

## **Community Participation by Migrants and Long-time Residents in the U.S. and China: Implications for Immigrant Integration in Europe?**

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### Abstract

Community organizing and participation are put in brief historical context. A comprehensive framework for analyzing and promoting empowerment at multiple levels is presented. At each level, sociocultural, political, economic, and physical environmental forms of capital are considered for their interdependencies and their influence on states of oppression, processes of liberation, and the goal of individual, institutional, and community wellness. The framework provides a guide for transdisciplinary research questions and development. We have studied social capital and community civic participation in urban samples of migrants and longtime residents in both the United States and China.

Studies 1, 2, and 3: Individual and streetblock-level observational and survey data from New York City, Baltimore, and Salt Lake City predicted residents' participation in block and neighborhood associations, both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. Income, home ownership, minority status, and residential stability were positively, but inconsistently, related to participation. Community-focused social cognitions (organizational efficacy, civic responsibility, community attachments) and social capital behaviors (neighboring, volunteer work through churches and other community organizations) were consistently and positively predictive of participation at both the individual and block levels. Some of these data have been published, but have never been analyzed comparing long-time residents vs. recent migrants (both foreign and domestic), which is the present focus.

Studies 4: Using a nationally representative survey, we examine sense of community, neighboring behavior, and social capital in China, and their ability to predict local political participation. Rural, older and married residents and those with a primary or high school education and higher perceived socio-economic status were more likely to participate. For urban residents, knowing one's neighbors is more important whereas in rural areas, neighboring behavior is more important, but both predict participation. Other measures of social capital do not generally predict political participation in China.

Study 5: We use survey data from a convenience sample of migrant workers in seven cities across China to offer predictors of three types of community participation: 1) amount of contact with community organizations, 2) frequency of help sought from community organizations, and 3) the rate of more formal participation in Urban Resident Committee (URC) meetings. Results indicate that education, neighborhood social interaction, and organizational social capital predict all three types of community participation. Additional predictors include number of children currently residing in the household, duration of residence in the current city, trust in community members, place attachment, and occupational quality of life (for amount of contact with community organizations); number of children currently residing in the household and neighborhood social capital (for frequency of help sought from community organizations); and number of elderly kin living in the household and place attachment (for participation in URC meetings). Implications for labor and migration policy, community participation, democratization in China, and immigration issues in Europe, and potential applications to immigration of the proposed ecological, transdisciplinary research framework are discussed.

Why community participation is important for migrants/immigrants:

- Represents a critical means for new residents [migrants & immigrants] to become:
  - Acquainted with longer-term and native residents
  - Aware of available services, educational & employment opportunities
  - Familiar with new social and political systems
  - Acculturated & committed
  - Able to voice personal needs and those of their community
  - Empowered
- Gives cities & longtime residents those same opportunities in reverse:
  - assess migrant needs
  - benefit from diversity, new ideas, volunteer labor & experience
  - credibility w/ migrant communities

#### Social Capital

- Ecological orientation: social capital must be understood from a multi-level perspective:
  - individual psychological/behavioral (micro-system)
  - Organizational/institutional (meso-system)
  - AND community network (exo- & macro-systems)

#### ***Social Capital at the Individual Psychological Level:***

- Individual variation:
  - What marginalizes certain people?
  - What makes others become leaders?
  - What makes some successful, others not?

Social capital consists of both informal, community-focused attitudes or cognitions (*sense of community*) & behaviors (*neighboring*) as well as cognitions (*collective efficacy*—or *empowerment*) and behaviors (*citizen participation*) relevant to the creation, maintenance, and efficacy of formally organized voluntary associations for direct action, advocacy, and community service (Perkins & Long, 2002; Perkins, Hughey & Speer, 2002).

	Cognition/Trust	Social Behavior
Informal	Sense of community	Neighboring
Formally Organized	Collective efficacy	Citizen participation

*Figure 1.* Figure: Four Dimensions of Individual-level Social Capital (from Perkins & Long, 2002)

*Citizen participation.* Participants in community councils, block, neighborhood, tenant or homeowner associations, & other local resident groups have more: empowerment, sense of community, neighboring, community satisfaction & other positive community attachments & organizational bridging activities (Perkins et al., 1990, 1996). Community multi-purpose voluntary organizations address many local needs: planning, housing & traffic issues, park cleanups & community gardens, youth & recreation programs & block parties, crime prevention, mediating & settling local disputes & conflicts, and information gathering & dissemination.

**Psychological Antecedents to Social Capital (participation, neighboring, empowerment, sense of community** (Perkins & Long, 2002) include these positive community-oriented cognitions:

- communitarianism: value placed on one's community & on working collectively to improve it
- place attachment/identity/pride: emotional bonds, developed over time, to particular geographic locales
- community satisfaction: subjective, not objective assessment of conditions or quality of life: those most aware & critical of local problems often most satisfied with community
- community confidence (perceived future direction): considered important to resident decisions to move or stay & to neighborhood revitalization, tho my data & others have not clearly supported that

### ***Social Capital at the Community Level: Ecology, Institutions & Networks***

■ Attention to group, network, setting, organization, community, institution, societal levels reveals:

- the collective nature of social capital—the norms of reciprocity or the degree of social integration within & between settings

■ Generally defined and measured at the *interpersonal, community, institutional, or societal* levels in terms of “bonding”, “bridging” & “linking” social connections:

- *Bonding*: close connections between people, characterized by strong bonds e.g. among family members, personal friends, co-workers; a person's social support network; norms of trust within that network.
- *Bridging*: more distant connections between people, characterized by persons with mutual interests, e.g. business associates, neighbors, acquaintances, on-line social network members; a person's functional social network ; norms of reciprocity within that network.

*Linking*: connections with people in positions of power, characterized by relations between those within a hierarchy with differing levels of power; good for accessing support from formal institutions; different from bonding & bridging in that it is concerned with politically or economically unequal relations; embodies the concept of mentor/mentee or “networking to get ahead.”

### ***Bridging/Linking versus Bonding*** (Ferdinand Tönnies, 1887):

■ *gemeinschaft* = informal social bonding relationships based on deep, face-to-face contact in many areas of one's life among neighbors (sense of community, neighboring), catalyst for participation & commitment

■ *gessellschaft* = formal social bridging/linking relationships among network of individuals & community institutions based on superficial, economic transactions (collective efficacy, participation), increases power, access, & learning

### Summary of Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft Differences:

#### Gemeinschaft Communities

Multidimensional interpersonal relationships  
Greater homogeneity of beliefs  
Caste hierarchies stronger  
Authority based on tradition  
Great place attachment  
Collectivistic values  
Stability  
Security  
Greater sense of community

#### Gesellschaft Communities

Unidimensional interpersonal relationships  
Greater heterogeneity of beliefs  
Caste hierarchies weaker  
Authority based on law & contract  
Little place attachment  
Individualistic values  
Change  
Freedom  
Lesser sense of community

Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993) found that in Italy (as elsewhere), local historical differences in the culture of civic traditions determined how regional government develops and how successful it is: Where institutions and relations are more formally organized (*gesselschaft*), participation is higher and government more effective and efficient. Where power and decisions are based more informally on kin & other informal relations (*gemeinschaft*), government is less effective and less efficient.

***Bridging/Linking more important than Bonding?***

- too much concern for social cohesion undermines ability to address controversial issues or engage in necessary conflict within & between groups & is thus disempowering
- too much bonding within groups → insularity, alienation of outsiders, & inhibit bridging to other groups
- Bridging/linking to other organizations & power structures → “2<sup>nd</sup> order” change, empowerment
- Bridging/linking helps relate psycho-behavioral analyses of “micro” social capital to “meso” analyses of networks & “macro” analyses of institutional links to policy, power, & economic capital

Questions re Social Capital:

- How do you reconcile the concept of social capital as a collective phenomenon with data collected at the individual level?
- How does social capital operate at each level: individual, neighborhood, city, national? How are the levels inter-related? [EG, stronger social capital among city elites may not help social capital within neighborhoods.]
- How is social capital related to income distribution? To education levels? To health? To immigrant status?

Does social capital lead to further marginalization of those with little connection to the elite norms of behavior, disposition, and social networks, which are normally interpreted as *social capital* ?

- How do community participation and social capital operate in different countries, cultures, and political systems?
- How do socio-cultural, environmental, political, & economic capital develop? How are they interrelated?
- How can your research &/or intervention projects be expanded to explicitly consider more cells & questions in the following framework?

**Comprehensive Ecological Model for Analyzing power Dynamics across 4 Domains of Capital & 3 Levels** (Christens & Perkins, 2008).

A new research agenda:

Integration & Participation of Immigrant/migrant Communities in U.S., China, & Europe?

- Migrant and immigrant communities in each continent relocate mainly for economic opportunity
- In some cases, also to flee oppression
- They all experience new, more subtle forms of discrimination & difficulty integrating in host countries
- How can they be empowered at each level: individual, family, group/org., community?
- Can they be integrated without losing their ethnic identities and cultural values? Which values must change and which to preserve?

## **Social Capital and Community Participation**

### Social capital theory

Social capital is defined as a multidimensional construct that refers to individuals' social networks and mutual trust that people can draw upon in order to solve common problems. Bourdieu (1986) distinguished social and cultural capital from human and economic capital. Specifically, employing social capital—group and network relationships—and cultural capital—knowledge, awareness, and experience—can help diminish some of the disadvantages associated with a lack of human or financial capital.

Participation in social networks and increased access to information channels can multiply one's resources, particularly if these relationships are multiplex, or traverse multiple networks. Norms, sanctions, and communication ensure that members within these networks can be relied upon reciprocally (Coleman 1988). Putnam's (1993; 2000) popular conception of social capital emphasizes trust, informal social ties, perceived helpfulness of others, and perceived likelihood of individuals taking advantage of a person if given the opportunity. A recent psychological theory of social capital defines the theory in terms of community-focused cognitions, such as sense of community and collective efficacy or empowerment, and behaviors, such as informal neighboring and organized citizen participation, and considers other psychological predictors, such as communitarianism and place attachment and identity (Perkins et al, 2002).

Social capital theory posits that through actively participating in local services and voluntary associations, including decision-making processes, individuals identify and support collective goals that help create norms of reciprocity, which in turn promote a more connected and caring community. Social capital facilitates collective action which can also encourage local political participation (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti, 1993). In contrast, where people feel isolated and alienated from social networks and wider society they tend to withdraw from political participation (Henn, Weinstein & Forrest, 2005).

However, the connection between social capital and community social and political participation is not always so simple and, in particular, may depend on cultural and political context. While social capital may facilitate social relationships and participation, democratic institutional infrastructure is required to translate social participation into political participation (Krishna, 2002; Xu et al, in press). Local socio-cultural, economic, and even working conditions can also affect the relationship between social capital and both the level and type of participation. For example, Lindström (2006) found in Sweden that the relationship between social capital and participation held for political or union activities, but not for leisure activities. Those with the most difficult work conditions participated more readily in union activities, but less so in arts, religious, athletic, or other types of organizations, as compared to those with less demanding job settings.

*Sense of community, neighboring, and community social and political participation.* The definition of sense of community generally focuses on the reciprocal relationship between the people and the community to which they belong from a psychological perspective. The major debate involves how narrow or expansive should be the definition. The greatest consensus on sense of community revolves around cohesive feelings of membership or belongingness to a group, in particular the emotional connections or bonds among people based on a shared history, interests or concerns (Hughey & Speer, 2002; Long & Perkins, 2003; Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Western theories hold that such shared emotional connections to one's community motivate residents to participate in both informal neighboring behavior and formally organized neighborhood improvement and planning efforts (Putnam, 2000). Evidence of the connection between sense of community, neighboring, and participation has been generally consistent

across countries and cultures (Brodsky, O'Campo & Aronson, 1999; Garcia, Giuliani & Wiesenfeld, 1999; Liu & Besser, 2003; Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996; Perkins & Long, 2002; Prezza, Amici, Roberti & Tedeschi, 2001).

