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**SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE
IN URBAN CHINA NEIGHBORHOODS:
A COMMUNITY MOVEMENT IN SHANGHAI**

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Social Capital and Collective Resistance in Urban China Neighborhoods: A Community Movement in Shanghai¹

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Abstract

Since the mid-1990s, China's urban grassroots governance has been shifted from a system based on state-run work-units to one based on neighborhoods which are led by local authorities. With this transformation, there has been more and more collective resistance against local authorities in China. This study addresses the dynamics of community movements, and it suggests that citizens in certain neighborhoods are more active and successful in collective resistance than others because of the social capital they wield. Both parties of the movement (local power holders and relatively powerless citizens) tend to make use of social capital as the main mean to mobilize support from state authorities and citizens, and to disintegrate the struggle of their opponents. Therefore, social capital is one important factor responsible for the emergence and consequences of urban China's ordinary collective resistance. Furthermore, social capital works in this way because of the authoritarian but disaggregated nature of the state. It is not only helpful for citizens to win their collective resistance and for civil space to grow up, but also able to promote the autonomy of the state.

Introduction

With the shift towards a more market-oriented economy, China's urban grassroots governance has moved from a system based on state-run work-units to one based on neighborhoods which are led by local authorities (Wu, 2002; Hua, 2000). Due to the recent urban reforms and a shift of focus to community-building, neighborhoods, instead of work units, are gradually becoming the main site where the interests of governmental organizations, market organizations and citizens are negotiated. Since neighborhoods are becoming the main channel by which the party-state implement its grassroots governance and control, the state and higher level governments attempt to keep neighborhoods stable. Concerned with their authority, high ranking government sectors hope their respective regulations to be performed

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at the grass roots level. Through the transformation of grassroots governance, local governments have been empowered to be involved in economic activities, and their main concerns are the ability of their localities to generate income and to implement their own development plans. Some market organizations, such as estate development companies, are interested in seeking profits in neighborhoods. Citizens have also been engaged in neighborhood politics because the rise and fall in the value of their housing, the quality of their life as well as their social status, which were previously dependent on their work units, are now closely related to the conditions of their neighborhoods.

Therefore, these actors may, to achieve their respective aims, cooperate, compete or conflict with one another. Due to decentralization and the relatively weak surveillance by high ranking governments, some local governmental organizations or market organizations often excessively exploit local resources, which is incompatible with residents' interests. Concurrently, with the changes in socio-political conditions, citizens have been able to react to local authorities very differently from how they did in the past. Actually, since the 1990s, a significant issue in grassroots politics has been the rise in civil resistance² against local authorities in both rural and urban China.

Many studies have already been conducted to address this issue. They suggest that, in contemporary China, important factors related to the rise in collective resistance include the openings in the "political opportunity structure" (O'Brien, 1996; Li & O'Brien, 1996), the existence of government intolerance (O'Brien, *ibid*; Cai, 2002), the emergence of organizers or cooperators (Li & O'Brien, *ibid*; Cai, *ibid*), the support of community members (O'Brien & Li, 1995; Cai, *ibid*; Read, 2003), the enhancement of rights consciousness (O'Brien, *ibid*; Pei, 2000) and the promotion of collective memories (Lee, 2000b).

However, up to now, the dynamics of collective resistance based on urban neighborhoods in the new context of urban governance are not yet clear. Firstly, the relevant research suggest that the openings in the "political opportunity structure" are mainly responsible for the rise of collective resistance because such structural changes facilitate the success of collective resistance (Tilly, 1978; Kitschelt, 1986; Tarrow, 1994; O'Brien, *ibid*; Li & O'Brien, *ibid*). However, they can not adequately explain why citizens in some neighborhoods are more active and successful in collective resistance than those in other neighborhoods who face the same problems, and the similar political and economical situations. Secondly, existing studies suggest that social networks are partly responsible for

² The aims of ordinary collective resistances are to "seek redress of routine instances of injustice for which the government and its agents are responsible" (Pei, 2000, p25). They focus on local economic or social issues, such as asking for compensation for resettlement, instead of macro, abstract, political concerns, such as democracy, freedom, so on and so forth. Therefore, they are, in nature, different from such political campaigns as the Red Guard Campaign in the period of Cultural Revolution, and such dissident movements as *Tiananmen* Movement in 1989 and *Falungong* Movement in 1999.

the mobilization of collective resistance (Snow, Louis and Sheldon, 1980; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; Dieter & Gern, 1993; Passy & Giugni, 2003). However, most of these studies focus on examining the role of horizontal networks between citizen protesters themselves without looking at the support they have received from high ranking governments. Therefore, it remains unknown why some citizen protesters can succeed in getting support from state authorities while others fail to do so. According to Oi (1989:8), in developing countries like China, formal channels for meaningful participation and interest articulation are weak, which cause citizens to pursue their interests by personal vertical networks between them and their superiors. This implies that some citizen protesters may also utilize the personal vertical networks between them and the high ranking officials who are close to them to facilitate civil resistance. Therefore, it is important for us to explore the role of such vertical networks in collective resistance. Thirdly, existing research on civil resistance in contemporary China focus on the collective action of single class, such as workers (Lee, 2000a; Lee, 2000b; Solinger, 2000; Cai, 2002), peasants (O'Brien & Li, 1995; Li & O'Brien, 1996; Ying, 2001; O'Brien, 2002), and they fail to explore the dynamics of cross-class citizens' collective resistance. As neighborhoods are becoming the base for the routine governance of the party-state, it is very valuable to study such collective action within neighborhoods in order to understand an important foundation of China's political order in the context of governance transformation.

Therefore, this article will address the following questions regarding civil resistance:

1. why are citizens in certain neighborhoods more active and successful in resorting to collective resistance than citizens in other neighborhoods who face similar problems?
2. how do they undertake collective action through horizontal and vertical ties with other people or organizations?
3. what strategies do different actors in the movement use in order to promote the odds against their opponents?

I will cover these knowledge gaps by representing a case study of a community movement against local authorities, which was formed by citizens in two connected Shanghai residential neighborhoods. Through this case study, I have found that residents in one neighborhood are more active and successful in collective resistance than the other because of the social capital they wield. In other words, residents in the neighborhood with more social capital tend more to adopt collective action when articulating their interests, and they are also more successful in collective resistance than others. Both parties of the movement (local power holders and relatively powerless residents) strive to make use of social capital as the main means to mobilize support from high ranking authorities and residents, and to disintegrate the struggle of their opponents. Therefore, I argue that social capital is one important factor responsible for the emergence and consequences of urban China's

community movements. Furthermore, social capital can work in this way because of the authoritarian but disaggregated nature of China state. It is not only helpful for citizens to win their collective resistance and for civil space to grow up, but also able to promote the autonomy of the state.

