beliefs, and tastes can facilitate interactions between individuals, and this certainly helped the promotion of good neighborhood relations in China before the economic reformation. However, this is no longer the case. Among all the respondents, about 53% of them are educated in university and above while others are not, and about 52% of them receive a monthly income above 6000 yuan while there are still about 20% of these respondents who only receive a monthly income below 2000 yuan. Due to this difference in educational background and income level, it will be hard for the residents to agree on a decision that works to establish a social organization or event that improves neighborhood relations or management. For instance, there can exist disputes between residents of different income over the hygiene issue of public facilities:



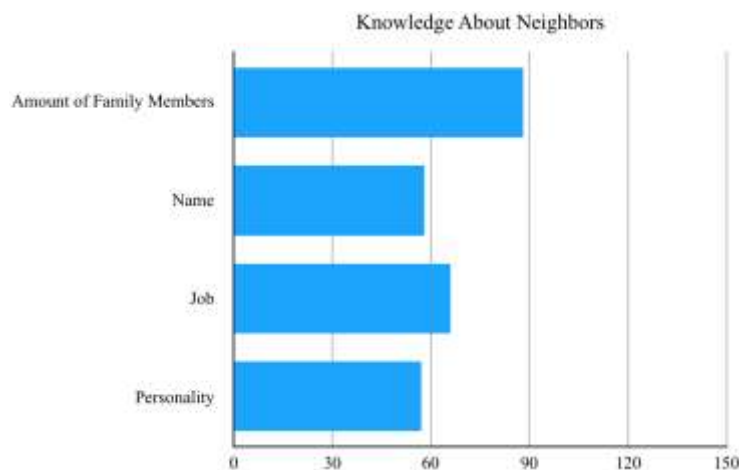
support between individuals on a daily basis, and this support can come in forms of borrowing tools and asking for assistance. Therefore, the more residents an individual knows, the more sources of help that individual will have. The three neighborhoods that are investigated can each fit 1724, 2772, and 4585 families. However, around 55% of all respondents claim that they only know one to five other families in their neighborhood. This reflects two problems: the residents of a neighborhood are not proactive in meeting other residents and the foundation for establishing social capital in these neighborhoods is weak. Therefore, these neighborhoods need

residents with higher income may want these public facilities to be clean and sanitized while residents who have a lower income may neglect this issue and be concerned more about the cost. Public facilities are constructed to provide beneficial services for the residents, however, if there exist such disputes, it will be harder to approve the construction of new public facilities, and if such disputes become severe, the overall neighborhood relation may be influenced negatively.

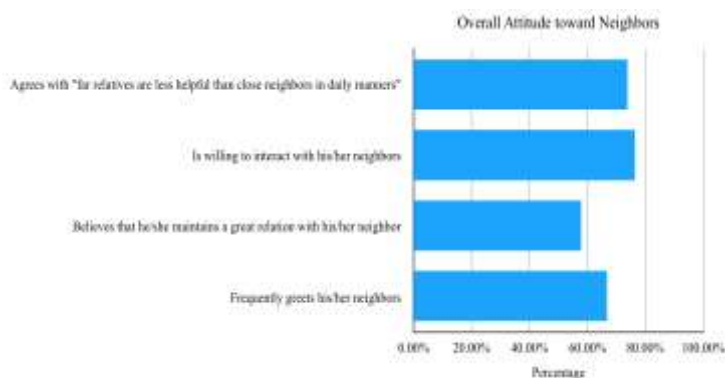
The next significant finding is the short living time of the residents in these neighborhoods. Out of all the respondents, almost 70% of them have only lived in their current neighborhood for four or fewer years. Part of this is a result of the

continuous urbanization in China. In 2019, China had a 2.5% rate of annual urban population growth, which is much higher compared to the 0.9% of annual urban population growth in the United States. [15] This shows that there is still a significant number of newcomers to Chinese cities and this, to a large extent, leads to both the mentioned problem of diversity and the new problem of discrimination, since a lot of these newcomers are from rural areas and are peasant workers who are poorly educated. A study by Shenjing He from HongKong University states that the discrimination aimed at the peasant workers has restricted them from accessing many social resources including social capital. [13] This shows another barrier to the establishment of a good neighborhood relationship.

The most basic form of social capital is the mutual support between individuals on a daily basis, and this support can come in forms of borrowing tools and asking for assistance. Therefore, the more residents an individual knows, the more sources of help that individual will have. The three neighborhoods that are investigated can each fit 1724, 2772, and 4585 families. However, around 55% of all respondents claim that they only know one to five other families in their neighborhood. This reflects two problems: the residents of a neighborhood are not proactive in meeting other residents and the foundation for establishing social capital in these neighborhoods is weak. Therefore, these neighborhoods need to create opportunities for their residents to meet and learn to know each other.