Some see that connection as so close as to include, not only membership and shared emotional connection, but also influence and needs fulfillment as dimensions of sense of community (McMillian & Chavis, 1986). Whether one prefers a narrow or broader definition of sense of community, the construct clearly relates to empowerment, or community members' shared expectations of the efficacy of collective action and feelings of community control (Kingston, Mitchell, Florin & Stevenson, 1999; Long & Perkins, 2003; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997). Scholars indicate that without collective efficacy residents are not likely to take active part in community decision-making; and local political participation for community decision-making is key to community empowerment and development (Colombo, Mosso & DePiccoli 2001; Ohmer, 2007; Perkins & Long, 2002).

### Social capital, migration, and participation

Human migration has increased tremendously in response to economic globalization as well as political turmoil, disasters, and large-scale building projects. Social capital and participation among migrants has only recently received much attention. Social capital has been found to increase the likelihood of migration (Palloni et al., 2001), but the move may simultaneously result in a loss of social networks and disrupt civic participation. Permanent migrants lose contact with the network they left whereas temporary migrants may be less likely to get involved in a new community they see as temporary and in which they have little stake or familiarity. Additional challenges may lie in language and cultural adjustments (Zhou, 2008).

Cheong et al. (2007) suggest that social capital among migrants depends on context, observing that migrant entrepreneurs in Canada have relied more upon human capital than social capital, but that in Hong Kong, working and middle class migrants relied heavily upon social capital. Further, current operationalizations may fail to measure types of social capital relevant to certain communities: for some ethnic groups, trust may be a relevant concept, but for others, social networks may be more important (Kao & Rutherford, 2007). Thus, research on social capital must be attuned to possible differences in social capital and how it operates in different ethnic and social groups.

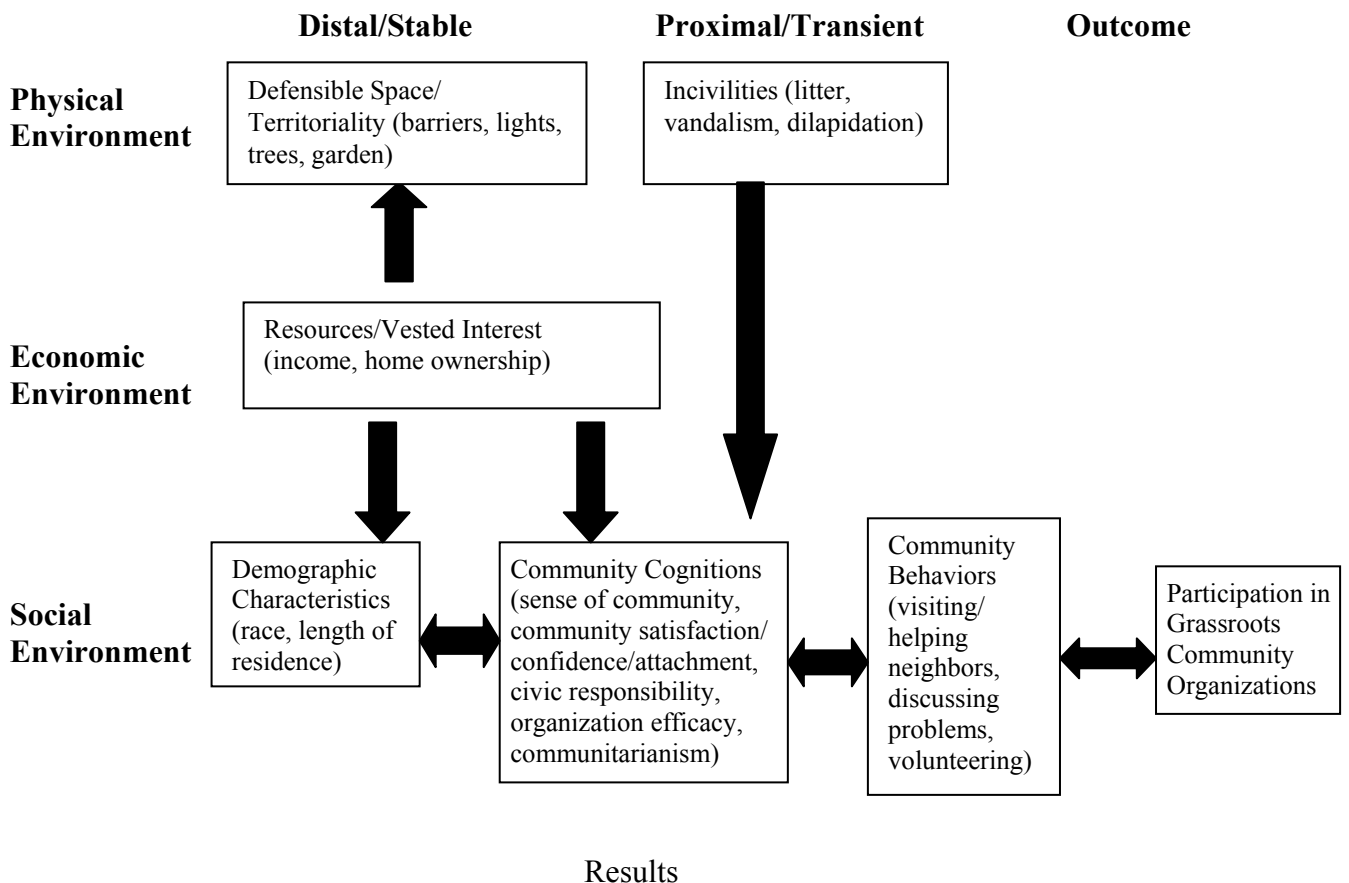
For some ethnic groups, migration may be accompanied by an increase in social capital. Among migrants, obligations and cohesion could be greater due to shared experiences. And although information channels may be reduced between immigrants and formal power structures, immigrant organizations could at least partially make up for this potential deficit (Kao, 2004; Zhou, 2008).

Civic and political participation among migrants has not been widely studied. Interest in it, however, goes back at least to 1956, when Zimmer found in the US that education and similarity of places of origin and destination are major factors in migrant worker participation: those from cities were able to adapt more easily to urban life and participate than those from rural areas, but highly educated rural persons participated more on average than urban natives. A more recent study of Turkish immigrants in Germany suggests that those most likely to engage in civic participation are older, engaged in political activity in the past, and identify as both Turkish and German (Simon & Ruhs, 2008). Those engaged in political activity were less likely to identify as separatist and also currently involved in civic activity. Other typical predictors of civic and political participation, such as education and religious identification, were not significantly predictive in this sample

### **Community Participation by Migrants and Long-time Residents in the U.S.**

■ Studies 1, 2, and 3: Individual and block-level observational and survey data from New York City, Baltimore, and Salt Lake City were used to predict residents' participation in block and neighborhood associations, both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. Some of these data have been published (eg, Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996), but have never been analyzed comparing long-time residents vs. recent migrants (both foreign and domestic), which is the present focus.

**Figure 2. An Ecological Framework for Participation in Grassroots Community Organizations** (from Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996)



■ Income, home ownership, minority status, and residential stability were positively, but inconsistently, related to participation.

■ Community-focused social cognitions (organizational efficacy, civic responsibility, community attachments) & social capital behaviors (neighboring, volunteer work through churches and other community organizations) were consistently & positively predictive of civic participation at both individual & block levels.

Table 1. Individual-level Correlations & Multiple Regressions Predicting Participation in Grassroots Community Organizations from the Economic, Social, & Physical Environment Across Multiple Cities & Time Lags

Study (City):	I. Salt Lake			II. Baltimore:		III. New York City:	
Time lag:	0 yrs (n=282)		0 years (412)	1 year (305)	0 yrs (1,081)		1 year (438)
Cluster	R <sup>2</sup> Δ		R <sup>2</sup> Δ	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	R <sup>2</sup> Δ		R <sup>2</sup> Δ
Variable	r/β		r/β	r/β	r/β		r/β
<i>Physical Environment</i> <sup>a</sup>	.01		.07**	.04*	.01**		.02**
Defensible Space	.06/-.01		.26/ .12	.21/ .08			
Incivilities	.08/ .06		-.13/ .09	-.11/ .09	.12/ .07*		.15/ .14**
<i>Economic Environment</i>	.06**		.08**	.04**	.05**		.01
Household Income	.21/ .18**		.33/ .18**	.24/ .07	.10/ .05		-.03/-.05
Home Ownership	.15/-.01		.28/ .08	.22/ .06	.22/ .06		.12/-.03
<i>Social Environment:</i>							
<i>Social Demographics</i>	.06**		.00	.00	.03**		.05**
Race (% Nonwhite)	-.17/-.02		-.06/ .08	-.09/-.00	.13/ .12**		.20/ .19**
<b>Length of Residence</b>	<b>.26/ .16**</b>		<b>.07/-.00</b>	<b>-.00/-.11</b>	<b>.21/ .07*</b>		<b>.16/ .09</b>
<i>Social Cognitions</i> <sup>b</sup>	.03*		.05**	.08**	.07**		.07**
Efficacy/Responsibility	.19/ .07		.22/ .03	.26/ .12	.24/ .13**		.22/ .12**
Community Attachments	.17/-.07		.33/ .20**	.30/ .20*	.20/ .12**		.18/ .15**
<i>Social Behaviors</i>	.16**		.04**	.04**	.09**		.05**
Church/Other Service <sup>c</sup>	.38/ .29**		.16/ .08	.16/ .10	.23/ .15**		.19/ .12**
Neighboring	.39/ .30**		.34/ .19**	.34/ .19**	.39/ .26**		.31/ .20**
R <sup>2</sup>	.31		.25	.21	.25		.21
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.28		.22	.17	.24		.19
F	10.2**		8.1**	5.4**	29.3**		11.8**

**Significant r's: bold** (p<.05, 2-tailed); for R2 change, final Betas & Fs: \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01.

**a** Incivilities = litter, graffiti, unkempt property. Defensible space = outdoor lights; barriers on residential property; trees, shrubs or garden. In Study III, only resident perceptions of block incivilities available at individual level.

**b** Perceived organizational efficacy (I); civic responsibility (II); composite of both (III, IV). "Community attachments" include sense of community, block attachment and satisfaction, and knowing one's neighbors.