Social Capital: A Conceptual Tool for Interpreting Collective Action

It was after the beginning of the 1980s that the concept of “social capital” has been activated and introduced into contemporary academic discourse. The works of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam are main origin of social capital theory. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (p248). In other words, social capital refers to social networks and resources embedded in social networks. However, for Coleman (1988s), social capital is “a variety of different entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspects of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors ... within the structure” (p98), and the specific forms of social capital are obligations and expectations, information channels, norms and effective sanctions. Putnam (1993a, 2000) highlights the elements of trust and cooperation, and he regards social capital as networks and norms that enable participants to cooperate effectively to pursue their common interests and shared objectives. After them, the term became very popular in cotemporary disciplines such as sociology, economics and political science, etc.

Some social capital theorists also split social capital into bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital consists of strong ties connecting family members, close friends and neighbors, etc; Bridging social capital refers to weak ties between people or groups who are in similar economic and political positions, but in different locations, occupations or ethnic groups (Gittel and Vidal 1998, Putnam 2000). Therefore, both bonding and bridging social capital are based on horizontal ties. Furthermore, Michael Woolcock suggests that vertical links are also an important source of social capital. Concerned with poverty problem and economic development, Woolcock focuses on the alliances between the poor and the sympathetic and powerful people or organizations beyond the community, and he defines this type of vertical links as “linking” social capital, by which the poor can get resources and information from the latter (Woolcock, 1999, 2000). In his later study, Woolcock develops this concept as “norms of respect and networks of trusting relationships between people who are interacting across explicit, formal or institutionalized power or authority gradients in society” (Szreter1 & Woolcock, 2003, p6).

With the popularity of the concept of social capital in the academy, there also rise great confusion and debates on its nature and working way. Generally, these debates are around the definition and the analysis level of social capital (e.g. Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993a, 2000), the role of strong and weak ties (e.g. Coleman, *ibid*; Burt, 1992), the role of vertical links (e.g. Putnam, *ibid*; Woolcock, 1999,2000), the positive or negative consequences of social capital (Putnam, *ibid*; Portes & Landolt, 1996; Portes,1998), etc. Most importantly, the changing mechanism of social capital in certain communities remains unclear.

However, as far as the definition is concerned, as Winter (2000) pointed out, there are a lot of overlaps between the definitions of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam, and the main elements they emphasize are social networks, norms, trust and resources embedded in the interacting relations. Most researchers also agree that social networks, norms and trust are core components of social capital. Therefore, in this study, I will regard social capital as the networks, norms and trust generated by the interaction of individuals and communities with others, which facilitate actors' collective action. And I will, based on this empirical study, discuss other above-mentioned debates below.

The Method of This Research

To understand this movement, I conducted a large number of open-ended interviews and engaged in participant observation over six months in order to gain an understanding of the motivation and attitude of various parties in relations to this civil resistance. My interviewees consist of more than sixty people, including local officials, leaders of community organizations, activists and local residents.

Especially, since this community movement was relevant to two connected residential neighborhoods, I will highlight the different roles of these two neighborhoods in the community movement and explain the reasons.

A Story of the North Green Neighborhood: A Ten-year Community Movement

Green Neighborhood: a cross-class residential neighborhood³

Green Neighborhood⁴ is located in the W Street, N District, Shanghai City. It was developed at the end of the 1980s. The number of the residents is nearly 20,000, and the neighborhood is divided into four residential sub-neighborhoods. The composition of residents in every sub-neighborhood are very similar and are cross-class ones. Most employed residents are factory workers, different ranking government officials, entrepreneur managers, private businessmen,

³ See the map in the appendix

⁴ All names in this paper are pseudonym.

teachers from primary, middle, high schools and universities, so on and so forth.

The Z Neighborhood and the F Neighborhood, where community movement broke out, constitute the north part of Green Neighborhood. These two neighborhoods were built with some six-storey residential buildings and 12 twenty four-storey residential buildings around an 8000-square-meter unused land, which was planned to be built into public greenbelts and central community park⁵. Most part of the planned park is located in the F Neighborhood. These two sub-neighborhoods are administered by the Z Resident Committee and the F Resident Committee respectively.

Before the city renewal, most residential neighborhoods in Shanghai, which are called Shanghai-style lanes (*Shikumen Linong*), were outmoded and shabby. Residents had to live in the crowded and bad-aired conditions, and there were usually few green spaces or plants in their neighborhoods. With the city renewal, many residents in the centre districts of city were resettled to suburbs. They felt both happy and anxious. On one hand, they would have the chance to get more spacious housing and better environments provided by the government and estate developers; on the other hand, most of the new residential neighborhoods were faraway from the center area of city and were thus inconvenient for them to live in. Therefore, as a way of compensation, the government provided many new-built residential neighborhoods for resettled citizens to choose. Green Neighborhood was one of these neighborhoods. Before the opening and developing of N District, this place was in the countryside and quite isolated. However, due to the preference of green spaces, many settlers shifted from the downtown area chose to live in the Green Neighborhood.

As a newly-built residential neighborhood, Green Neighborhood was built with a lot of greenery, which made it very famous in the front half of the 1990s. Many residents were deeply proud of their neighborhood. However, with the opening and development of the N District, the land value of Green Neighborhood increased quickly due to its good geographical position. This caused a lot of local power holders to covet the land of the community park. Therefore, from 1993 to 2003, residents in the north Green Neighborhood undertook a community movement that lasted ten years to protect their community park.

The civil resistance against the local estate development company: the origin of the community movement

⁵ Since the end of the 1980s, Shanghai redesigned its urban development strategy and initiated the urban renewal. To reconstruct Shanghai into an internationally influential city, the government also introduced the global ecological discourse into the urban renewal and proclaimed the so-called “development with a harmonious relationship between human and nature” (*ren yu ziran de hexie fazhan*). Therefore, when planning new-built neighborhoods, community parks and green spaces were required to be on the central position of communities. For the Bamboo Garden, the criterion for greenery coverage was planned to be 10.16 percent and 1.28 square meters every resident. Since there were 12 high residential buildings and a lot of residents, a big community park was thus planned to meet the above criterion.

The Initial Resistance against the Estate Development Company

In the year of 1993, the Shanghai Estate Developing Company (hereafter the SEDC), which was the developer of Green Neighborhood, planned to occupy part of the unused land to build another 26-storey residential building for sale, by which they would make a big sum of money. By bribing an official in the Shanghai Municipal Urban Planning Bureau (hereafter the SMUPB), which is charge of approving all construction plans under the jurisdiction of Shanghai City, they got the construction license for this project. However, their construction disturbed Mrs Fang, who is a retired teacher living in the F Neighborhood. Because the newly-planned high building was in the east of Fang's house, she was afraid that this building would hide a lot of residential buildings including her apartment from sunshine. Furthermore, this building would occupy a lot of land that had been planned for the community park, which will be unfavorable to the community environments. Therefore, she was determined to resist this project.