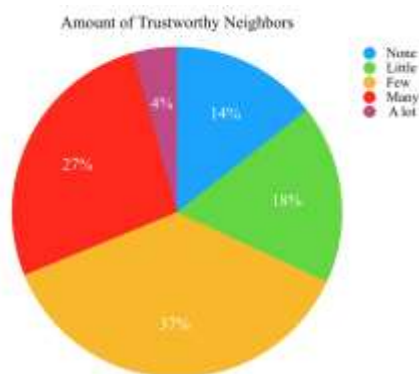
(The graph shows the frequency instead of the percentage)



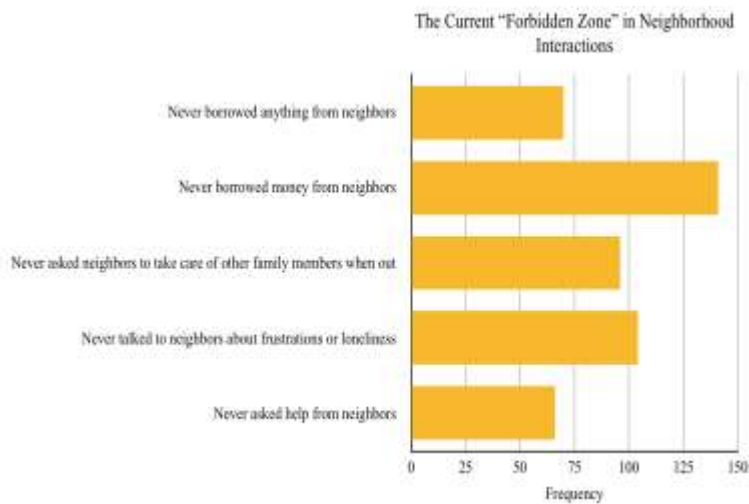
Looking at this set of data on an overall scale, it is easy to make a similar conclusion that there is a lack of interactions between neighbors, especially between door-to-door neighbors. The research collected 161 survey results, and only 88 respondents, which is only 56% of all respondents, knew the number of family members their "next-door neighbor" has. The results become even worse in other sections, in which only 36% of the respondents know the name, 42% know the job, and 36% know the personality

of their neighbor. These results again reflect the problem that there are not enough interactions between neighbors in modern Chinese neighborhoods, and that some sort of activities or events are needed to increase such interactions because the residents are not proactive in knowing other residents, even if they live right next to each other. Moreover, there is in fact something very interesting in this data if one divides the four sections into two: "amount of family members" and "job" as one group, "name" and "personality" as another group. The first group contains information that can be told through simple observations; however, the second group contains information that can only be learned through conversations and interactions. The fact that the percentage of respondents that know the amount of family members and the job of their neighbor is higher than the percentage of respondents that know the name and personality of their neighbor reflects the truth that many of these respondents choose to not interact or talk with their neighbor even when they confront each other. This phenomenon has to be changed, whether through a sign that encourages residents to interact or help their neighbor, or through an event or activity that requires cooperation between two neighbors. It has to be changed because it prevents the possibility of mutual benefits arising between neighbors.

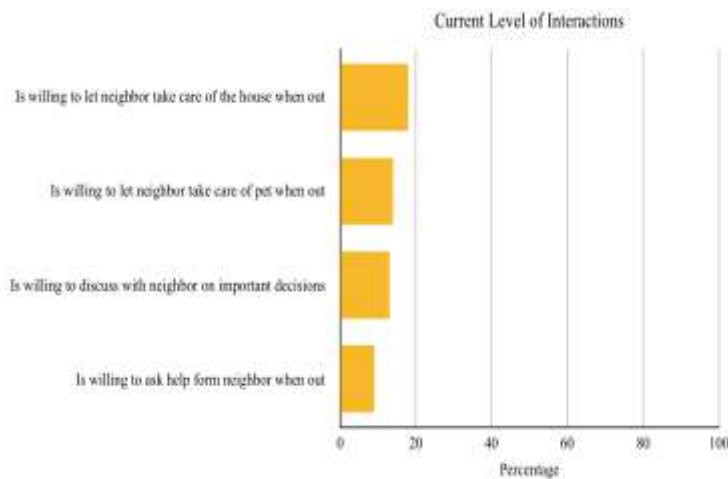
This section of the survey aims to find out the overall attitude of the respondents toward their neighbors. The first question asks the respondents if they agree with a popular Chinese adage, which is "far relatives are less helpful than close neighbors." Chinese people, due to the influence of Confucianism, believe in strong connections between family members, and that everyone in a family should help each other with daily matters. [12] This strong relationship between family members is easily kept in the past because all members of a family tend to live together, however, in modern China, as transportation networks expand, members of the same family tend to move to different cities for jobs and opportunities, and this without a doubt weakens the pre-existing familial connections. To a large extent, these familial connections serve as the social capital in old Chinese societies, in which people use family as a unit to provide mutual assistance and create an autonomic ruling system centered around the father or the older brother - since old-China is a patriarchal society. This system is currently lacking in urban neighborhoods, but according to the results from the survey, the neighborhood is an applicable unit to continue this system and provide mutual assistance and self-rule. Among all respondents, 74% of them agree with the adage "far relatives are less helpful than close neighbors" and 76% of them indicate that they are willing to interact with their neighbors. These results show a positive signal for future development of neighborhood relations, however, willingness to interact does not mean a desire to interact. The fact that there are 20% less respondents who believe that they maintain a good relationship with their neighbors again proves the statement that the residents will not interact proactively, and there needs to be something in place to "force" this interaction.