**c** Church/other service = attend church group meeting (I); church work (II); member of other organization (III).

Table 2. Block-level Correlations and Multiple Regressions Predicting Participation in Grassroots Community Organizations from the Economic, Social, and Physical Environment Across Multiple Cities and Time Lags<sup>a</sup>

Study (City):	I. Salt Lake		II. Baltimore:		III. New York City:		
Time lag:	0 years (n=60)		0 years (50)	1 year (50)	0 years (47)	1 year (47)	7 yrs (44)
Cluster	R <sup>2</sup> Δ		R <sup>2</sup> Δ	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	R2Δ	R2Δ
Variable	r/β		r/β	r/β	r/β		r/β
<i>Physical Environment</i>	.06		.20**	.14*	.16*		.12*
Defensible Space <sup>b</sup>	-.09/-.04		.44/ .19	.37/ .16	-.34/-.37*		.29/ .43*
Incivilities	-.22/-.00		-.32/ .09	-.28/ .04	.28/ .11		.29/ .15
<i>Economic Environment</i>	.07		.09*	.07 .04	.10*		.01
Household Income	.27/ .27*		.46/ .27	.39/ .24	-.09/-.11		-.24/-.17
Home Ownership	.14/ .06		.42/-.05	.36/-.06	.12/ .22		.19/ .04
<i>Social Environment:</i>							
<i>Social Demographics</i>	.00		.03	.01	.01		.09
Race (% Nonwhite)	-.06/ .03		-.06/ .19	-.10/ .08	.20/ .04		.31/ .07
<b>Length of Residence</b>	<b>.03/-.01</b>		<b>.03/ .05</b>	<b>.04/ .08</b>	<b>.09/-.26</b>		<b>.30/ .11</b>
<i>Social Cognitions</i> <sup>c</sup>	.13*		.05	.03	.25**		.23**
Efficacy/Responsibility	.29/ .15		.38/ .14	.38/ .25	.41/ .35**		.48/ .45**
Community Attachments	.42/ .14		.43/ .21	.34/ .03	.28/ .19		.20/ .09
<i>Social Behaviors</i>	.22**		.03	.02.	.13**		.06*
Church/Other Service <sup>d</sup>	.40/ .26*		.27/ .16	.18/ .16	.50/ .38**		.35/ .04
Neighboring	.54/ .37*		.44/ .16	.36/ .08	.46/ .06		.54/ .27*
R <sup>2</sup>	.49		.41	.28	.59		.63
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.38		.26	.09	.48		.25
F	4.5**		2.7*	1.5	5.3**		5.6**



**Significant r's (p<.10, 2-tailed): bold.** Signif. levels for R<sup>2</sup> change, final Betas, & Fs: \* p<.10, \*\* p<.01.  
a Block-level participation in study III includes activity level of the organization.

b Outdoor lights, barriers on residential property, trees, shrubs and gardens, and (except in Study I) street narrowness and street lighting.

c Perceived organizational efficacy (I); civic responsibility (II); composite of both (III). "Community attachments" include sense of community, block attachment and satisfaction, and knowing one's neighbors.

d Church/other service = attend church group meeting (I); church work (II); member of other organization (III)

#### Conclusions re Migrant Participation in U.S. Cities

- At the individual level, migrants were less likely to participate in NYC & SLC but not in Baltimore.
- At the community level, blocks with newer residents were as likely to participate as stable blocks in Baltimore & SLC, but in NYC, blocks with more migrants were less likely to be active, especially 7 years later.
- In NYC, the community-level migrant effect is stronger over time than the individual-level effect suggesting it is **not** that migrants will not participate, but that they live in unorganized and disenfranchised communities with less opportunity to participate.

#### Study 4: Sense of Community, Neighboring, and Social Capital as Predictors of Local Political Participation in China

Using a nationally representative survey, we examine sense of community, neighboring behavior, and social capital in China, and their ability to predict local political participation. In the last two decades, China's economic and welfare reforms and their social and cultural impact on communities, on community-based services, and on opportunities for local community participation have generated significant interest among scholars and nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Bray, 2006; Guan, 2000; Li, 2006; Xia, 2008; Yan & Gao, 2007). In contrast to the limited opportunities in Maoist China for local political participation and social capital, not to mention the limits on social research during that period, what communities in China have experienced can now be studied and compared to what has been established in Western societies, such as the definition and meaning of community, sense of community, neighboring behavior, social capital and civic participation, their relationship to each other and to political participation. Likewise, what Western theories and practices describe about community and community participation also challenges China's capacity for community building and for the development of participatory democracy, at least at the local level.

Scholars have argued that changes in the provision of community services in the context of China's welfare reform and social transformation will eventually lead to the development of civil society indicators such as sense of community, the connectedness among close geographic neighbors, beyond what was traditionally built upon kin and cadres (Ge, 2008; Jones & Xu, 2002; Liu, 2008; Xu, 2008; Xu & Chow, 2006). Ties to communities are providing ordinary Chinese with the social and welfare support they once drew from family and employment units. Individuals' participation in community services and other community activities promises to empower community residents, add to their social capital, and consequently may help create genuine, broader grassroots community actions. At the same time, massive labor migration and urbanization throughout China has strained both formally organized public services and informal family and community ties and supports; and those strains affect both rural and urban areas, but the nature and magnitude of those effects may be different (Guan & Chow, 2003/2004; Mallee, 2000; Xia, 2008). Citizen responses and opportunities for participation are thus likely to be different in urban and rural areas (Bray, 2006; Jennings, 1997; Jones & Xu, 2002; Xu & Chow, 2006; Zhang, 1992).

Due to the paucity of research, the dynamics among community cognitions (attachments and perceptions), community organization, social capital, and local political participation in China are still unclear. Empirical studies using national datasets are few; systematic comparisons between rural and urban community participation are almost nonexistent; and surveys that include rural samples are especially uncommon. Can Western theories concerning local political participation, sense of community, neighboring, and social capital be applied in China? This study uses Chinese national survey data with random sample to answer these questions: Do sense of community, neighboring, and social capital predict local political participation behavior? How do urban and rural residents differ in terms of their patterns of community participation?

*Community social and political participation in China.* Community participation is defined differently by different people according to their social, economic and political context. On the one extreme, participation is simply perceived as the passive response of receiving services or involvement in community activities. On the other extreme, it is viewed as the complete ownership of the community and/or community organizations (Blanchet, 2001; Murthy & Klugman, 2004). The latter encompasses participation in both community decision-making and local politics. It has been noted that traditional Western forms of community participation based on institutionalized reciprocity and communal self-help had very little impact in developing countries (Blanchet, 2001; Midgley, Hall, Hardiman & Narine, 1986). For many developing countries, scholars have found that community participation is often linked to the governmental initiation of social service programs (Abatena, 1997; Jewkes & Murcott, 1996), in that community participation brings to social service programs with added efficiency, sustainability, equity, and collective community power (Gonzalez, 1998; Jones, 2003). Many scholars question the value of this type of community participation since community participation in service programs could only be viewed as a “contribution;” they argue that the voluntary donation of people’s resources to a common good does not necessarily imply that control and direction of activities pass to the local people (Foley & Martin, 2000; McConnell, 1993; Murthy & Klugman, 2004).

In China, community participation stems from the Chinese tradition of neighborhood mutual help, and historically has rarely involved decision-making and local politics. In the last two decades, as the Chinese government’s ability to provide services and welfare programs to its citizens declined following the economic and social reforms starting in 1978, the concept of community and community-based services were introduced and adopted in the mid-1980s. The adoption of community-based services was a response to the changing family composition and aging population, and consequently growing needs in care and services (Bray, 2006; Yan & Gao, 2007). The shift was also underpinned by a rationale that service programs should be carried out in the community, by community members and with community input (Guan, 2000; Guan, & Chow, 2003/2004). Therefore, citizens have been encouraged to participate in the community both socially and politically, at least up to the extent the local political environment allows. Over the last two decades, however, community participation in China, as in other developing countries, typically involves limited roles for community members in programs initiated by the government and led by Communist Party members. The result is thus too often a less than empowering, top-down experience rather than a grassroots, or bottom-up, one. Community members consequently lack necessary motivation and organizational infrastructure to participate in community decision-making process or local politics.

While studies of community participation in China rarely focus on its political aspect, local political participation, particularly in rural China, has drawn scholars’ attention in recent years; and their investigations are often in the context of governance and democracy (O’Brien & Li, 2000; Zhang, Fan, Zhang & Huang, 2004; Zhong & Chen, 2002). Community participation and local political participation are often distinguished in the sociology and political science

literatures. In China, however, the definition of community and the changing nature of local elections suggest that the two forms of participation may be viewed as on a continuum. The China's Ministry of Civil Affairs officially defined geographic "community" in 1994 as the lowest political administrative unit. In each unit, Chinese laws have established that the leading organization is the semi-governmental, but self-governing by law, Urban Residents' Committee or Rural Villagers' Committee. Because local political participation in China refers to the participation in Urban Residents' Committee or Rural Villagers' Committee elections, as available literature has shown, local political participation is a part of community participation, specifically from the perspective of community ownership, decision-making, and collective action.

In China, sense of community carries features that might be different from Western theories. Historically, "community" in China was based on a patrilineal kinship network, where extended family lived proximately within a geographic area and cared for each other in times of need. Under the socialist regime (pre-1978), the employment unit (*Dan Wei*) became urban people's new community (Ruf, 1998). Neither the kinship network nor *Dan Wei* encompasses the psychological or social meaning of a geographic-based community (Guan & Chow, 2003/2004; Ruf, 1998). Since the economic and social reforms in 1978, the dissolution of employment units as well as aggressive housing and other major construction projects, and widespread labor migration have largely dissolved *Dan Wei* "communities" and greatly strained kinship networks. Instead, new geographic communities are emerging, where residents often share little in common. For this reason, a sense of geographic community must be nurtured and collective efficacy needs to be instilled so that people will want to participate to collectively address their own community needs and problems (Luo, 2007; Perkins et al, 1996).

There is little empirical study of either sense of community or neighboring (or even of the related broader concept of social support; Yuen Tsang, 1999) in China. There has been even less published on how they relate to community social or political participation. Limited evidence indicates, while urban communities in today's China present moderate level of community belongingness, the importance of neighboring, neighborhood mutual help and community participation have been consistently decreasing (Gui & Huang, 2006). Scholars have just begun to attend to the conceptualization of sense of community, but to what extent sense of community, neighboring, community participation, and especially local political participation correlate and affect each other in China remains unclear.

*Social capital and community social and political participation in China.* The content of social capital is not new to the Chinese. Social ties (*Guanxi*) have been well studied as they assist Chinese in obtaining employment, promotion, and other informal benefits (Bian, 1997; 2001), and social capital does contribute to individual's health and well-being (Yip, Subramanian, Mitchell, Lee, Wang & Kawachi, 2007). Existing research also indicates that individual social capital in China is more cognitive than structural; that is, social ties and social network are primarily based on individual relationships rather than participation in civic organizations (Yip, et al., 2007). However, the nature of social capital, its dimensions, and its role in community social and political participation have just started to be studied in China.

Recent studies of community participation in China show contradictory results as they relate to social capital. In terms of community social participation, the social capital obtained by individuals in rural China predicts their participation in community health programs (Zhang, Wang, Wang & Hsiao, 2006); however social ties or individual networking also became a barrier for equitable and active participation in a rural community tourism development (Li, Lai & Feng, 2007). As to community political participation, on the one hand, examinations of Rural Villagers' Committee elections show that social capital (both social trust and network) does not help increase participation rates (Sun, Xu, Tao & Su, 2007). Observations of Urban Residents' Committee elections, on the other hand, suggest that government authorities use social capital

imbedded in the community to promote a high local political participation rate (Gui, Huang, Li & Yuan, 2003).

Since social capital is defined differently and used in a wide range of contexts, relationships among sense of community, social capital and community participation have not been consistently documented. Scholars indicate that sense of community should be a psychological construct and a correlate of social capital (Mancini, Martin & Bowen, 2003; Pooley, Cohen & Pike, 2005); sense of community and formal participation in community organizations could also be viewed as parts of an individual's social capital (Perkins, Hughey & Speer, 2002). Nonetheless, empirical studies suggest that social capital and sense of community are very important in predicting community social and political participation, but different constructs of social capital (network, mutuality, trust) may relate to community participation differently (Liu & Besser, 2003) and may relate differently to political than social participation.