At the beginning, Fang chose the normal channel and complained about this to the F Resident Committee. She expected the latter to represent residents' interests and to transfer her complain to the W Street office, who might negotiate with the SEDC. But it turned out that this way was "ineffective". Because the SEDC was affiliated to Shanghai Municipal Government, the W Street Office would not offend them. The result was that the W Street office ordered the resident committee to warn Fang not to make trouble. Fang got upset by this and decided to organize a collective appeals to higher ranking governments because this is usually the only relatively economical and effective channel available for powerless China citizens to argue against local power holders who invade citizens' interests⁶.

To mobilize other residents to participate in the collective resistance, Fang had to get trust and cooperation from them. However, before this event, there was little collective action in the neighborhood and residents didn't know each other. And there were few resident organizations except the residents committee either. Since the latter was unreliable for her to ask for support, she decided to enlist heads of resident groups, who might be able to help her to mobilize other residents to participate in the collective appeal⁷. Then, she attempted to get to know some heads of resident groups in the north Green Neighborhood and discussed with them about the problem that the community would confront, and she tried to rouse them to call on other residents to participate in collective appeals. From the outset, these heads of

⁶Usually, when appealing to government, if citizens make bigger troubles, their problems will be addressed quicker. For detailed analysis of the effect of individual appeals and collective appeals, see Ying (2000) and Cai (2002).

⁷ China's resident committees usually divide the households under their administration into resident groups and invite enthusiastic residents as heads of such groups, who are supposed to help the resident committees to administer residents. Due to this, heads of such group are usually quite familiar with and trusted by residents in their groups.

resident groups and residents did not trust her because they were not familiar with her. Fang assured them again and again that she would lead the future resistance, and that she would definitely not risk them into any possible punishment. Due to Fang's persistence and, especially, the common problem they would face, some resident gradually agreed to participate in collective resistance. In other words, the common requirement obliged residents into the initial collective action.

One day in September, 1993, Fang led 37 residents to go to the N District Government to complain of the SEDC's project. However, the guards at the government refused to let them into the office yard. Fortunately, Fang happened to see one of her former students, a high ranking official, standing near to the gate. She told him of their problem. Being respectful his former teacher, the official ordered the guards to let Fang into the government office to express their appeal. Therefore, by her individual vertical ties, Fang succeeded in accessing the N District Government.

After a few days, one of the leaders of the N District Government instructed that the SEDC's project should be suspended because of the residents' protest. This greatly inspired those resident protesters. More residents thus believed they also should participate in the struggle for their community interests. However, because the SEDC was affiliated to Shanghai Municipal Government, they first didn't treat the instruction of the N District Government seriously and went on their building project. Then, Fang and other residents appealed to the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress. Encouraged by Fang's initial success, more residents attended the collective appeal. One leader of the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress instructed that this matter should be investigated because it was related to the stability of the neighborhood.

Because of the intervention of the high ranking authorities, the SEDC began to handle the resistance seriously. Due to the importance of Fang in collective action, the SEDC attempted to prevent her from organizing collective resistance again. They believed that if they disintegrated the collective protest of residents, both the Municipal People's Congress and the district government would turn a blind eye on this project since the SEDC was affiliated to the municipal government. Therefore, on the one hand, they asked for help from the W Street Office. The latter then ordered the F Resident Committee to monitor Fang's action. On the other hand, the SEDC attempted to discredit Fang in the community. They pretended to negotiate secretly with Fang herself, promising that they would provide her with a new suite of house in another place if she stopped organizing resistance. Maybe due to the pressure of the resident committee and the temptation of new housing, Fang agreed to comprise with the SEDC. However, the latter spread the news of the negotiation among residents. Due to their originally vulnerable trust to Fang, the protest activists believed in the SEDC and were very angry at Fang's betrayal. Although Fang found cheated by the SEDC

and tried to organize resistance again, nobody would join her again. Therefore, Fang had to withdraw from the collective protest since then. Furthermore, a lot of activists in the F Neighborhood felt disappointed and would not engage in collective resistance any more. Therefore, the collapse of trust between movement activists in the F Neighborhood resulted in the absence of further collective action.

The Transference of Leadership of the Community Movement

Due to the above lesson, the rest of protest activists believed that a reliable and able leader was very important to the success of the resistance. In this circumstance, an activist of the Z Neighborhood recommended one of his neighbors, Mr. Tan, who was a factory cadre in his forties at that time, and he believed that Tan could be a good leader of their resistance. In the high building where this activist lived in, some residents were collectively resettled (*jiti dongqian*) from the same downtown area, and Tan was one of them.

Before the city renewal and their resettlement in the Green Neighborhood, these former neighbors had lived in one outmoded Shanghai-style lane. In such lanes, the living conditions were quite bad; most residents' houses were very small, and they had to share kitchens, toilets and other public facilities. Besides, young people and children had no their independent space at their houses, and they thus tended to go outside to play around with their peers. In some lanes, neighbors might fight against each other for limited public facilities and outside space; in other lanes, neighbors learned to cooperate with one another. Therefore, the bad living conditions and the common requirement obliged citizens to interact and cooperate with each other. As researchers pointed out, the more people connect and cooperate with one another, the more they will trust one another (Gittell & Vidal, 1998:15). In the latter situation, the long-term successful cooperation made people knew one another very well, and it thus gradually cultivated trust, emotion and dense networks between neighborhoods. Since Tan's former residential lane was just in such situation, people there knew one other very well, and they still had face-to-face interaction with one another frequently. The initial activists tended to recommend Tan because the latter took part in collective action for many times during the Cultural Revolution and had many experiences of struggle; that Tan also is good at making, and have a lot of, friends, including some government officials, who might be helpful in their future resistance.

Persuaded by these neighbor activists, Tan agreed to organize more protest activities and thus became the new leader of the community movement. To mobilize more participants, Tan called for residents to meet in the JZ Building where he lived

At the meeting, Tan disclosed what was being done by the SEDC and the influences of the project on the environments of the community. He called on residents to participate in

collective action to protect their environment rights. Because many residents living in the JZ Building were also the former neighbors of Tan, they trusted him and agreed to join him. These residents and some original activists had become loyal supporters of Tan during the later ten-year community movement. Furthermore, by the help of a high ranking government official, who was relative of a resident in the JZ Building, Tan got a copy of the original neighborhood construction plan of Green Neighborhood and found that this controversial building was not included in the original plan.

Collective Action and the Success of the Collective Resistance against the SEDC

Since Tan got the support from a lot of residents and found the evidence of illegality of this project, he decided to organise collective action. On the night of June 15, 1994, Tan and a number of activists demonstrated in the north Green Neighborhood. Meanwhile they used loudspeakers to notify other residents that they had got such evidence, and they also called on residents to destroy the foundation of the controversial building before it was completed. The result was that more than one thousand residents joined them and destroyed the foundation.