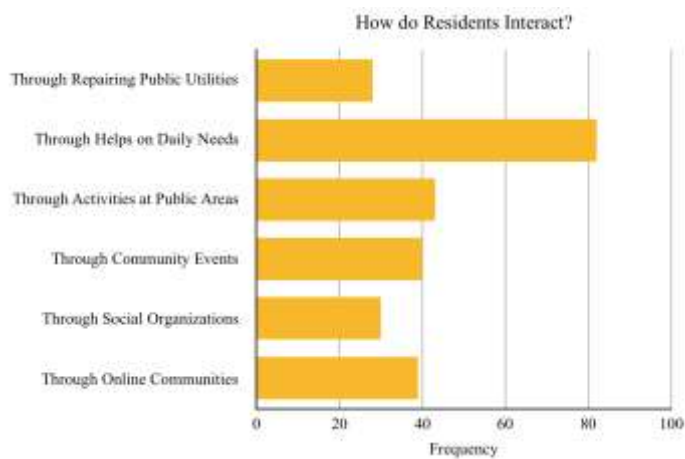
Simple interactions between neighbors are not enough for social capital to form, and most scholars who study social capital also indicate the importance of trust in this process. Trust cannot be built quickly, as it is more a product of repetitive fulfillments of expectations and obligations. Moreover, it is the threshold for social capital because people need it in order to cooperate and mutually assist one another. The results from the survey show that in modern Chinese urban neighborhoods, there is a decent range of trust built already between residents: among all respondents, 86% of them have at least one trustworthy neighbor. This range of trust might not be enough for establishing social organizations, but it at least makes social capital accessible for those residents.



to the greatest extent, protect the privacy of both the requester and the responder. For instance, borrowing tools is an easy exchange of physical objects but talking about frustrations is a complex exchange of mental feelings. To sum up, the level of trust between most Chinese urban neighborhood residents remains on the level of basic exchange of objects and skills. This is not technically a deep extent of trust, but it is already enough for the mutual assistance between residents on a daily basis.



The previous data demonstrates the range of trustworthiness between residents in Chinese urban neighborhoods, however, it does not tell the extent of this trustworthiness. Based on the responses to this section, it is easy to say that the trustworthiness addressed in the previous section does not include any exchanges involving money, as almost 90% of the respondents have never borrowed money from their neighbors. On the other hand, the respondents are open to borrowing tools or asking for simple help from their neighbors, as almost 60% of the respondents have done such actions. The similarity of borrowing tools and asking for help is that both of them, to the greatest extent, protect the privacy of both the requester and the responder. For instance, borrowing tools is an easy exchange of physical objects but talking about frustrations is a complex exchange of mental feelings. To sum up, the level of trust between most Chinese urban neighborhood residents remains on the level of basic exchange of objects and skills. This is not technically a deep extent of trust, but it is already enough for the mutual assistance between residents on a daily basis. Another example that shows the current overall level of trustworthiness between neighbors not allowing for interactions involving personal privacy is that less than 20% of the respondents are willing to let their neighbor take care of their house or pet when traveling or working.