In summary, more than two decades of community practice would give Chinese citizens more experience and confidence to participate in their own communities. Along with their efforts in forming their new community identity and developing sense of community, China's community participation promises to move from participation as mere involvement in social service programs to participation in community decision-making and local politics. In the context of China's social transformation, this trend could be facilitated by increased sense of community and social capital, which are gradually on the rise in China. However, the disruptions in sense of community due to relocations, rural-urban migration and urbanization and unique characteristics of social capital in China present uncertainty in these relationships. While we are using Western approaches to measure sense of community and social capital, it is unclear how local political participation, sense of community, neighboring and social capital relate to each other or whether sense of community, neighboring and social capital could become valid indicators for local political participation in the context of Chinese culture and China's society. This study is an initial effort to investigate those relationships.

### Research Questions and Methods

*Questions and hypotheses.* This study addresses the following questions: After controlling demographic variables, (1) do sense of community and neighboring predict local political participation? And (2) does social capital predict local political participation? In addition, do rural and urban people differ in their participation patterns? Given previous research efforts and our conceptual framework, and taking into account the welfare reform and social transformation occurring in China, in this study, a community is defined as a geographic urban neighborhood or rural village. Sense of community therefore primarily looks at residents' feelings towards their respective neighborhood or village. Community political participation as a dependent variable in this study is limited to residents' participation in voting for community decision-making representatives, that is, members of Urban Residents' Committees and Rural Villagers' Committees. In contrast, we define social capital more broadly as a combination of reciprocity, trust, and participation in urban or rural neighborhood organizations. We hypothesize that (1) higher sense of community and neighboring predict local political participation, as ordinary community members in China gradually develop a connection with their community in a psychological and social way; (2) individuals' higher level of social capital predicts their local political participation, as social capital connects them through networking and builds their reciprocity and mutuality; (3) urban and rural people differ in their patterns of sense of community, neighboring, social capital, and local political participation. Urban-rural differences are harder to predict. Due to China's far-reaching social and economic reforms, enormous migration and urban transformation blur the traditional urban-rural division, and profoundly change the composition of both rural and urban communities (Cai, 2000). Rural social cohesion and community participation may be higher due to the longer residential

histories, and smaller size of village communities. On the other hand, urban residents live in closer, more dense communities and may have been more exposed to democratic and other Western ideas.

*Sources of data.* This study uses data from the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS) 2005, an annual representative sample survey of China's urban and rural households aiming to monitor systematically the changing relationship between social structure and quality of life in urban and rural China. The survey was administrated by People's University and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in China and Hong Kong, respectively. CGSS uses a four-stage stratified sampling scheme with unequal probabilities (HKUST Survey Research Center, 2004). In detail, the sampling units at each stage are: (1) first stage—125 urban districts (including suburban districts) and rural counties (including county-level municipalities) selected; (2) second stage—four townships, town seats and city sub-districts (streets) selected; (3) third stage—two urban neighborhood committees and rural villager committees selected; and (4) ten households selected and then one eligible household member is selected to be the survey respondent. The CGSS 2005 includes 10,372 participants, 58.6% of whom are from rural areas.

*Measures.* Given the role of community participation played in China's community-based service delivery, local political participation in this study focuses on community-based citizen-initiated activities that could influence community decision-making, a long-term benefit as this type of community participation would improve the community's performance in meeting people's needs (Jennings, 2004). Local political participation was measured by a yes-no question, "Did you vote in the last election for members of Urban Neighborhood Committee/Rural Villager Committee?" Urban Neighborhood Committee/Rural Villager Committee is by law the community decision-making body in China's cities and rural areas. As a grassroots organization and meanwhile a mandated basic unit in China's political hierarchy, both Urban Neighborhood Committees and Rural Villager Committees carry out numerous administrative tasks issued by the government, as well as manage certain community care and service programs on their own. This measure does not equal the actual participation in community decision making, but it represents a behavior — making efforts to change the composition of the community decision-making body and therefore influence decisions made for the community.

From questions available in the CGSS, there is unfortunately only one question that may serve as a reasonable measure of sense of community (SOC): "How well do you know your neighbors?" Likewise, there is only one good item to measure neighboring: "How much do neighbors help each other or expect to be helped?" This actually measures one's perception of the level of neighboring in one's community. Thus, both items could arguably be combined as a measure of community cognition, but we prefer to examine their impacts separately. Both measures use a five-point Likert scale; the higher the score, the stronger is the individual's sense of community or perceived neighboring.

There is no widely held consensus on how to measure social capital. This study adopted three dimensions to measure social capital (SC) including: membership in a social network, reciprocity, and trust (Putnam, 2000; Rahn & Transue, 1998). Network membership measures people's membership and their frequency of participation in seven different types of organizations, including sports and exercise groups, entertainment and social organizations, professional organizations, religious organizations, children's interest groups, educational organizations, and public service organizations (Cronbach's Alpha=0.750). Reciprocity within the network is measured by asking "how much members help each other or expected to be helped in each organization." These measurements allow this study to estimate not only the extensiveness of individual's network, but also quality of the network (Cronbach's Alpha=0.801). Trust is measured by asking how much the individual trusts 13 different types of people including neighbors, relatives, friends, coworkers, group members, strangers, etc.

(Cronbach's Alpha=0.676). Each of the three social capital measures was generated by calculating the sum of seven, seven, and 13 items (respectively) within the above dimensions. The internal consistency (Alpha reliability) of the Trust measure is acceptable and of the Membership and Reciprocity measures is good.

*Statistical methods.* Descriptive statistics were used to understand the demography and representativeness of the sample. Because local political participation is a dichotomous variable, logistic regression models were developed to test the hypothesis. In addition, sub-group analysis was conducted in order to describe the difference between rural and urban local political participation.

## Results

Among the 10,328 participants, there were slightly more females (52.6%) than males; the vast majority (84.6%) were married. 40.2% of participants perceived themselves as middle class, and 52.5% classified themselves to be lower or lower-middle class in China. Average age at the time of survey was 44.7 years (sd=14.8); and average household size was 3.88 (sd=1.9). Table 3 delineates the distinctions between rural and urban populations, suggesting two very different groups of people. Compared to urban residents, people in rural areas are more likely to be married, have less education, and live with more family members but less family income; interestingly, rural people perceived themselves as having a slightly higher socio-economic status, although that may simply reflect the comparison with poorer neighbors.

Table 3: *Demographics of the sample (n=10,328)*

	Urban (n=6,075)	Rural (n=4,253)	$\chi^2$
Age (mean)	44.66 (sd=15.45)	44.76 (sd=13.81)	F=.113
Gender (Male %)	46.5	48.7	4.825*
Household size (mean)	3.46 (sd=1.65)	4.48 (sd=1.97)	F=797.00**
Marital status (Married %)	80.5	90.3	185.455**
Family year income (mean)	12019 (sd=15214)	4123 (sd=5833)	F=981.059**
Perceived Socio-economic Status (%)			150.146**
Upper	0.4	1.3	
Upper Middle	5.5	8.0	
Middle	37.0	44.8	
Lower Middle	33.1	25.3	
Lower	24.0	20.6	
Education (%)			2271.496**
No Education	6.0	19.6	
Elementary School	15.2	40.5	
Middle School	29.5	30.3	
High School	21.7	6.8	
Less than College	21.7	2.7	
College	5.6	.0	
Graduate School	0.4	.0	

\*\* p<.01      \* p<.05

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics on social capital, sense of community (SOC) and neighboring, as well as urban-rural differences. In general, rural residents in China have a significantly higher SOC, neighboring, and trust compared to urban residents. But rural people have a significantly lower level of social capital in terms of membership in social organizations

and reciprocity within their social network. As to local political participation, fewer than half (43.8%) participated in the last election for Urban Neighborhood Committee or Rural Village Committee, i.e., the local community decision-making bodies. Rural residents have a much higher political participation rate (67.8%) than urban residents (27.0%). Bivariate correlations of all study variables appear separately for urban and rural samples in Table 5.

Table 4: *Local political participation, sense of community, neighboring, and social capital rural-urban comparison (n=10,328)*

	Total (mean/sd)	Urban (mean/sd)	Rural (mean/sd)	t
Local Political Participation (%)	43.8	27.0	67.8	
Sense of Community (1-5)	3.80/0.99	3.46/0.97	4.28/0.80	45.578**
Perceived Neighboring (1-5)	3.02/1.12	2.69/1.06	3.49/1.03	38.635**
Social Capital				
Membership <sup>3</sup>	9.34/3.71	10.54/4.21	7.63/1.77	-42.578**
Reciprocity <sup>4</sup>	3.53/5.29	5.22/5.88	1.06/2.83	-42.879**
Trust (0 to 65)	34.93/8.47	32.43/7.28	38.48/8.69	38.384**

<sup>3</sup> Ranging from 7 to 35, the higher, the more social group membership and more active within the groups.

<sup>4</sup> Ranging from 0 to 35, the higher, the stronger reciprocity gained from the social groups.

\*\* p<.01      \* p<.05

Table 5: *Correlation table for urban sample (above diagonal) and rural sample (below diagonal)*

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	--	.019	.019	.182**	-.007	.021	.140**	-.032*	-.027*	.050**	.047**	.044**
2. Age	.112**	--	.250**	.008	.116**	.004	-.402**	.160**	.099**	.033**	.184**	-.151**
3. Married	.099**	-.063**	--	.057**	.004	.075**	.095**	.103**	.099**	.038**	.070**	.091**
4. Family Income	.177**	.138**	.094**	--	.167**	.071**	.271**	.055**	-.026*	.075**	.158**	.135**
5. Perceived SES	-.011	.063**	.082**	.188**	--	-.028*	-.251**	.033*	-.011	.144**	.214**	-.201**
6. Household Size	.008	.028	.066**	-.033*	.070**	--	-.098**	.025	.046**	-.018	-.025	-.020
7. Education	.226**	.319**	.006	.249**	.213**	-.037*	--	.136**	.071**	.140**	.311**	.275**
8. Sense of Community	.041**	.085**	-.031*	.024	.046**	-.006	-.007	--	.527**	.074**	.059**	-.056**
9. Neighboring	.056**	-.013	.062**	.060**	.078**	-.032*	.074**	.387**	--	.114**	.112**	.089**
10. Trust	.108**	-.004	-.019	.021	.098**	-.003	.117**	.054**	.096**	--	.208**	.194**
11. Reciprocity	.070**	.140**	.077**	.083**	.093**	.024	.251**	.006	.029	.115**	--	.877**
12. Membership	.052**	.120**	.076**	.050**	.073**	.017	.219**	.003	.012	.121**	.876**	--

\*\* p<.01, \* p<.05

Overall model fit of five predictors (3 social capital scales, SOC, and neighboring), with Local Political Participation as the dependent variable, is significant ( $X^2=2244.79$ ,  $p=.00$ ); the model correctly classifies 71.4% of the cases. Logistic regression results indicate, after controlling demographic variables, that SOC and neighboring each significantly predict local political participation. The odds ratios predict a 23.5% greater probability of participating for every unit increase in SOC on a 1-5 scale and a 14.8% greater chance of participating for every unit increase on the 1-5 neighboring scale (see Table 6). Among the three dimensions of social capital, only reciprocity within the network significantly predicts local political participation, with a 3.1% greater chance of voting for every value on the 0-35 reciprocity scale.

In addition to several demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, social economic status, and education) that significantly predict local political participation, urban and rural residents significantly differ in their likelihood to vote for local committees. Controlling for other predictors, rural people are 5.74 times more likely to participate in community elections than are urban residents. Results from sub-group analysis indicate that SOC and neighboring remain significant within both rural and urban groups in predicting people's local political participation (see Table 7). While all three dimensions of social capital do not relate to local political participation for people in rural areas, for urban residents, reciprocity significantly predicts community political participation.