On the other hand, by the vertical link with his official friends, Tan got to know about the locations of the SMUPB offices and their work schedules. In the following days, he organized residents to flood several important sectors of the SMUPB, accusing the SEDC of its illegally approved project. Disturbed by residents' continuous collective appeals, the SMUPB could hardly work as usual. They had to promise to investigate this project as soon as possible.

Tan was also aware the importance of the mass media in dealing with such issues. In China, since the main mass media are affiliated to the party and government, they are also quite powerful. Some important media not only are able to broadcast ordinary matters, but also have the authority to investigate influential events and to report those things in their inner circulations (*neican*) which are only read by high rank officials and used to trigger their attention on important issues. Therefore, some governmental media can be regarded as a special type of administrative authority. Due to this, many people will appeal to the media whenever they suffer from some unfair matter. In Shanghai, *Jiefangribao* and *Wenhuibao* are the most politically influential newspapers. Tan thus appealed to some mass media such as *Wenhuibao* and succeeded in requesting them to broadcast on the illegal project of the SEDC.

Although the SEDC tried to discredit Tan as they did to Fang, Tan did not accept their request for private negotiation; neither did residents believe in the rumors about Tan. Under pressure from the residents and the mass media, the SMUPB issued an official order to repeal the construction license of the SEDC. The latter had to stop the project, and several of its leaders were arrested because of their bribery and corruption in performing this project.

Therefore, base on the initial “stock” of social capital between Tan and his former neighbors, the collective resistance against the SEDC was completely successful.

The growth up of the social networks and the norms for participation

Although the SEDC had retreated from the unused land, the plan to construct the community park was not implemented for a long time. Some local organizations, such as the primary school of Green Neighborhood and the W Street Office also tried to occupy part of the land for their use at all kinds of excuses. Due to their experience of resisting against the SEDC, Tan and the residents frustrated all such attempts. And they also appealed to the mass media of such situations again and again. Some influential Shanghai media such as *Wenhubao*, *Xinminwanbao*, *Laodongao*, *Shanghai Minzheng*, concurrently broadcasted on the circumstances of the north Green Neighborhood. The media warned the Green Neighborhood primary school, the W Street Office and other organizations that this piece of land was not a piece of “Meat of Tang Monk (*tangseng rou*)” to be shared by anyone. The media also urged the local government to carry out the plan to build the community park. Under the demands of the residents and the pressure from the media, the relevant N district government sectors finally completed the construction of the park, building a large field of grass and a bamboo forest as well. In the following two years, Green Neighborhood residents could thoroughly enjoy this field of grass, using it for all sorts of leisure activities and a place of exercise as well.

The community movement and its success greatly affected various social relationships between people in the north Green Neighborhood and contributed to the community solidarity. Firstly, it promoted the level of trust and more cooperation within the community. Because Tan exhibited his leadership and efficiency in a series of collective action, some residents trusted him very much. At numerous community activities, it could be seen that any viewpoints or directions articulated by Tan were accepted and followed without being questioned. On the other hand, since many initially strange residents were also involved in a series of collective action, they gradually became familiar with each other, which in turn promote the rise of trust and more cooperation on other matters between them. Secondly, the movement promoted the formation of the norm of community participation. The initial success of the movement greatly inspired movement activists and other residents, and they believed that they should hold a big celebration for it. When the construction team of the SEDC withdrew from the unused land, residents not only collectively set off a lot of firecrackers, but also hung up several huge slogans along some high buildings which claimed that green spaces should be protected in accordance with law, and the whole north part of Green Neighborhood was filled in happy atmosphere. The cooperation in organizing celebration and the happy atmosphere affected residents greatly. More residents thus believed

that this way of resistance was legally recognized and that the community affairs were under their control. This experience has also become the collective memory of the community and contributed to the future collective action. Through the various collective activities, the norm of community participation gradually took shape and be consolidated in the community. Many residents regarded participating in such collective action as individual duty. Thirdly, in the process of collective resistance, an informal networks of activists appeared within the community. Almost in every residential building, there emerged some activists which included engineers, teachers, white-collar workers, ordinary workers, house wives and retired people, etc. they were not only very active in the collective resistance, but also very willing to be under the leadership of Tan as well. These informal networks allowed Tan to easily mobilize residents for any collective action. Especially, in the JZ Building where Tan lived in, including his former neighbors, the number of activists was the most outstanding. When the time came that the government encouraged residents to elect their representatives to constitute estate owner committees⁸ in 1996, residents in the JZ Building actively established the Estate Owner Committee of JZ Building (hereafter JZBEOC) and elected Tan as its head. Finally, through a series of collective appeals, Tan succeeded in seeking support from relevant municipal government sectors and the mass media many times, and he henceforth managed to establish personal connections with some officials and journalists.

As Putnam pointed out, such social capital as trust, norms and networks have the inclination to strengthen themselves. One time of successful cooperation will construct links and trust which will in turn facilitate their future cooperation on other matters (Putnam, 1993b). A series of successful collective action led by Tan resulted in the emergence of new networks between activists, of vertical connections between Tan and some municipal officials and journalists, and the norm of community participation within the neighborhood. This reinforced trust and cooperation between resident protestors themselves, and between resident protestors and outside supporters. Therefore, these collective actions contributed to the enhancement of both Tan's individual social capital and collective social capital of the north part of Green Neighborhood, especially of the Z Neighborhood, which constituted the dynamic of their future cooperation.

⁸ Before the middle of the 1990s, it was through their work units that most China's urban residents got their housing, and they could only use their houses without ownership. Since then, the state began to perform the reform of house property and required citizens to buy the ownership of their housing from the state with relatively low price, or to buy houses from estate developers with high price, instead of asking for housing from work units as before. The government also encouraged residents who have got the ownership of their housing to elect their representatives to constitute estate owner committees, whose obligations are to deal with the affairs that are related to residents' estates and to oversee the work of housing management companies (Cao, 2000; Read, 2003). In the north Bamboo Garden, most or residents were willing to buy the ownership of their housing, because this park would bring better community environment, which not only contribute to the quality of their life, but also to raising the value of their housing.