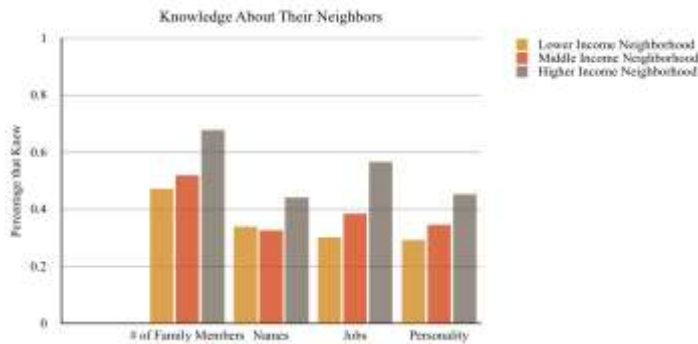


(The graph shows the frequency instead of the percentage)

This section of the survey has two purposes: to assess the overall quantity of interactions between neighbors and to analyze their preference over different types of interactions. Looking at the results, first, there are only 17% of all respondents who interact with their neighbors through repairing public utilities. The reason for why this number is so low is because many Chinese urban neighborhoods have their own property management administration by the company that constructed the neighborhood instead of the residents, and therefore decisions over repairing and constructing public utilities are not a typical concern for most Chinese urban neighborhood residents. There is a similar case for the low percentage (19%) in the social organization section; because there

already exists a professional management team for the neighborhood, creating other social organizations may seem unnecessary. Both of these findings reflect the lack of self-rule awareness by Chinese urban neighborhood

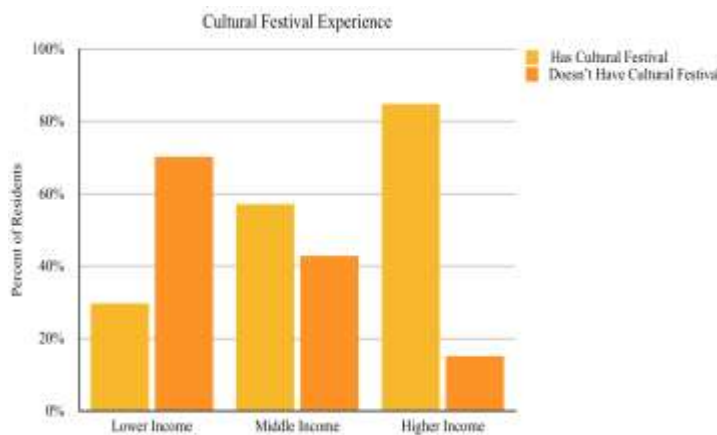
residents. Secondly, the most popular type of interaction between neighbors is to interact through helping with



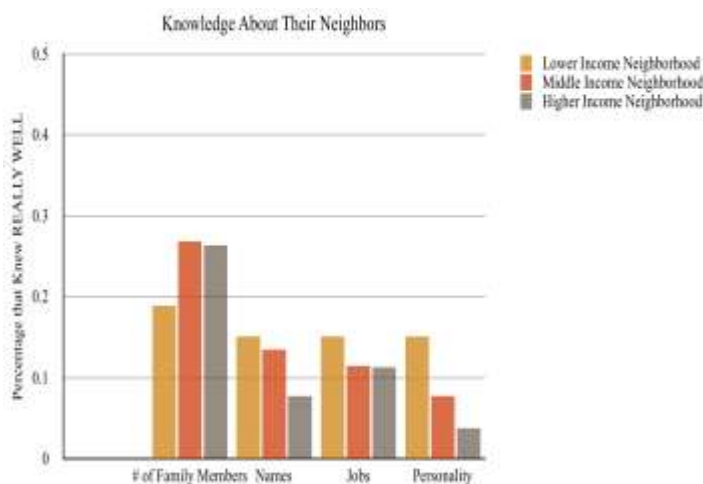
daily needs. The cause for this is the consensus that daily problems are frequent, and that asking neighbors for help can really save both money and time. However, although its percentage is much higher than that of other types of interactions, it is still only 51% of all the respondents. This along with other responses, including 27% through activities at public areas, 25% through community events, and 24% through online communities all show that there are already some forms of social capital developed and practiced between

neighbors, but the current level of social capital is still far from ubiquitous, and that there is only a small portion of the residents who can access it.