Table 6: *Logistic regression model: Local political participation as dependent variable (n=10,328)*

	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp(B)
Gender [male]	.103	.048	4.601*	1.108
Age	.023	.002	158.767**	1.023
Unmarried	-.334	.070	22.559**	.716
Family Income	.078	.031	6.228*	1.081
Social Economic Status <sup>3</sup>			17.544**	
Upper	.369	.273	1.821	1.446
Upper Middle	.377	.105	12.835**	1.458
Middle	.209	.063	10.895**	1.232
Lower Middle	.130	.065	3.945*	1.138
Household Size	-.007	.013	.252	.993
Education <sup>4</sup>			67.413**	
Elementary School	.411	.082	25.049**	1.509
Middle School	.581	.088	43.389**	1.789
High School	.546	.103	28.048**	1.726
Less than College	.183	.112	2.688	1.201
College	.297	.167	3.145	1.346
Graduate School	1.016	.497	4.175*	2.763
Sense of Community	.211	.030	51.228**	1.235
Neighboring	.138	.025	30.750**	1.148
Social Capital				
Trust	.004	.003	1.653	1.004
Reciprocity	.030	.010	9.486**	1.031
Membership	.016	.014	1.365	1.016
Rural Residency <sup>5</sup>	1.748	.066	702.793**	5.740
Constant	-4.436	.241	339.134	.012

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to Lower Social Economic Status    <sup>4</sup> In contrast to No Education

<sup>5</sup> In contrast to Urban Residency

\*\*  $p < .01$       \*  $p < .05$



Table 7: *Regression models predicting local political participation: Rural and urban comparison (n=10,328)*

	Urban			Rural		
	B	S.E.	Wald	B	S.E.	Wald
Male	-.033	.063	.279	.324	.075	18.558**
Age	.026	.002	122.916**	.017	.003	33.611**
Unmarried	-.227	.088	6.596*	-.520	.116	20.152**
Family Income	.109	.040	7.433**	.001	.055	.000
Social Economic Status <sup>3</sup>			7.189			14.271**
Upper	.599	.458	1.710	.313	.330	.902
Upper Middle	.311	.144	4.700*	.483	.158	9.352**
Middle	.161	.086	3.530	.258	.095	7.363**
Lower Middle	.156	.085	3.400	.077	.102	.560
Household Size	.010	.019	.265	-.018	.018	.910
Education <sup>4</sup>			34.467**			28.553**
Elementary School	.457	.155	8.699**	.332	.099	11.237**
Middle School	.672	.154	19.034**	.469	.115	16.782**
High School	.640	.161	15.746**	.494	.169	8.483**
Less than College	.326	.165	3.905*	-.271	.232	1.371
College	.439	.207	4.499*	-22.099	26189.219	.000
Graduate School	1.195	.516	5.351*			
Sense of Community	.301	.040	58.219**	.104	.046	5.030*
Neighboring	.070	.034	4.146*	.193	.036	28.093**
Social Capital						
Trust	.004	.004	.851	.004	.004	.724
Reciprocity	.035	.011	10.772**	.041	.027	2.243
Membership	.018	.015	1.608	-.036	.040	.779
Constant	-4.991	.321	242.365**	-1.477	.451	10.733**

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to Lower Social Economic Status    <sup>4</sup> In contrast to No Education    \*\* p<.01    \* p<.05

Table 8: *Demographics and local political participation: Rural and urban comparison (n=10,328)*

Variable	Urban (n=6,075)		Rural (n=4,253)	
	Yes 27.0% (n=1,643)	No 73.0% (n=4,432)	Yes 67.8% (n=2,884)	No 32.2% (n=1,369)
Local Political Participation				
Age (mean/sd)	48.63 (sd=14.67)	43.19 (sd=15.48)	45.48 (sd=13.03)	43.25 (sd=15.24)
Gender (Male %)	47.4	46.2	51.9	41.9
Marital status (Married %)	86.1	78.4	92.2	86.5
Family Income (mean/sd)	12360 (sd=14948)	11890 (sd=15314)	4224 (sd=5954)	3906 (sd=5559)
Household Size (mean/sd)	3.49 (sd=1.58)	3.46 (sd=1.67)	4.45 (sd=1.90)	4.53 (sd=2.14)
Perceived SES (%)				
Upper	40	60	74.1	25.9
Upper Middle	32	68	75.7	24.3
Middle	27.8	72.2	70.1	29.9
Lower Middle	27.5	72.5	65.3	34.7
Lower	23.9	76.1	62.4	37.6
Education (%)				
No Education	23.8	76.2	59.9	40.1
Elementary School	29.3	70.7	69	31
Middle School	28.7	71.3	71	29
High School	27.9	72.1	73.1	26.9
Less than College	23.7	76.3	60.3	39.7
College	24.1	75.9	0	100
Graduate School	40.9	59.1	0	0

Among all demographics that are included in the analysis, only household size does not predict Chinese people's local political participation. In China's rural areas, men are more likely to participate than are women, but in cities the gender difference disappears. Meanwhile, older and married people are more likely than younger and unmarried people to vote. Education, family income, and self-perceived social economic status show interesting patterns of predicting local political participation (see Table 7 and 8). Urban residents with higher family income are more likely to vote, but income is not at all related to voting in rural areas. Residents with higher perceived social economic status are also more likely to vote (Table 8), although the contrasts are not all significant in the multivariate equation (Table 7). The pattern between voting behavior and education is curvilinear. In urban areas, the curve is tilde (~) shaped with primary through high-school and graduate school educated citizens most likely to vote. Due to the lack of graduate-educated villagers in the sample, the curve in rural areas is an inverted-U shape with primary through high school educated villagers most likely to vote and those with some post-secondary or no education less likely to vote.

#### Discussion of Study 4

*Strengths and Limitations.* Before summarizing our results and drawing conclusions, we will discuss some of the study's strengths and limitations. One limitation of this study is that, as required by the available CGSS survey data, measures of participation, neighboring, and sense of community (SOC) were necessarily just proxies of the fuller, more psychometrically sound and sensitive scales measuring those constructs in many Western studies. For example, the dichotomous measure of voting for Urban Neighborhood Committee/Rural Villager Committee

is an admittedly narrow operationalization of local political participation, although in the Chinese political context, it is about the only option other than running for local office. Further, our dependent variable is not intended to reflect broader forms of community participation (e.g., membership, meeting attendance, work, leadership) in a variety of community-based organizations (e.g., faith-based organizations, youth groups, public policy boards), which again are rare in China. Our measure of SOC is also necessarily limited to the one Likert-scaled survey item of knowing one's neighbors. In contrast, more commonly used SOC scales include many more items and multiple dimensions with widely tested reliability and validation (cf. Long & Perkins, 2003; Peterson, Speer & McMillan, 2008). Similarly, the single, Likert-scaled item measuring perceived neighboring (how much neighbors help each other or expect to be helped) is a fairly typical question, but a fuller neighboring scale of respondents' own behavior would have been preferable. Social capital was more fully measured using a multi-item, three-dimensional scale (which makes its insignificant relationship to political participation all the more noteworthy). However, it may still not be a close approximation of Western measures of social capital given contextual and cultural differences, language differences, and different items and subscales.

Also, CGSS data is self-reported, cross-sectional data, which prevents this study from drawing any causal inferences; for example, this study cannot examine whether a strong SOC is the *cause* of local political participation. It is likely that social cohesion and participation are mutually reinforcing, which we will expand on below. Furthermore, information derived from the CGSS may be less than perfectly representative as families and individuals who are hybrid across rural and urban lines are possibly excluded. Given that the rural-urban migration population is estimated to be 80 to 120 million in China (Cai, 2000), there may be many families not represented in this study as they might not be officially documented in any Urban Neighborhood Committee or Rural Villager Committee. Despite this caution, a strength of the study is that the large, nation-wide urban and rural sample is likely to be as representative a sample of residents as can be obtained in China at present. Access to such data has only become available in recent years and so surveys such as the CGSS provide one of the first reliable glimpses into the mentality and activities of Chinese citizens and communities.

*Local political participation, neighboring and sense of community.* Westerners may assume that Chinese are disengaged from political participation and that China's political structure and system impede such participation. However, the Urban Neighborhood Committee and Rural Villager Committee elections have attracted much notice in China and abroad in the past decade. The increased internal interest among urban and rural residents is due to these organizations' special position in the community, as well as their role in community service programs that affect people's daily life. In the context of China's substantial economic reforms but limited political reforms, Urban Neighborhood Committees and Rural Villager Committees have the decided advantages of being unusually autonomous and influencing local decisions and services people care about. As both kinds of community organizations have gained more power and resources, and worked with fewer constraints, Chinese citizens want to be more involved in working together with "their" organizations on common concerns, such as elderly care, job training and employment, health and environmental safety, to name a few. They consequently want to have more of a voice in the community political process and decision-making body. While these sentiments are easily articulated, actually making the concerted effort, and potentially taking the risk, to work collectively and effectively with one's neighbors and the community organization will take some time to develop throughout China.

This study documents the state of SOC and perceived neighboring behavior in contemporary urban and rural China and the strong tie between those community cognitions and local political participation. This suggests that informal community bonds in China, which have led to one end of the spectrum of community participation — in service delivery and related

activities — can also predict the more political or democratic end of participation — for decision-making. Indeed, there is a common concern that, whatever the state of SOC in general, it must be difficult for Chinese living in a time with tremendous transformation in the lives of individuals, families, and the society. With urbanization and associated labor migration, shifts toward a market economy and associated general social distrust, and massive relocation due to housing reconstruction and associated disrupted family and social ties, Chinese are assumed to be less connected to community, more disorganized at the community level, and thus unable or unprepared to participate in local political processes. This study indicates that this concern is not necessarily valid. Ordinary Chinese are willing to, and do, participate in community political processes, especially for those who have established connections with their neighbors and developed a SOC. We were only able to measure one dimension of SOC (i.e., community cognition), but that may be the most basic element of SOC as other dimensions (e.g., membership, shared emotional connection, influence, needs fulfillment: McMillian & Chavis, 1986; or mutual concerns and community values: Long & Perkins, 2003) depend on first knowing one's neighbors. From this point of view, our results suggest that community cognition is an important building block in developing local political participation and democracy.

This preliminary conclusion generates both optimism and concern about community participation in China. Just as informal community bonds may lead to participation, participation in turn may also increase future SOC and neighboring. Current community practices in China focus on social service provision, program development, and capacity building of community organizations (Urban Neighborhood Committees and Rural Villager Committees). It is expected that Chinese people through these programs and activities are gradually developing SOC, and increasing neighboring behaviors. However, whether community residents are community “citizens” in more than a formal sense rests in large part on the quality and infrastructure of local political participation. From this point of view, we should not overestimate the role of SOC and neighboring behavior. True, meaningful, equal, and effective political participation at the local community level ultimately depends on China's political reforms, including the development of various non-governmental organizations, an effective system of democratic institutions at all levels of government, a more orderly, more supervised, more regularized use of political power at the local level, and collaborations between the Communist Party, the government, and the citizens of China, which will likely take a long time.