The collective resistance against the local government: the highlight of movement

The Conflicts between Residents and the Local Government

At the end of 1997, the N District Government was to confiscate 1300 square meters land of the community park, and to build a recreation center for senior cadre there. They entrusted the W Street Office to be in charge of building the center. In contemporary China, senior cadres are a special social group. They can not only get preferential service from the present government because of their contribution to the communist revolution, but also be able to impose great influences to present officials by their links. Therefore, they are very influential in Chinese politics at all levels. To some present officials, being ingratiated with important senior cadres means great chances to be promoted in the near future. In this case, because senior cadres of the N district liked the geographical position of Green Neighborhood, the head of the N District Government therefore made this plan to cater for their requirement. The main reasons that the W Street Office participated in this project were as follows, firstly, it neither wanted nor dared to oppose the plan of the district government, which is its direct superior authority. Secondly, the N District Government planned to invest more than 10,000,000 Yuan on this project. The future constructed facilities would greatly contribute to the development achievements of the W Street Office because the location of this project was under its jurisdiction. In addition, the senior retired cadres were all very old, which implies that they would subsequently all pass away soon; and in the near future, the W Street Office would inherit the ownership of the new facilities, by which they could do other businesses.

Actually, there had already been an amusement center for old residents of the neighborhood within the community park. This amusement center occupied approximately a space of 135 square meters. The plan of the local government was to demolish the civil amusement center and to build their recreation center over it. This new center would cover 1300 square meters and be only for the use of senior cadre. Therefore, the Street Office then sent a construction team to destroy part of the park, and began to build the planned recreation center.

Residents were very upset by this project. First, this project will do harm to their environment because it occupies part of the community park. Since the Shanghai Municipal Government has regulated that any constructed parks are not allowed to be demolished under normal circumstances, the local government thus should not destroy the park at will. Secondly, this project will impair their estate property rights. Since 1996, Shanghai initiated the housing reform, and many residents got the ownership rights of their houses by paying for them. They believed that the park was part of the public amenities of their housing, and should be the property of all residents. Therefore, the local government had no authority to occupy the land

without legal confirmation. Furthermore, once the local government use the facilities for commercial purposes, many customers would be moving in and out of the residential neighborhood, which would bring much inconvenience to the lives of residents. Therefore, Tan and other activists then decided to launch resistance against the local government to protect the community park. At the beginning of the resistance, residents tried to complain of this project directly to the W Street Office. But the latter claimed that the land belongs to the state; the local government is the representative of the state, and it has the power to decide how to use this land. The street office also warned that those who dare to obstruct the project of the local government would be regarded as disturbing the social order and be punished. Tan and other activists recognized that the opponent they would confront this time was the powerful N District Government, and any rash actions would endanger themselves⁹. Therefore, they had to find good justification for whatever they would do. However, past successes in the community movement granted great confidence to Tan and other activists. Given the fact that this project was against the regulations regarding public greeneries and citizens' housing property rights, they believed it would be possible for them to succeed in the following resistance if their strategies were appropriate.

Most importantly, by the end of 1997, including the ZJBWC, the Green Neighborhood established a total of 9 estate owner committees, 6 of them were in the Z Neighborhood and well organized. To legitimize their protest and reduce the risk of being punished, Tan decided to utilize these formal resident organizations. Then, Tan visited important members of these estate owner committees one by one, and persuaded them to participate in the resistance. Since Tan himself was also the head of the ZJBWC and had experiences in leading successful collective action, these leaders of estate owner committees finally agreed to support him. Therefore, Tan drafted one appeal letter, and asked the leaders to endorse it with the stamps of the committees. Since then, an informal alliance was established among these estate owner committees, and the leaders often discussed their struggle strategies with each other and coordinated in collective action. In the initial stage of the resistance against the local government, Tan's opinions were treated with respect within such an alliance.

After that, Tan went to the *Wenhuibao* to complain of the local government is illegal project, and submitted the appeal letter. The latter investigated the matter quickly and

⁹In China's administering system, bypassing their immediate superiors, some local government officials tend to establish direct links with higher ranking authorities by informal networks. If they succeed in doing this, they can ignore the authority of their immediate superiors and thus have more independence. In the case of the N District, it has a special position in Shanghai city. Since its opening, its district government has been granted more power than other district governments. The central government instructed that events happened in the N District should be dealt with in its own way. Therefore, even some municipal governmental sectors, without the support of the top leaders of the municipal government, have no authority to give orders to the N District Government.

published the report: “Green Space of Green Neighborhood to be Demolished, Unrest amongst the Residents”. Because the matter might affect the stability of the area, some secondary leaders of Shanghai Municipal Government instructed the local government to suspend this project¹⁰.

Because of the protest of residents and the intervention from the municipal government, the W Street Office paused and required negotiating with the nine estate owner committees. Both parties had a meeting regarding the purpose of the project and the issues about the land areas. They also reached an agreement that the local government could continue the project; but this centre would be open to both senior cadre and old residents as well, and that the occupied land area should not exceed 650 square meters. However, because the agreed function of the facilities and the land area greatly differed from what the local government intended initially, the N District Government decided to overthrow the agreement. They also set a new construction plan, clearly wanting to build facilities only for the senior cadre, with an occupied area of 2000 square meters. The residents were uninformed of all these decisions by the local government until April 1999 when the construction team employed by the W Street Office went into the park. The residents then judged from the occupied land area and the depth of the dug-up holes that the project would exceed that delineated by the agreement. It was through private channels that Tan got to know that the local government was still planning to go ahead with its original plans. Residents felt deceived by the local government and were very angry. They not only appealed to the SMUPB but also reflected the treachery of local government to the media. The *Wenhuibao* hence started its investigation and the W Street Office had to release the real plan to its journalists. However, the Street Office refused to stop the construction. Tan realized that if they always resisted by formal means, the local government would just ignore them; but if they engaged in physical conflicts, the officials at the higher levels would treat the matter as one that threatened social stability, henceforth would force the local government to concede. Thus, on May 25, 1999, Tan led hundreds of residents in overturning walls around the construction site, and destroying the construction base without damaging the construction equipment. This forced the local government to stop its construction. What is important here is that Tan had carefully planned this drastic action. He had earlier revealed this plan to a public safety officer, who is his intimate friend, to seek for advice. The officer suggested that there should be no big problem to overturn the wall and to destroy the construction base if residents would not damage the equipment. The resident protests indeed followed this

¹⁰ Presently, the China's high ranking governments wish to eliminate any events that may affect the social stability from spreading. Once such events emerge, high ranking governments usually put blame on the local governments where the events happen, and require the local authorities to concede to disgruntled resident protesters as long as the events are not political ones. See Cai (2002)

boundary during their operation, which made the local government fail to launch the actually strong charge of their damaging state property.

After this incident, the W Street Office required resident committees to organize party members in the neighborhood into re-education, declaring that this collective action was destructive, just like the 1989 Tiananmen Event, and that Tan would be arrested because of his leading role. They also warned the family members of protest activists to stop their resistance against the government.