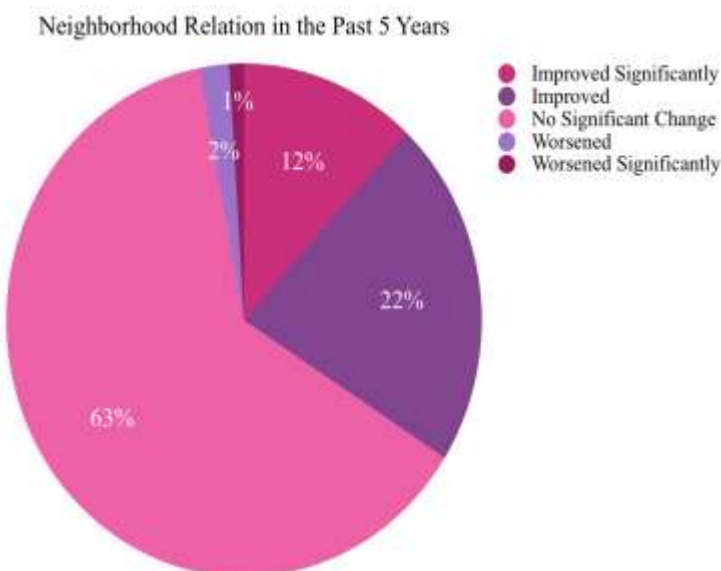
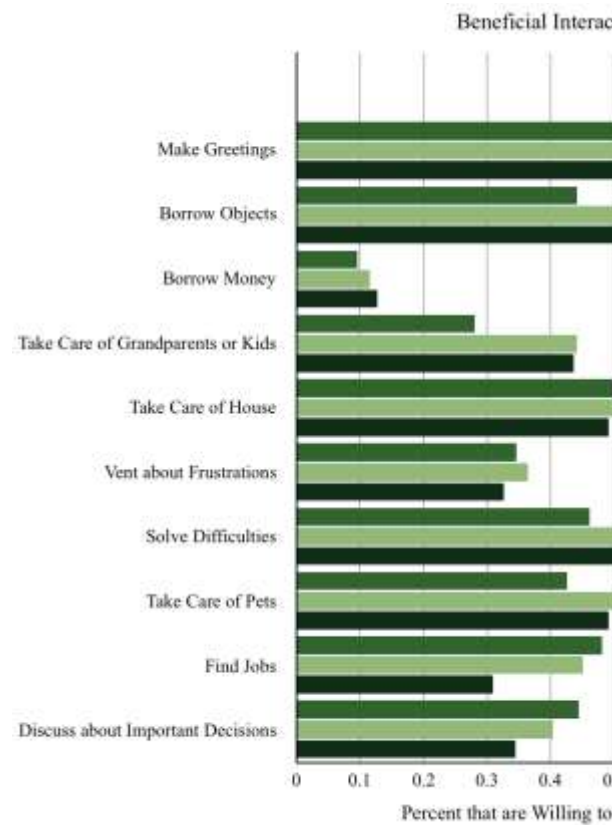
These two graphs show the comparison of responses by respondents from different neighborhoods. As mentioned in the methodology section, the survey covers three different neighborhoods, and these three neighborhoods are each categorized as lower, middle, and higher income neighborhoods regarding their price for their apartments. The purpose for this is to analyze the effect of overall wealth level on neighborhood interactions. Looking at the results, the respondents from the higher income neighborhood tend to have much higher knowledge about their neighbor compared to the respondents from the lower income neighborhood. This shows that there are more interactions between residents in the relatively affluent neighborhood than in the relatively impoverished neighborhood.



This phenomenon is mainly caused by the difference in the way each neighborhood's administration team handles their cultural festivals. Cultural festivals are a common form of community event in Chinese urban neighborhoods; they are usually set on a typical Chinese holiday and assemble the neighborhood residents to watch performances and take part in leisure activities. This is an example of creating opportunities for residents to interact, however, not all cultural festivals are effective in doing this. Due to the differences in the overall wealth level of the neighborhoods, the administrative teams of different neighborhoods have different amounts of funds to organize cultural festivals, and this difference can make some neighborhoods' cultural festivals have poor quality and no advertisements. For instance, 70% of the respondents from the lower income neighborhoods do not know their neighborhood has a cultural festival, while out of all the respondents in the higher income neighborhood, the percentage who do not know their neighborhood has a cultural festival is only 15%. This dramatic difference shows that there are many ineffective cultural festivals in Chinese urban neighborhoods, and that these ineffective cultural festivals are not useful in encouraging neighborhood interactions.