*Social capital and participation in urban and rural communities.* In this study, in contrast to what Western literature suggests, social capital failed to predict Chinese people's local political participation. Reciprocity within one's social network was the only significant social capital predictor, and only among urbanites. Social capital has very different characteristics in rural and urban China. Rural residents in China have relatively weak social capital, especially reciprocity or instrumentality of mutual expectations; rural social capital is more psychological than structural in that rural Chinese have very trusting interpersonal relationships and clearly, they have a higher voter participation rate. In contrast, urban Chinese have more social capital in general and are better connected with a wider and broader social network; they meanwhile have a low local political participation rate. We expected to find urban-rural differences in SOC, neighboring, social capital and participation and we found them. But due to China's recent economic transformation and social upheavals, and related human migrations, we were not able to identify a clear basis to predict whether rural or urban levels would be higher. It appears that the higher SOC, neighboring, and trust in rural areas may explain much of the higher levels of local political participation in rural communities, outweighing the higher levels of membership and reciprocity, as well as any greater exposure to

Western democratic ideals, in urban China. The fact that urban areas are more densely populated simply makes them more anonymous and potentially alienating.

It might be too early to draw the conclusion that there is no general connection between social capital and local political participation in today's China. From a cultural perspective, in China, there might be little social capital based on Western definitions and measures emphasizing formal organizational participation. In post-1949 China, formal member organizations outside the Communist Party were few until the "emerging civil society" came in the late 70s. Social capital in China therefore is more about social ties, as described by Bian (1997, 2001). This type of social capital is more informal than formal, individual self-interest oriented than collective common good oriented, and economic than social, psychological or political. The idea that social capital should predict local political participation is based on a presumption that people with sufficient social capital are prepared for collective action. However, political participation, even at the local community level, requires more than a desire for collective action; it also demands an understanding of local political systems, an embrace of democracy, and collective efficacy in the community, in which contemporary Chinese history is surely deficient. Meanwhile, ordinary Chinese who experienced historical political turmoil would feel it difficult to transform their invisible social capital into visible local political participation. Social capital in China needs institutional infrastructure in order to transform into political participation, similar to the experience in India (Krishna, 2002) and many other developing countries.

It appears that living in closer, denser urban communities neither helps residents develop a stronger SOC and neighboring behaviors, nor facilitates local political participation, despite urban residents' greater exposure to Western ideas. In fact, local political participation is also affected by several individual factors. Older, married people with primary to high school education are more likely to participate in general. It is noteworthy that since the 1950s, the Chinese Communist Party has specifically recruited and mobilized poorer and less educated people for certain political movements. There is good reason to assume that such a pattern still prevails in the society, which may discourage those with higher education from participating. In rural villages, where rates of participation are highest, it is generally men with higher status who are more likely to vote (and run, for that matter) for Rural Villagers Committee, a scenario that has not changed for two decades since Burns documented political participation in rural China in 1988. This could be the residual of patriarchal familial tradition which has carried on for generations in China's rural villages. For women, as well as younger and single residents, until village power structures change, theories connecting SOC, neighboring, social capital and local political participation, a well-conceptualized community participation and development theory may remain just that — theoretical.

#### **Study 4 Conclusions**

This study finds that local political participation, SOC, neighboring behavior and social capital are related somewhat differently in China than elsewhere. Unlike Western studies, the concept of social capital derived from theories about networking, bonding or bridging at the membership-based, organizational level failed to explain local political participation in China. Instead, interpersonal relations such as knowing your neighbors, mutual support, and the reciprocity of helping each other are associated with local political participation. This is because social capital is primarily conceptualized as a characteristic of individuals and their networks, which has not been embedded collectively at a community or societal level in China.

#### **Summary of Study 4 Results:**

■ In rural China, older and married residents and those with a primary or high school education and higher perceived socio-economic status are more likely to participate.

- For urban residents, knowing one's neighbors is more important whereas in rural areas, neighboring behavior is more important, but both predict participation.
- Contrasts with Putnam et al? Informal ties (gemeinschaft) IS important for development of local democratic institutions!
- Social capital does not generally predict local political participation in China.
- **As expected, rural residents have more informal sense of community & neighboring (gemeinschaft), but they are also much more likely to participate formally in local politics**
- **But what happens when they move to a city to find work?**

### **Study 5: Social Capital and Community Participation by Migrant Workers in China**

- In China, rapid development has led to massive rural to urban migration.
- We use survey data from a convenience sample of 3,024 migrant workers in seven cities across China to offer predictors of three types of community participation:
  - amount of contact with community organizations,
  - frequency of help sought from community organizations, and
  - the rate of more formal participation in Urban Resident Committee (URC) meetings.

The world has become more global and more mobile, but community participation is still an important means of improving conditions and services at the local level, especially for populations, and in countries, with inadequate social services. Social capital is currently a widely popular, multidisciplinary construct for promoting formal and informal community participation, and for analyzing how it forms and can be made more effective and how it relates to various kinds of community social ties and networks (Perkins, Hughey & Speer, 2002). Ironically, social capital has been studied most often in developed democracies in the West where economic and physical capital and services are greater and human needs are less than in the developing world. Where social capital and community participation have been studied in less developed regions, results have been mixed (Campbell, Cornish & McLean, 2004; Mitchell & Bossert, 2007) perhaps due to unfavorable political conditions, cultural differences, or because social capital indicators conceived in the West may not translate directly to developing areas. Social capital and participation among migrant communities has rarely even been studied.

China offers a particularly relevant context for study, due to its immense size, rapid development, deep history, and complex legal policies. By some measures, internal migrants represent 7-8% of the total population, and social capital and community participation may offer ways to lessen the effects of the hukou system of residency restrictions, which generally limits opportunities for social mobility for migrants and their children and leads to continued cycles of inequality. We apply social capital theory to Chinese migrant workers and their families to predict three types of community participation. Several measures of social capital are employed to address the less consistent relationship between social capital and community participation in the developing world (Xu, Perkins & Chow, in press).

#### *The Chinese Context*

*Chinese Development/Migration.* An estimated 132 million Chinese people have migrated to cities from China's rural areas for jobs over the past two decades (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2008). These rural-to-urban migrant workers have greatly challenged China's pre-reform (pre-1978) social system that was a dual scheme with a rural-urban distinction. China's household registration system (*hukou*), introduced in 1958, created not only a rural-urban distinction but also two classes of people. The household registration system was a governmental mechanism aimed to control the movement of its citizens within the country (Chan & Zhang, 1999) and to distribute and redistribute its limited resources to urban residents.

Up until 2003, without proper documents and/or employment certificates, rural people could not reside in cities, and in some cases those who were caught “illegally” living in the cities were detained and repatriated to the countryside (Looney, 2003).

Because of the long history of urban-rural distinction, the household registration system also continued a bias that divided the population into multiple categories: state and collective, rural and urban residents, agricultural producers and industrial workers, and with recent changes, a new category has arisen, the traditional and the modernized. These classifications also have translated into a broad distinction in opportunities including employment, education, and healthcare, among others; urban families have greater access to university educations, medical care at modern urban hospitals and higher paying jobs while rural youth have under-funded schools, few chances for advanced education, and lack of a series of opportunities for upward mobility (Li, Zhang, Fang, Chen, et al., 2007).

The surge of rural migration that started in the early 1980s was prompted primarily by the infusion of foreign investment into China, due mainly to its cheap labor and China’s decision to open its doors to foreign investment. This prompted an enormous growth and transformation of its urban economy, greatly expanded the manufacturing sector and increased the need for laborers, especially cheap labor. At the same time, the “push” factors that brought people from rural areas into China’s cities included the increasing surplus of agricultural labor and the growing income gap between urban factory workers and rural farm workers (Fan, 2001; Meng, 2000). Even though factory workers are paid low wages by Western standards, their wages far surpass those of agricultural workers in China’s rural areas.

To address China’s need for factory workers and other laborers in its urban regions, in 1985, China’s central government issued the Ten Policies for Rural Economic Development, which encouraged population movement for economic means. Since this time, rural-to-urban migrant workers have been permitted to work in China’s growing towns and cities with “temporary residence permits” and without obtaining an urban status from the household registration system. The plan paid off. In 1978, about 28.27 million “permitted” migrants worked in the cities; three decades later, in 2008, the number had grown nearly fivefold, to 132 million (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2008).

With millions of rural migrants working and living in cities today, public disdain towards this group is growing and is exacerbated by the loss of employment and income insecurities brought on by China’s economic reforms and structural changes. Many city governments have made efforts to incorporate migrant workers into the urban communities, and improve their wellbeing and public acceptance; this is symbolized by the city of Chongqing’s recent declaration of the first Rural Migrant Worker’s Day (Xinhua News, 2007) aimed to celebrate their contributions to the city’s development. However, the long-term effects of the urban-rural distinction cannot be easily erased.

*Urban Resident Committees and participation.* The pre-reform China (pre-1989) did not lack grassroots participation. Both the government and the Chinese Communist Party had developed a series of mass mobilization and community organizing strategies and skills; grassroots participation was deeply rooted in several political movements in modern China (Liu & Liu, 2008). However, this type of participation is fundamentally different from what we understand through such concepts as democracy and civil society in Western societies. Urban communities in the pre-reform China were work-unit-based and generally did not encompass the psychological and social meanings usually carried on by a geographic community (Guan & Chow, 2003/2004; Ruf, 1998). Participation at the local level was simply the involvement in the political propagandas; the primary goal was to comply with government administration and ideology control (Liu & Liu, 2008). Therefore, the pre-reform grassroots participation does not translate directly to today’s community participation.

Community participation in urban China is closely connected to the development of urban neighborhood communities and the transformation of Urban Residents' Committees (Xu, 2007). The Urban Residents' Committee (the Committee hereafter) is a neighborhood-level, quasi-governmental organization that the central government has mandated in all cities, towns and rural areas across China. These committees are the most basic and lowest unit in the political hierarchy. According to the PRC Urban Residents' Committee Organizing Law (1989), these Committees, whose employees are civil servants, are autonomous, though they are often regarded as being whips and informants for the central government and its local officials, and of carrying out numerous administrative tasks.

China's current urban administration structure demands a strong community organization, one that both the government and residents can trust; they must maintain a certain authority in the community, and must have a long-term history of working with residents to meet their variety of needs. As such, the Committee has become a critical player in urban community's daily life. On one hand, these Committees function as the government's representatives in the community, working with local government officials and businesses, monitoring family-planning compliance, maintaining household registry rolls, and implementing and facilitating government-sponsored community programs (Derleth & Koldyk, 2004). On the other hand, over the past 15 years, as the central government has ushered in numerous social and community reforms, the Committees have been modifying their traditional role in the community and taking on new leadership roles and responsibilities; these residents committees are now responsible for developing and implementing a wide range of community programs for their residents, such as English and computer classes, intergenerational activities for children and the elderly, and community celebrations and events to enrich the community life for the elderly (Xu, Gao & Yan, 2005). Therefore, urban communities and the Committees now provide abundant participation opportunities for residents (with or without Hukou).

Community participation (or lack of) among rural-urban migrant workers has been increasingly recognized. Due to the nature of migration, rural-urban migrant workers have difficulties, and in fact lack the motivation, to participate in rural villages that they might leave behind permanently. Meanwhile, migrant workers have not fully engaged and integrated in urban communities where they work and live; marginalization both politically and socially, due to the long-term rural-urban distinction, creates barriers for migrant workers' participation (Huo, 2007; Wu & Ye, 2008). A recent survey states conducted in Wuhan (one of the biggest cities in central China) that only about 11% migrant workers have participated in urban communities; and about 72% had not participated in their villages ever since they started to work in cities (Yang & Zhu, 2007).