Under such circumstance, Tan and other activists felt that their situations were dangerous. Due to the special position of the N District in Shanghai, residents believed that only the top leaders of the municipal government could solve the problem and order the N district government to concede. Therefore, they decided to appeal directly to the Shanghai Municipal Government in order to draw attention of its top leaders. By consulting his official friends, Tan was also aware that, due to the memory of the Tiananmen Event, the dates surrounding 4th June were sensitive period of the Chinese politics; any instability happening on such dates would be treated with utmost consideration. Thus, if they went to the municipal government in the day time or any dates too close to 4th June, the impact would be too much, which would disgrace and infuriate the Shanghai Municipal Government. Therefore, the optimal time must be appropriate so that it would attract enough attention from the top leaders of Shanghai on the one hand, but not threaten their authorities on the other hand. Therefore, Tan specifically chose a sensitive time- the night of June 1, - for their collective action.

The Shanghai Municipal Government immediately informed the local government about this collective appeal. Regarding the time choice of the residents' appeal, the local government was very shocked and scared. Since this initial resistance was organized under the name of estate owner committees, the local government claimed that estate owner committees are becoming the "third force" threatening the authority of local governments and the rule of the party-state because they are well organized and based on important personal interests of citizens. And they concluded that estate owner committees may be more dangerous than *Falungong* organizations. However, the municipal government would not believe in their interpretation. Therefore, the local government did not dare to carry on with the construction plan immediately. But they were not willing to quit the project as well. Both parties of the movement went into stalemate.

In the movement, some municipal government sectors, such as the SMPB and the Shanghai Municipal Garden and Forestry Management Bureau (hereafter SMGFMB) tended to supported citizen protestors. Since the N District Government was granted special power, they usually tend to ignore the regulations of municipal governmental sectors, and the authority of the latter has been limited within the area of the N District. Therefore, some

municipal governmental sectors were quite unsatisfied with this and a little resentful of the local government of the N District. Through his official friends, Tan was aware of, and attempted to utilize, such gaps. Once a time, on the poster of the project, the local government obviously put its position in front of the SMGFMB. Tan took photos of this poster and sent them to the SMGFMB. The latter felt furious of this. After all, in the administrative system, its ranking was higher than the local government. This poster showed the local government's contempt to higher ranking authority. Therefore, The SMGFMB sent its officials immediately to the N District and protested to the local government. The local government had to change the poster later. Furthermore, in the movement, movement activists claimed that they undertook collective resistance against the local government to defend the authority of the regulations of high ranking governments. Sick of their regulations always broken and their authority impaired by the local government, the SMGFMB resolutely supported the position of resident protestors in this movement.

In Feb 2000, due to the effects of Tan's leading the long-term movement of protecting the park, one leader of the SMGFMB, who was a resident of the F Neighborhood and Tan's friend as well, suggested to award Tan the honor title of "the Guard of Greenery", which was granted to annually to several Shanghai residents who have contributed greatly to the protection of the greenery since 2000. After this, important TV stations and newspapers in Shanghai made coverage of Tan and the movement. The encouragement and support from the SMGFMB and the media to Tan greatly inspired him and other activists, and they also granted the resistance with more legitimacy.

The Struggle Strategies of the Local Government

Tan's influences made the local government believe that the resistance would subsequently be quelled once they succeeded in disintegrating people's trust and support to him. Therefore, the local government's countermeasures were directed mainly at Tan.

Firstly, the local government invited relevant municipal government officials to banquets and asked them to modify the construction plan of Green Neighborhood to adapt their project. By this, they tried to refute Tan's claim that their project was an illegal one. Secondly, they claimed that the opinion of Tan and his supporter was not representative of the majority of residents. To justify this, the local government incited the F Resident Committee to mobilize some residents to sign an appeal letter requesting continuance of this project. Furthermore, they also asked a delegate of the N District People's Congress living in the F Neighborhood to deliver the appeal letter to the Congress which suggested that the latter empowers the local government to restart the project. Thirdly, the local government sent presents to some journalists and asked them to broadcast on its own claim that its main aim

was to provide amusement facilities for old residents, and that the project was impeded by Tan and his supporters unreasonably. Fourthly, the leaders of the W Street Office also attempted to build personal ties with some activists in order to draw them to the side of the local government. Finally, the local government also attempted to disintegrate the residents' trust to Tan and to collapse the alliance of estate owner committees by fomenting discord between them and Tan. On the one hand, the F and the Z Resident committees proclaimed to the old residents that the W Street Office was going to build amusement center for them; but Tan resisted against the local government because he wanted to blackmail the W Street Office into allowing his friends to get the construction contract. On the other hand, due to the fact that Tan did not ask for agreement from most of other estate owner committees when he led in the collective action of destroying the construction site in May, 1999, the resident committees told the leaders of other estate owner committees that Tan and his partners had violated the law and would be charged to court. The secretary of the Z Resident Committee also, by her influence in the neighborhood and her personal connections with the important members of other estate owner committees, asked them not to participate in the collective resistance organized by Tan in the future.

These strategies turned out to be quite effective. Firstly, the appeal initiated by the resident committee gave the local government the excuse to claim that the majority of residents agreed to restore the project, and that the objection of Tan and his supporter was unreasonable. Secondly, due to the lure of the W Street Office, several former activists including the vice head of JZBEO, turned around to back the position of the local government. They not only criticized Tan's being radical but also released Tan's plan of action to the local government. Especially, when the local government was going to restart the construction in September, 2000, Tan asked two journalists in Shanghai TV Station to secretly investigate the matter and to announce the result on the news program. If that happened as planned, the local government would be imposed great pressure. However, an anonymous former activist released this plan to N District Government secretly. The latter then, by their personal link, requested the Propaganda Department of Shanghai Party Committee to prohibit the journalists from publishing the result of the investigation. This hit and frustrated Tan heavily. Hence after, he became more careful in organizing collective action. Thirdly, due to the propaganda of the resident committees and some media, some old residents believed in the local government, and were thus very resentful of Tan. Some relatives of the activists also violently opposed their further participation in the collective resistance. Most importantly, due to the influences and persuasion of the resident committees, most leaders of estate owner committees withdrew their assistance to him. When Tan held new collective appeals, they refused to endorse the appeal letters with the stamps of the committees.

The Countermeasures of Civil Leader

Disappointed and frustrated by the above events, Tan would not give in. He believed that once he lost the struggle, his reputation would collapse. More seriously, the collective resistance might be defined as illegal, and all his supporters, including protest activists and some journalists, might thus suffer because of their supporting to the collective resistance. Concerned with the norm of reciprocity, Tan believed that he should strive to win to repay his friends for their support; otherwise, he would loss their trust and his social capital. Fortunately, different from Fang, Tan had tens of loyal protest activists and some official friends who were always assisting him in collective action. Therefore, Tan decided to fight back.