This is another graph comparing the results from different neighborhoods, and instead of recording the respondents' basic knowledge about their neighbor, this graph shows the percentage of the respondents who know their neighbor really well. In the section of the survey where it asks for the respondents' knowledge about their neighbor, there are three choices: "know really well", "know", and "do not know". The previous graph shows the percentage of the respondents that choose the first two options, but this graph only shows the percentage of the respondents that choose the first option, which is "know really well". Comparing the two graphs, there is a significant difference in which the percentage of respondents from lower income neighborhood tends to be higher than the respondents from neighborhoods of other income levels. This is a result of more "proactive" interactions between residents in the lower income neighborhood. In China and many other Southeastern Asian countries, there is actually a unique food shopping tradition, in which people will go to open air farmers' markets and wet markets every morning and buy food for the rest of the day. This habit has been changing in China due to the potential sanitary problems within these open-air markets, however, this change is only observed in the relatively affluent families, who now purchase food from standardized supermarkets instead. Due to the fact that the open-air markets are usually crowded and do not have parking lots, the residents of nearby neighborhoods often choose to walk to these markets. This "timed" and "fixed" tradition can greatly increase the chance of two residents meeting each other on their way to the open-air markets, and this will encourage both of them to "proactively" make further interactions other than a simple greeting. This particular "advantage" of the lower income neighborhood makes the residents of the lower income neighborhood have deeper knowledge about their neighbors, and this also shows the difference in passive interactions by community events and proactive interactions by the residents themselves.



This graph shows a comparison of the overall attitude toward beneficial interactions by residents from different neighborhoods. Looking at the results, all three neighborhoods have a similar performance on many types of beneficial interactions, such as making greetings, borrowing money, venting about frustrations, and taking care of pets. However, on the interactions involving mutual assistance such as borrowing objects

and solving difficulties, the residents from the relatively impoverished neighborhood perform much worse compared to the other two neighborhoods. The reason for this is analyzed in previous paragraphs, in which the quantity of interactions between residents in the relatively affluent neighborhoods is much higher than the quantity of interactions between residents in the relatively impoverished neighborhood. Therefore, the quantity of these simple beneficial interactions is also much higher in the higher income neighborhood. On the other hand, the residents of the higher income neighborhood have fewer interactions with their neighbors when it comes to finding jobs and discussing important decisions. This is because there is a relatively lower demand for jobs in the relatively affluent neighborhood and because the residents who are more affluent tend to rely more on their own judgement.

The final section of the survey asks for the respondents' opinions about the change in neighborhood relations over the past five years. Although only 34% of the respondents think the neighborhood relationship has improved, there are also only 3% of the respondents who think it has worsened. This is a positive result; however, it shows that more work needs to be done to improve this relationship.

VI. Recommendations

The recommendations listed below all aim to improve the neighborhood relationship and create usable forms of social capital in modern Chinese urban neighborhoods.

Organize New Community Events

Cultural Festival - The cultural festival has been mentioned multiple times in this research, and the survey in fact contains questions that ask the respondents for the frequency of cultural festivals in their neighborhoods and their attitude toward these community events. As analyzed in the previous section, the cultural festival has been proved to be an important factor of neighborhood relations, in which a cultural festival with good organization and publicization can make a significant difference in terms of encouraging more neighborhood interactions. However, the cultural festival contains a big problem with its cost in both organizing and publicizing. For instance, a cultural festival needs to be interesting in order to attract residents, therefore, the property management team of the neighborhood needs to have enough funds to prepare the materials needed for this event, otherwise, the festival will just become an act of formalism, which both wastes resources and does not create new value. At the same time, publicizing a cultural festival is also difficult. According to the results of the survey, even though the lower income neighborhood has organized cultural festivals in the past, due to the lack of publicization, only 30% of its residents acknowledge this event. In conclusion, even though the cultural festival is able to encourage neighborhood interactions, it is not a preferred choice for the relatively impoverished neighborhoods because it has an expensive cost and requires strong publicizing ability by the neighborhood's property management team.

Group Exercise - Compared to cultural festivals, group exercise is a more cost-efficient choice for the relatively impoverished neighborhoods. Group exercise is a community event that gathers the residents of a neighborhood to exercise together, and this exercise can include night runs and square dancing (a typical Chinese dance designed for seniors). The advantage of group exercise is that it is highly attractive to residents even without "luxurious" organization, because the ultimate goal of group exercise is to help the residents stay healthy. Similar to cultural festivals, group exercise is also an efficient way of gathering residents together and encouraging them to interact. This increase in interactions between residents can encourage more mutual assistance in the neighborhood, which allows more residents to access social capital. To sum up, group exercise is an effective approach for all levels of a neighborhood, and it will not only improve the overall neighborhood relation, but it will also help the residents of the neighborhood to live healthily.