Barriers or factors that affect migrant workers' community participation have been identified at both individual level and policy/structural level, including level of education, economic situation, awareness of participation, unequal access to service and education, and rural bias and discrimination (Huo, 2007; Wang, 2008; Wang & Zhu, 2007; Yang & Zhu, 2007; Zhao, 2008). Among several individual factors, migrant workers' social capital has been discussed. Wu and Ye (2008) indicated that lack of community participation is primarily due to the characteristics of migrant workers' social capital: migrant workers rarely establish a network of social affiliations beyond the boundaries of one's village; while they bond tightly in the network, these networks may provide few resources for participation.

## Research Questions and Methods

### *Questions and Hypotheses*

Despite the obstacles to participation listed above, the research presented here indicates that some migrant workers do become more involved in their communities than others. After controlling for demographic variables, we attempt to predict what results in this higher level of



involvement. We predict community participation across three levels of involvement: 1) amount of contact with community organizations, 2) frequency of help sought from community organizations, and 3) the rate of more formal participation in Urban Resident Committee meetings. Urban Neighborhood committees offer one of the few avenues for direct participation in government; in addition, citizens deeming non-governmental organizations helpful to solving their problems, indicating a certain degree of social capital, may further contribute to this process. Based on prior theory, we expect social capital, sense of community, social support, place attachment, life satisfaction, and quality of life to be predictive of community participation.

*Data sources.* Respondents for this study were 3,024 people registered as rural residents who were working in seven cities across China in the fall of 2006. The survey is part of the China Ministry of Education's project "The Transition of China's Rural Labor to Urban Areas," which is directed by Dr. Xingping Guan, professor at Nankai University Department of Social Policy and Social Work.

Sampling involved four stages: (1) Seven large cities, as primary destinations for migrant workers, across different geographic areas of China were first selected: Beijing (capital), Shenyang (northeast), Tianjin (east), Kunming (southwest), Guangzhou (south), Weihai (east) and Shanghai (east central); all seven cities are either the capital of a province or a direct administrative city under the central government; (2) Using public information and labor statistics collected by city governments, specific administrative districts where the migrants were concentrated in each city were identified; two districts were then randomly selected; (3) From a list of companies in the districts, two to three companies were randomly selected; and (4) migrant workers were recruited at each company; local graduate students interviewed migrant workers recruited at each company. Researchers also recruited additional subjects directly from restaurants, hotels, markets, and small business stores.

#### *Measures*

The dependent variables in this study are three varying measures of community participation, as obtained from the following survey questions: 1. How much contact do you have with residential area community organizations? 2. When you encounter difficulties, do you seek Urban Resident Committees and other community organizations for help? 3. Have you participated in community organizations' meetings, such as the General Assembly (of the Urban Residents' Committee)? Each item was scored on a 4- or 5-point Likert-type scale, where higher values indicate greater community participation. The items were not combined into a single dependent variable because we wished to see whether different social capital factors predict different levels of community involvement. As seen in table 1, for all three dependent measures (means between 1.27 and 2.24), reported levels of participation were fairly low.

The independent variables are comprised of demographic variables and measures of social capital. Demographic variables include sex, age of parents, age of children, education, marital status, number of parents living in the home, number of children under the age of 12 living in the home, number of relatives over the age of 65 living in the city, current income, housing quality, total number of months spent in urban areas, number of months spent in the current city, and employment situation.

Additional independent variables measure social capital. The place attachment scale contains binary items assessing long-term employment and settlement intentions, while the life satisfaction scale combines Likert-type items assessing overall satisfaction with life and confidence in one's future. The occupational and environmental quality of life scales ask respondents to rate their current situations to those prior to moving to the city, on such things as work conditions and time for leisure. The place attachment ( $\alpha=.67$ ,  $n=2$  items), life satisfaction ( $\alpha=.60$ ,  $n=2$ ), occupational quality of life ( $\alpha=.56$ ,  $n=4$ ), and environmental quality of life ( $\alpha=.75$ ,  $n=7$ ) scales all have acceptably high alphas (Sapag et al., 2008).

In addition to the scales listed above, social capital measures include the level of neighborhood interaction, helpfulness of organizations and neighbors, trust in community members, the inclusion of neighbors as primary social actors and number of brothers and sisters and friends in the city. The absence of a single scale allows a comparison of relevant social capital predictors in China to those typically found in the West.

As seen in tables 9-10, males comprised 59% of the sample. The average level of education was 3.15, which corresponds to completion of junior high school (9 years of formal schooling). The average income was 1092 yuan/month (s.d. 747), with a range from 0 to 10000, while the average duration of residence in urban areas was 5.22 years (s.d. 5.22). The average number of children living in the home was 0.21, while the average number of elderly relatives was 0.16. The average level of neighborhood social capital (measured by the effectiveness of previous neighborhood interactions) was 2.21, which corresponds to a low amount neighbor helpfulness (compared to none, medium, or high), while the average level of neighbor(hood) support (the concentration of friends from one's neighborhood as opposed to from work or from one's home village or province) was .32, meaning that the average respondent reported only .32 neighbors as primary social actors out of a possible 4. The average level of organizational social capital was 1.58, which corresponds to low amounts of social capital (as compared to none, moderate, or high). Finally, the average level of friend support was 3.40, corresponding to a moderate amount of friends (as opposed to high, low, or none).

Table 9- Outcome Variables

	Mean	S.D.	Minimum	Maximum	N
DV1: Contact with community organizations	2.2387	.88332	1.00	5.00	3012
DV2: Frequency of help sought from community orgs	1.2811	.62023	1.00	4.00	2992
DV3: Rate of participation in general assembly meetings	1.2676	.63378	1.00	4.00	2044

Table 10 – Demographics of the sample (N=3024)

	Mean	S.D.	Minimum	Maximum	N
Male (%)	.6014	.48969	.00	1.00	2953
Age	30.66	10.718	15	71	2955
Married/Cohabitation (%)	.5368	.49873	.00	1.00	2949
Education	3.1490	1.03502	1.00	7.00	2932
Number of children under age 12 living with you	.2147	.50971	.00	4.00	2920
Number of relatives over age 65 living with you	.1570	.49125	.00	4.00	2975
Income/Month (yuan)	1068.4799	979.50725	.00	35000.00	2940
Duration of residence in cities	62.98	63.132	0	500	3007
Duration of residence in this city	46.13	51.796	0	500	3012
Full time employment (%)	.8304	.37531	.00	1.00	2990

### *Statistical methods*

Descriptive statistics, reported in tables 9 and 10, were used to understand the demography and representativeness of the sample. Factor analysis was used to examine the psychometric properties of the measures of expected predictors and generate appropriate scales. Hierarchical multiple regressions were used to predict participation, with results reported in Table 11. All of the demographic variables were first loaded separately into a regression, and the significant demographics for each dependent variable were then used for a subsequent analysis. Those that were significant for each variable were first loaded separately for each dependent variable (model 1); place attachment, life and community satisfaction, and occupational and environmental quality of life were added for model 2; and social capital, trust, and social support measures were added for model 3. For model 1, only significant demographic variables are reported, as few demographic variables were significant predictors for each dependent variable, while all additional variables for models 2 and 3 are included for each outcome variable.

### *Statistical Limitations*

The dependent variables were relatively skewed toward little participation, particularly for the third dependent variable, so the models below predict relatively exceptional behavior for that population. This lower amount of participation in organizations and Urban Neighborhood Resident Committees is not unexpected for migrant workers. Migrants lack the advantages that come with full urban residence permits and may therefore remain excluded from the advantages such participation would confer.

## Results

Results of hierarchical multiple regression using standardized scores, reported in Table 11, indicate that education, neighborhood social interaction, and organizational social capital were significantly predictive of all three types of community participation. Surprisingly, neighborhood support, family social support, friend social support, and life satisfaction failed to be predictive of any type of participation in models 2 and 3. Community satisfaction was predictive in model 2 and but dropped out in model 3 for all three dependent variables, and the same was true for environmental quality of life for DV2 and 3. Place attachment was slightly negatively predictive (model 3) for dependent variables 1 and 3, while neighbor social capital (model 3) was slightly positively predictive for DV2 and trust was slightly positively predictive (model 3) for DV1. Number of children was generally predictive only in model 1 for each of the three DVs, while duration of residence in current city was predictive only for DV1 (all three models) and occupational quality of life was predictive only for DV1 (models 2 and 3). Rates of participation declined as participation could be classified as more active, from contact with organizations to help seeking behaviors to actual participation in committee meetings.

Specifically, an increase in one standard deviation in neighborhood social interaction led to an increase of .10 to .18 SD increase in community participation, while an increase of 1 SD in organizational social capital had an increase of between .37 and .58 SD on participation. An increase in 1 SD of education, meanwhile, had an effect of between 0.06 and 0.13 SD on participation. Almost all of the other variables, significant or not, had weaker effects on participation levels. In addition, family and friend social support failed to have any significant effect on participation, which stands in contrast to existing literature emphasizing their importance in the urban Chinese migrant context (Lee, 1998). Finally, support for the overall fit of the models is found in the  $R^2$  reported in Table 4; model 3 predicts 34%, 42%, and 25% of the variance for outcomes 1-3, respectively.

Table 11. Regression of standardized dependent and independent variables

Cluster Variable	DV1			DV2			DV3		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>/Δ</b>
	β	β	r/β	β	β	r/β	β	β	r/β
<b>Demographics</b>	<b>0.059***</b>			<b>0.032***</b>			<b>.048***</b>		
Education	.221***	.197***	<b>.173/.117***</b>	.177***	.155***	<b>.135/.062**</b>	.206***	.179***	<b>.159/.126***</b>
Number of children under age 12 living with you	.065*	.067*	<b>.093/.024</b>	.051 <sup>a</sup>	.049	<b>.040/.006</b>	.015 <sup>b</sup>	.008	.031/-.015
Duration of residence (this city, in months)	.108***	.110***	<b>.137/.087***</b>	Not tested in this model			Not tested in this model		
Number of relatives over age 65 living with you	Not tested in this model			Not tested in this model			.084*	.075*	<b>.100/.068*</b>
<b>Attachment, satisfaction, quality of life</b>		<b>0.046***</b>			<b>0.028***</b>			<b>.045***</b>	
Place attachment		-.029	<b>.112/-.064*</b>	.021	<b>.090/-.017</b>		-.023	<b>.076/-.068*</b>	
Community satisfaction		.122***	<b>.099/.030</b>	.092**	<b>.091/.018</b>		.104**	<b>.069/.038</b>	
Life satisfaction		.025	<b>.125/.022</b>	.028	<b>.092/.017</b>		.035	<b>.125/.044</b>	
Occupational quality of life		.104**	<b>.183/.074*</b>	.028	<b>.125/-.003</b>		.056	<b>.141/.041</b>	
Environmental quality of life		.060	<b>.142/.001</b>	.077*	<b>.119/.014</b>		.115**	<b>.149/.050</b>	
<b>Social interaction, capital, &amp; support</b>			<b>0.239***</b>			<b>0.361***</b>			<b>.151***</b>
Neighborhood social interaction			<b>.304/.175***</b>			<b>.202/.097***</b>			<b>.190/.118***</b>
Organizational social capital			<b>.516/.425***</b>			<b>.627/.581***</b>			<b>.394/.365***</b>
Neighbor social capital			<b>.254/.037</b>			<b>.258/.056*</b>			<b>.175/.001</b>
Trust in community members			<b>.115/.060*</b>			<b>.081/-.027</b>			<b>.081/.028</b>
Neighborhood Support			<b>.126/.011</b>			<b>.073/.007</b>			<b>.084/.026</b>
Family Social Support			.026/.008			-.002/.004			-.028/-.039
Friend social support			<b>.170/-.006</b>			<b>.093/-.011</b>			<b>.084/-.015</b>
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.059	.104	.343	.032	.060	.422	.048	.094	.245
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	.056	.098	.335	.030	.054	.415	.045	.085	.231
<b>F (df, df)</b>	(3, 1152)	(8, 1147)	(15, 1140)	(2, 1154)	(7, 1149)	(14, 1142)	(3, 851)	(8, 846)	(15, 839)
	23.931***	16.671***	39.706***	19.178***	10.508***	59.466***	14.386***	10.914***	18.124***

Significant r's in bold (p<0.05). Significant levels for R<sup>2</sup> change and final betas and F: \*p<.05, \*\*<.01\*\*\*<.005; a = was significant at 0.01 level in the demographic regression but dropped out in model 1; b = was marginally significant (0.05 level) in the demographic regression but not significant in model 1.