He attempted to construct new resistance by informal ties. On the one hand, he attempted to discredit the W Street Office. Through the vertical networks with his official friends, Tan almost collected all the important local government documents regarding their above-mentioned plans. Then, he refuted the pretended claims of the W Street Office by providing journalists and residents with these evidence. By accusing the local government of violating relevant law of environment and property rights, Tan claimed that the W Street Office was not the representative of the state; that residents should follow the law but not the orders of local government. He also claimed that he organized the resistance not to challenge the state, but to help the state to defend the law; that the state authority should thus support objection to the illegal project of local government, which only represented the collective interests of the latter, but not the interests of the state and the people. As a result, some journalists who supported the local government before turned to the side of Tan and broadcasted the affair of Green Neighborhood, which disgraced the W Street Office very much. Some residents turned out to become unsatisfied with the local government and the residents committees. The residents in the JZ Building were especially resentful of the Z Resident Committee; some heads of resident groups in this building also became loyal supporters of Tan, causes the existing resident committee's failure to manage the JZ Building.

Furthermore, although other estate owner committees withdrew their support to Tan, he succeeded in calling for over 200 residents to sigh another appeal letter in September 2000 and organized some residents to collectively appeal to the Shanghai Municipal Government again. Thus, the SMUPB and the SMGFMB promised to deal with the affair seriously. Meanwhile, due to his connections with some journalists, Tan was introduced to the Shanghai Branch of the *Xinhua* News Agency (hereafter SBXNA) by them. In the next few days, SBXNA investigated the matter and believed in what Tan said. Then they notified municipal top leaders of Shanghai Municipal Government that they would report this affair to the central government if the municipal government did not treat residents' appeals seriously. The top

leaders were scared of this, and they entrusted the leaders of the SMUPB and the SMGFMB to deal with this matter. Then, both the top leaders of these two sectors went to the N District Government and had a meeting with its top leaders. Under such pressure, the top leaders of the N district Government had to sign an agreement to cancel the project. Up till now, Tan and others thought their collective resistance was finally successful.

The Local Government's Challenge to Municipal Authorities

Due to its above-mentioned privileges, although having signed the agreement with the municipal government sectors, the local government was not willing to carry it out. Instead, with the name of “party organization”, they incited an old party member, whose name is Lou and lived in the Z Neighborhood, to organize old residents to express support of the local government. Lou was a retired high school teacher. Because of her background of high education, she was respected and trusted by some old people in the neighborhood. Loyal to the calling of the “party organization”, the old party member mobilized more than 100 old residents to sign an appeal requesting the local government to continue the project. By this excuse, the top leader of the N District Government claimed that they should perform part of the project at least. Tan was awfully angry with the action of the old party member and the capriciousness of the local government. Therefore, he asked activists to mobilize 400 residents to sign another appeal letter against the local government. The SMGFMB was also very upset and strongly supported resident protestors.

In the following two years, the struggle continued in the similar ways as described above, and Tan was honored the title of “the Guard of Greenery” another two times by the SMGFMB. In 2003, due to the long-term collective resistance, the municipal government gave an order to rebuild the destroyed park, and resident protestors won the community movement in the end.

Through the above description, people may be impressed by the role of networks, trust and norms in the community movement. In the following section, I will generalize the function of social capital under the context of authoritarian China.

Social Capital as the Weapon of Powerless Residents and Local Power Holders

The differences between neighborhoods towards collective resistance

The community park is the focus of the movement, and it is between the F Neighborhood and the Z Neighborhood. However, residents in these two neighborhoods reacted quite differently to collective resistance. Actually, the larger part of the park is located in the F Neighborhood, and it is therefore more relevant to the interests of their residents. However, most protest

activists were residents in the Z Neighborhood, and their role was much more important than those in the F Neighborhood.

It was residents in the F Neighborhood who started the movement. At the beginning, they tried to use the normal channel, which, however, turned out to be ineffective. Although they initiated collective resistance later, the center and leadership of the movement was transferred to the Z Neighborhood after a short period. Because of the weak networks within the F Neighborhood, the trust and cooperation between their resident leaders and ordinary participants were unstable. Therefore, their resistance was easily disintegrated by the SEDC. However, while the SEDC and the local government also used the same strategy to disintegrate the collective resistance launched by residents in the Z Neighborhood, the effect was quite weak. The main reason was that the trust between resident leaders and ordinary participants was very strong because of the long-term connections between them. It is the stable informal networks within the Z Neighborhood made the big difference.

Secondly, another difference between the F and the Z Neighborhoods was that there were well-organized estate owner committees in the latter. In the initial stage of resistance against the local government, it was the appeal letter endorsed by the alliance of the residents' organizations that brought the high attention of the Shanghai Municipal Government and the mass media to the matter. Although the alliance went into pieces later, Tan could still make use of the name of the head of the JZBEOC to organize collective action. This formal network increased the legitimacy of collective resistance greatly. However, within the F Neighborhood, estate owner committees were not well established enough to organize any collective action.

Thirdly, compared to Fang, by his personal networks, Tan was also more successful in seeking support from municipal government officials and the mass media. As mentioned above, these vertical connections were very important to the success of the collective resistance.

Fourthly, due to the high density of interaction, there are strong norms of community participation in the F Neighborhood, and many residents believed that they had the obligation to attend collective action for the common interests.

In sum, compare to the F Neighborhood, there are higher density of social networks and stronger norms of community participation within the Z Neighborhood. This resulted in higher degree of solidarity, and more trust and cooperation inside it. This is a fundamental condition for mobilization. Furthermore, based on personal vertical networks, the Z Neighborhood could also get more support from high ranking authorities, such as municipal government sectors and the mass media. It was the above differences that made the residents in these two neighborhoods reacted differently towards the community movement.

The role of social capital in residents' construction of their resistance

In this movement, the local power holders and the powerless residents struggled against each other for nearly ten years. This study shows that, to the relatively powerless residents, social capital is the fundamental weapon for their collective resistance. Specifically, it can be used in the following manners.

To Mobilize both Resident Leaders and Participants

Former research highlights the importance of citizen leaders in collective action, and suggests that the main factors causing these leaders to emerge are their own self-interests, a sense of justice, community pressures and self-confidence (O'Brien & Li, 1995; Li & O'Brien, 1996; Cai, 2002). In this community movement, as some activists mentioned, without Tan's leadership, they could never succeed. However, one of the main reasons that Tan agreed to lead the collective resistance was because of his neighbors' recommendation and persuasion. To lead collective action, leaders usually have to spend a lot of time, energy, and even money. Sometimes, leaders may be arrested if high ranking governments believe that their resistance will lead to political or social instability. Fully aware of the possible cost or risk of leading collective resistance, Tan was not willing to disappoint his neighbors and friends. As elite in his community, Tan was also well aware of the fact that the community expected him to stand up for their common benefits. If he ignored this norm, or if he quitted the struggle half way, he would lose the trust of both his neighbors and people who supported residents' resistance outside.