Setting up a Street Stall - "Setting up a street stall" means to set up a stall on the side of a street and sell unused objects to pedestrians. This used to be a common phenomenon in China, however, due to increasing regulation, it has become extinct in many Chinese cities. On May 27th, 2020, in order to mitigate the economic recession brought by COVID-19, the Chinese central government decided to lift the regulation on setting up a street stall, and the Premier of the State Council, Li Keqiang, claims that "street stall economy" is crucial for reviving the Chinese economy from the recession brought by the virus. Setting up a street stall can be a great neighborhood event because it not only responds to the call of the government, but it also helps to reallocate resources in a neighborhood more efficiently. The residents can look for objects in their houses that have not been used for a long time and bring them to the stall market and sell them to other residents who need them. Because these objects are used, they will be cheaper than their price in the actual market, thus, it benefits both the sellers and the buyers since the sellers gain new value from their unused objects and the buyers are able to purchase the objects they need at a lower price. Setting up a street stall differs from cultural festivals and group exercise because it does not aim to increase the interactions between neighbors, but it instead creates a new platform for social capital that can both generate value and fulfill material demands at a lower cost.

Charity Events - Charity events in a neighborhood can be in the form of volunteer concerts or charity sales that can raise funds, and a trustworthy organization will use this fund in charity. This type of event can effectively increase the trust between residents who participated in it because it demonstrates the kindness of those residents. Charity events also have a higher possibility of forming close friendships between residents who participated, because the residents who participated in charity events likely share common values, and this will likely boost their depth of interactions. Finally, charity events can also raise the neighborhood spirit as a whole, which will help to facilitate future organization and publicization of other community events.

Children's Activity - Children's activity is an approach to use kids as a bridge to connect the adults in a neighborhood. Due to the need of working, most adults in a neighborhood usually do not have time to participate in many community events, and this makes them unable to interact with their neighbors by themselves. Therefore, their children can be a great channel for them to expand their social circle. There should be two basic guidelines for all the types of children's activities, the first one is that all the activities need to be done under close observation to ensure the safety of the children, and the other one is that all the activities shall have the ultimate goal of educating the children. Examples of such children's activities can include group games that help children learn cooperation and build leadership, visual art activities that stimulate children's creativity, and lessons that teach children the moral guidelines of society. Other than the activity itself, the products of these children's activities can also be used to increase the entire neighborhood's spirit. For instance, the paintings from the children's activities can be used as decorations in the neighborhood, and this will effectively increase the feelings of connection between residents.

Embrace New Technologies

Online Communities - Online communities of the 21st century shall not be restricted to computer websites anymore; with new technological advancements, there are so many more social networking platforms that can be easily accessed with smartphones. In China, the three most popular social networking platforms are Tiktok, Kuaishou, and WETV, all of which first focus on the production of short music videos. However, as they develop, the videos on these social networking platforms become more and more diverse, and as of now, there are videos across the areas of singing, dancing, food-making, comics, games, daily tips, etc. These social networking platforms can be a great channel for the residents in a neighborhood to interact with each other. For example, the residents who have a pet in a neighborhood can spontaneously create an online community on these social networking platforms titled "daily experiences with your pet", and the residents in this community can post videos of their pet and share their stories about their pet, which can help the residents to easily become friends with each other and encourage better neighborhood relations. Moreover, if a resident of the same neighborhood just got a new pet, he/she can also join this online community and the other residents who have had a pet for a long time can teach him/her many useful tips on taking care of a pet. This is a new form of social capital that can be processed with new technology. Connecting this idea to the current crisis brought about by the pandemic, online communities can provide a great platform for residents to stay connected and provide mutual assistance under social distancing.

Neighborhood Competition - Neighborhood competition is a contest between residents of the same neighborhood in a certain area of ability. The two most common areas of contest are singing and dancing, however, different from the stereotypical singing and dancing competition, this competition will be online instead of offline. Contestants will record a video of themselves performing, post the video on the online community of the neighborhood, and let people vote for the best performer in their opinions; the winners of the competition can receive a special award from the neighborhood's administration team. This form of competition can effectively limit the awkwardness for the residents to perform in front of the public - since most of the residents who participated in this competition are not professional performers. The online approach has another significant advantage compared to the offline approach in that it has a much lower cost in organizing and publicizing, and this makes it suitable for all types of neighborhoods. The goals of such competitions are to improve the neighborhood's overall atmosphere and to help the residents find someone with common interests and thus increase neighborhood interactions.