## Discussion

Because of the specificity of social capital indicators in the regression analysis, an extended comparison of different sources of social capital, from family and friends, to neighbors and organizations, is helpful. Education, neighborhood social interaction, and organizational social capital were predictive of all three types of community participation. Consistent with previous research, education is the key to community participation; predominately low levels of education among rural-urban migrant workers may limit their understanding and awareness of community participation and affect their capacity to build useful social capital as well. Logically, higher levels of neighborhood activity and prior positive experiences with organizations also predict all three levels of community participation. Contact with and frequency of help sought from community organizations logically increases with demonstrated prior success and evidence of the positive effects of involvement, and residents may feel more reason to become involved if they perceive more interaction in their neighborhoods.

Surprisingly, family and friends support were not predictive of community participation. Lee (1998) has noted that many migrants locate jobs through friend networks, and Yip et al. (2007) have noted that villagers rely on loans from friends and relatives rather than through more formal channels when unexpected or large costs arise. However, such networks appear unrelated to community participation. This assertion is supported by the fact that in the present study, the primary source of friends was from a migrant's place of origin; such relationships may be relatively unhelpful for participating in less familiar, urban contexts (Wu and Ye, 2008). This dichotomy between friend/family support and neighbor support suggests that social capital in China may not be cumulative; instead, people may tend to rely on one source of support or another depending on the goal in question.

The relatively small number of migrants with prior success with organizations is likely different from the majority of migrants who, attempting to remain less conspicuous due to their ambiguous and unofficial housing status, may not be in a position to seek organizational support. However, though China has a relatively limited history with respect to encouraging civic participation, especially in the past 60 years, and may not yet have harnessed the potential advantages of structural social capital, this form of social capital is likely to become more important as the country becomes more open and perhaps more democratic (Guan & Chow, 2003/2004; Ruf, 1998; Liu & Liu, 2008).

A look at other significant variables may help explain why family and friend support were unimportant. For instance, number of children was mildly predictive of participation, particularly for DV1; thus, community organizations may offer a particular source of support for families with children. In addition, for DV3, number of elderly kin living in the household proved positively predictive of participation; migrants may participate more readily in UNCs if doing so improves the quality of life of their parents, especially as their parents are apt to spend more time in the more immediate neighborhood than either themselves or their children, as these committees are often responsible for planning neighborhood social activities, in which elderly persons would be more likely to participate due to their greater amount of time spent around the home (Xu, Gao & Yan, 2005).

Any positive effect of place attachment on participation was suppressed by its correlation with other predictors. Place attachment is something that generally takes a long time to develop, so it is not surprising that it would be a less important factor to migrants. This is confirmed by Ziersch et al. (2005), who found neighborhood attachment in China to be important to health for long-term residents, but unimportant for more recent residents. A bigger possible concern is that migrants' continued attachment to their prior homes and villages may inhibit the development of new ties and participation in their newly adopted cities. We did not have prior place attachment as a variable, however.

The generally insignificant coefficients for other measures of social capital, such as trust, are also supported by the mixed results and ambiguity of prior research. For instance, though Yip et al. (2007) found trust to be predictive of health in rural China, Wang et al. (2009) have found the opposite to be true. Such ambiguity suggests that for some types of social capital, those persons with little, as well as more social capital, both find reasons to engage in the community.

Finally, neither age nor financial capital was predictive of community participation, which stands in particularly strong contrast with observed relationships between social capital and health or education. It appears, then, that migrants have very material reasons for participating in the community and may do so for the benefit of others, such as their children or parents, rather than to enhance their own financial standing or ability to amass other resources.

The varied effects of social capital presented above further support arguments of the importance of place and the examination of context in social science research. The lives of migrants feature difficulties beyond the typical growing pains associated with the burgeoning Chinese economy. Though community participation theoretically offers a way to improve migrants' lives, some difficulties may be overcome only with great effort, regardless of social capital, if larger structural barriers are also present (Huo, 2007; Wang, 2008; Wang & Zhu, 2007; Yang & Zhu, 2007; Zhao, 2008). On the other hand, migrants' lives may be relatively better despite the dangers of migrant lifestyles, and these advantages may supersede gains that would be expected from additional social capital.

#### *Study strengths and limitations*

Significantly, the sample was a convenience sample, not a random one. Though care was taken to sample from multiple cities, because respondents were located through businesses, levels of community participation and social capital may have been affected by factors associated with the business as much as through the variables used in included models. Further, the study is cross sectional, which does not lend itself to causal explanations.

In addition, even though some of the survey items used measures and wording that have been validated in previous research, items measuring social capital failed to hold together in a primary scale, suggesting that these measures of social capital and other variables are inexact and perhaps operate differently in the present context. Further, as Ziersch et al. (2005) have suggested, most of these measures address only perceptions of neighborhood qualities and could be made more objective. On the other hand, this may allow for a great examination of active social participation indicators that have been found to be reliable in the West. In China, Xu & Chow (2006), for example, have pointed out that residents who lack other support systems and stand to benefit most from engagement and, perhaps, who are most in need of assistance, are more likely to be engaged in the community, and thus likely have less social capital than one would expect of those engaged in the community in the West.

#### Conclusion

This paper presents compelling arguments for reexamining the conceptualizations and operationalizations of social capital with respect to social context. In a country in which extensive informal networks can be most advantageous, and with a short and limited history of civic participation, traditional notions of social capital may be less helpful or even inappropriate in predicting participation. It is clear that the relationship between social capital and community participation extends to the Chinese context, but that it may require significant modification and further examination. In this paper, only some of the social capital variables that were expected to predict participation were indeed predictive. Logically, prior success with organizations tends to lead to predict greater participation, as does neighborhood social interaction. The relationship between social capital and participation for Chinese migrant workers may depend on more physically tangible evidence, then, rather than on the more psychological concepts like trust.

Such participation, while still practiced by relatively few migrant workers, appears to benefit different groups in different ways. General contact with community organizations may benefit children, while participation in more formal URNCs may facilitate better living conditions for workers' parents and other older relatives.

Beyond social capital, what it means to "participate" may be different in China than in the West. China, with at least a more recent history of state-sponsored social support, may be less dependent and less accustomed to relying on community for support. As the country develops, and this state support structure further deteriorates, one would expect community participation to increase. Not only will this help create feelings of connectedness in a country with more than a billion people, but it will also help meet growing needs for social support.

Finally, and most speculatively, community participation may offer a way to become more involved in basic democratic organizations in China. For permanent residents, URNCs in particular give residents a voice in determining their representation, and this early form of democratization may transform the country in the future. Though they remain less accessible for migrants, some nonetheless choose to become involved. As it stands, migration typically represents not a means to accumulate financial resources for selfish reasons, but rather as a way to support oneself and one's family, and participation in the community may represent an extension of these priorities. In addition, for migrants, participation in all types of community organizations might offer one way to pursue increased rights and services as housing policies continue to ease.

#### Implications for China

##### ■for labor and migration policy:

- Labor needs and migration problems could be addressed through legalizing & facilitating relocation and participation of migrants in urban communities

##### ■for community participation:

- Urban Neighborhood Committees and city planning & services would benefit from greater participation by migrants

##### ■for democratization:

- Most importantly, urban & rural resident committees represent the first opportunities for the development of real democratic institutions in China, but without broad & meaningful participation will be neither democratic nor effective

### **The situation in Europe?**

All of Western Europe is experiencing rapidly increased immigration

- To the extent that traditional, informal ties determine power & influence, immigrants will be shut out and remain disaffected & uncommitted to local communities & nations

- Opportunities & active recruitment for meaningful community participation by immigrants & refugees is critical (Goodkind & Foster-Fishman, 2002)

- Policies that put up barriers to full participation in society by immigrants may lead to apartheid-like conditions, worse problems of alienation, crime & potentially political violence

#### **Implications for Successful Immigration Outcomes in Europe**

Much recent research attention to immigrant acculturation & [individual] immigrant youth outcomes

- Britain (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000)

- Finland (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000)

- Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, UK, US (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006)

- Ireland & UK (Fong, 2008)
- Germany & Israel (Slonim-Nevo, Mirsky, Rubinstein & Nauck, 2009)
- Italia (Francescato; Migliorini, Rania & Cardinali; Cristini, Scacchi & Santinello)

But until recently, too little focus on policy and other macro-societal influences & host community responses to immigrants and immigration

■Recent Exceptions:

•Dec. 2008 Special Section of *American Journal of Community Psychology* on “The Other Side of Acculturation: Changes among Host Individuals and Communities in Their Adaptation to Immigrant Populations”

■Reconceptualizes acculturation by focusing more on ecological processes, historical contexts, and power inequities, including:

■Spain & U.S.: Domínguez & Maya-Jariego: Acculturation of host individuals: Immigrants and personal networks.

Other Recent Exceptions:

■Italy:

•Grillo, R. D., & Pratt, J. C. (Eds.). (2002). *The politics of recognizing difference: Multiculturalism Italian-style*. Ashgate.

•Prezza et al (2008). Territorial Sense of Community, Ethnic Prejudice and Political Orientation.

*Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*.

•Community practice in Italy: Martini Associati projects.

■Germany: Simon & Ruhs (2008). Identity and politicization among Turkish migrants in Germany: The role of dual identification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

■Spain, Belgium & Italy: García-Ramírez, Paloma, Suarez-Balcazar & Balcazar (in press)



## Figure 2: Comprehensive Model for Action Research on Immigrant Communities

Consequence or stage of empowerment/wellness:		Oppression (state)	Liberation/Empowerment (process)	Wellness (outcome)
Domain of Environment/Capital:	Political:	Oppressive political & economic structures in both origin & host societies (eg, profiling & other discriminatory employment, housing & education policies)		
	Economic:			
	Physical:			
Level of Analysis/ Intervention:	Socio-cultural:			
	Macro/ Collective/ Structural/ Community	oppressive influences of both original and host cultures	societal processes, structures & policies promoting organizing & participation by migrants & acceptance & inclusion by host communities	policies & other macro variables affecting migrant community wellness (eg, places & accommodations for religious & other cultural practices)
	Meso/ Organizational Group/ Relational	organizations that violate standards of social justice for immigrant workers & communities; setting-level influences on family & individual powerlessness	change in organizations affecting immigrants; migrant worker & client participation in org. decisions, esp. those affecting immigrants	Identify & promote organized opportunities & methods of reducing social threats to, & enhancing social wellness of, migrants
Micro/Individual Personal/ Psychological (emotional, cognitive, behavioral, spiritual):	oppressive migrant family structures & dynamics, helplessness, internalized oppression	human capital (skills, knowledge), behaviors, beliefs affecting immigrants; migrant social/political consciousness, activism, leadership, & self-efficacy	Strengths & social supports of immigrant families & cultures promoting personal wellness	

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