Create New Neighborhood Organizations

Resident Committee (neighborhood organization) - Chinese urban neighborhoods are currently regulated by the local neighborhood committees, which are mostly made up of civil servants instead of the residents. This means that modern Chinese urban neighborhoods are lacking a sense of self-rule. The Chinese government is attempting to reform this system, in which it chooses multiple neighborhoods around China to practice a new system of neighborhood management. This new system gives the power of implementing regulations back to the residents, and the government representatives will be more of an "agent" between the residents. This system, to a large extent, grants the power of self-rule to the residents and practices many democratic ideals. Moreover, the resident committee that derives from this system is also an important place for residents to interact and share their ideas. The biggest advantage of this system is that it follows the will of the residents, and therefore the residents are willing to practice the new rules. However, the biggest disadvantage is

that this system contains mostly residents, who do not need to follow discipline like the civil servants, therefore, when there is an emergency, for instance like the COVID-19 breakout, many members of the resident committee resigned their position because they were afraid of being infected and taking on heavy responsibilities.

VII. Conclusions

The Chinese urban societies, after undergoing forty years of dramatic economic transformation, have now developed a new urban culture distinct from before. With the improvements in infrastructures, the overall population mobility of the Chinese people also increases, which leads to a more diverse population in Chinese cities, which are often the “transportation hub” in the area they belong to. This new diverse Chinese urban population has multiple new uncertainties and potentials in the Chinese urban neighborhood relationships, and this research has been suggesting implications that use the new potentials to address the new uncertainties.

The two essential questions for this research paper to answer are: how strong the neighborhood relationship in modern Chinese urban neighborhoods is and how can social capital be constructed within these neighborhoods. Past research concerning the neighborhood relations in Chinese urban neighborhoods has stated the importance of social capital in a community and found that due to the decrease in overall neighborhood relations within Chinese urban neighborhoods in recent decades, social capital is difficult to build. Therefore, this research aims to find the current status of neighborhood relations in Chinese urban neighborhoods, promote methods that can encourage more positive neighborhood interactions, and advise possible approaches for establishing social capital within these neighborhoods.

The three major findings of this research are: 1. residents of Chinese urban neighborhoods are unlikely to spontaneously interact with each other, leading to a lack of interactions and lack of knowledge between neighbors and residents; 2. neighborhoods with relatively higher income residents tend to have a better neighborhood relation than neighborhoods with relatively lower income residents, however, the “distance” between the residents in the relatively impoverished neighborhoods tends to be closer than the residents in the relatively affluent neighborhoods; 3. residents of Chinese urban neighborhoods hold a positive opinion toward establishing social capital in their neighborhoods, and most of them are open to increasing their interactions with their neighbors. In order to mitigate the problems addressed in the major findings, the research proposes eight solutions to improve the current condition of neighborhood relation: cultural festivals, group exercise, setting up a street stall, charity events, children’s activities, online communities, neighborhood competitions, and resident committees.

Building upon this research, future researchers should further examine social capital within Chinese urban neighborhoods and search for a more efficient neighborhood management system based on the new social capital in place. With the slowing of Chinese economic growth, urban social mobility in China will also decrease, and this change will start to expose more social problems embedded in modern Chinese society. In order to respond to such problems, a more mature and efficient neighborhood management system needs to be established.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Farr, J., *Social Capital: A Conceptual History*. Political Theory, 2004
- [2]. Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, 1995
- [3]. Global Metro Monitor 2012
- [4]. James S. Coleman, *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital*, *The American Journal of Sociology*, S97-S100, 1988
- [5]. John Dewey, *The Elementary School Record*, 1900
- [6]. John Dewey, *The School and Society*, 1900

- [7]. Kimberly A. Goyette, *Education in America*, p. 53, 2017
- [8]. Maqianzu Studio, Bulk Jiangsu | Requisition of College Dormitory, Nighttime News, Feb. 14, 2020
- [9]. Martin Ruef, *Neighborhood Associations and Social Capital*, 2016
- [10]. Nanjing Municipal Economic and Social Development Statistical Communiqué of 2019, Nanjing Daily, 2020
- [11]. Nina Evason, *Chinese Culture*, Cultural Atlas, 2015
- [12]. Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, p. 63, 2000
- [13]. Shenjing He, From emerging markets to multifaceted urban societies: Chinese urban studies, *Urban Studies Journal*, p. 6, 2017
- [14]. Sun Lu, Missing and Rebuilding: An Analysis of Social Capital of Chinese Urban Communities, *Social Sciences in Yunnan*, p. 106-109, 2007
- [15]. Urban Population Growth, the World Bank
- [16]. Yang Zhongfang, Conceptualization of Chinese Interpersonal Trust: A Viewpoint of Interpersonal Relationship, *Sociology Studies*, 1992
- [17]. Zhang Jing, Nanjing's GDP exceeded 1.4 trillion yuan last year, and the per capita GDP reached 24,000 US dollars, PengPai News, 2020
- [18]. Zhao Tingyan, Community detuning and community social capital reconstruction, *Social Science Series*, p. 76-78, 2007