Tan agreed to be the leader also because he had enormous confidence in successful resistance. However, his confidence was based on his present own social networks and his ability to build new social networks. With his connections with his neighbors, formal resident organizations, municipal government officials and journalists, he believed that he would be able to organize strong resistance against the local authorities. Specifically, in the resistance against the SEDC, Tan believed that, with the help of his old neighbors, he could mobilize a lot of participants. When confronted with the local government, he also had confidence that the former activists would go on to join him due to their trust on him and their prior successful cooperation with him. Furthermore, he had faith that, as head of JZBEOC, he could organize the resistance at the name of this resident organization, which would provide the resistance more legitimacy. One another important reason for Tan's willingness to lead the resistance against the local government was the support of mass media and some government officials. In the prior resistance, Tan succeeded in obtaining support of the mass media and some government officials. Through his long-term interactions, he established close connections with some of them. He also believed he could obtain support from them for the future resistance, which would be very helpful in their resistance against the local government.

Therefore, it is because of these kinds of networks, the norm of community participation and the support from outside that the leader would come out to lead the community movement. In other words, social capital is responsible for mobilizing civil leaders.

As far as the ordinary participants are concerned, as mentioned above, existing social networks and emerging norms for participation were very helpful in mobilizing residents into collective action. Specifically, in the initial stage of the community movement, one important reason for Fang to succeed in mobilizing some residents into the collective action was that she made use of the present community networks (heads of resident groups). When Tan acted as the leader of the community movement, he easily mobilized a lot of participants also through his personal connections with his old neighbors and the formal networks of estate owner committees. The past experiences of successful resistance against the SEDC, as social memory and historical resource, also enhanced movement activists' confidence. As mentioned above, the norms of community participation were also partly responsible for mobilizing ordinary participants. Furthermore, the support of the mass media and some high ranking officials greatly encouraged ordinary participants to participate and persist in the community movement.

To Get Support from State Authority

In current Chinese political field, formal channels for meaningful participation and interest articulation are still weak. Although many official rules and law are set up, they are not put into practice seriously. Accordingly, to those people who turn to the state authority for support, it is most important for them to access the state authority through personal ties. For example, in the case of this movement, according to law, residents can charge the local government of their violating the relevant restrictions or law. However, in reality, it is nearly impossible for them to succeed in charging government organizations on court even the latter obviously violate the law. By consulting lawyers, Tan was quite clear about this. He believed that it was impossible for them to win the litigation against the powerful N District Government. Furthermore, if they lost in the litigation, residents would be deprived of legitimacy to organize further resistance.

In this movement, the personal vertical networks between resident protesters and municipal government officials affected the community movement significantly. Firstly, they were used to approach the state authority. Fang's access to the district government, and Tan's access to the SBXNA and other municipal government sectors, were all because of the help of their student and friends.

Secondly, they were used to discover the boundaries of collective action. In contemporary China, although all levels of government have tolerance towards civil

resistance, there are certain boundaries that are not allowed to be crossed. Generally, one principle is that collective action will be suppressed once it is believed to lead to political or social instability. For example, in normal time, citizens are tolerated to appeal to the central government. But in some sensitive time, such as the National day, such action will not be tolerated because it will disgrace the state. This timing is a kind of boundary¹¹. Therefore, it is very important for resident protesters to be clear of such boundaries in order to make best use of their chances. However, such boundaries are usually not obvious in conditioned cases. In this movement, because of the advice from his official friends, Tan was very aware of the boundaries of government tolerance. Therefore, although resident protestors destroyed the construction site violently and appealed to the municipal government in sensitive time, they did not damage the construction equipment and did not disgrace the municipal government. Therefore, they were thus not specifically punished.

Thirdly, personal vertical networks were also used to enhance the legitimacy of civil resistance. In the community movement, Tan was awarded the honor title of “the Guard of Greenery” three times, which granted him with the legitimacy of organizing resistance. As some officials in the local government admitted, just because of this, they could not use force against Tan. However, in fact, it was one of the leaders of the SMGFMB, who was also a resident of the F Neighborhood and Tan’s friend, that suggested entitling Tan with this honor title.

Although the municipal government officials and journalists supported the civil resistance partly because of the sense of justice, the personal vertical networks between them and resident protesters were mainly responsible for their providing specific and constant help. Actually, most officials who provided specific help were friends or relatives of Tan and other protest activists, and some of them were residents of Green Neighborhood. They would not conflict with the powerful local government directly, but they supported activists in all kinds of ways. A good case in point was the above mentioned leader in the SMGFMB. This leader was Tan’s friend, and he gave full support to the collective resistance. Although he claimed that the SMGFMB honored Tan because Tan deserved it, the leader also admitted that they would not do so if he did not know Tan well. Therefore, private vertical networks are responsible for the support that citizen protestors get from high ranking authorities.

To Collect Information or Evidence against their Opponents

The above discussion displayed how the powerless residents constructed their resistance by utilizing social capital. However, social networks were also used to discredit the local authorities and to cripple their influences. Specifically, the protest residents used personal

¹¹ For a detailed analysis, see Cai (2002), Ying (2002).

vertical networks to collect information or evidence against local authorities. Due to Tan's personal vertical connections with some officials, the latter often released the decisions of the local government to him, which was very helpful for him in preparing timely countermeasures. By these vertical ties, he also succeeded in collecting the original construction plan and local government documents of its project. These stuff were vital for Tan to disclose the illegal nature of the projects of the SEDC and the local government; and they contributed a lot to his disintegrating the social capital of the latter, and to his competition against the local authorities of obtaining social capital. For example, in the resistance against the local government, the resident protesters realized the W Street Office was concerned with its reputation very much. Its head was relatively young and would have great promotion opportunity in near future. The release of its scandal to the mass media and residents would destroy their trust to the W Street Office, which would impose heavy pressure to its leaders. As mentioned above, Tan displayed a lot of evidence to show the illegality of the local government's project and their lies. The disclosure made some of the original supportive journalists of the W Street Office turn around to criticize it and to support citizen protesters. It also raised residents' antipathy to the W Street Office. In fact, due to this affair, the north Green Neighborhood was covered by disappointed emotion and mood to the W Street Office. Some residents indicated that they would never believe in the W Street Office any more. Therefore, the disclosure discredited the local authorities successfully and won citizen protesters more social capital. Furthermore, this also provided a strong basis for protesters to urge the municipal government to cancel these projects.

Among the above factors that affected the civil resistance, trust or cooperation among residents, or specifically, neighboring networks and the norm of community participation were "bonding social capital" that mobilized participants. The support of government officials and the mass media served as "bridging social capital" that facilitated movement activists to access state authority and relevant information. Therefore, these bonding social capital and bridging social capital were the main weapon that citizens protesters wielded to construct their resistance.

Social capital as the countermeasure of local power holders

To legitimize their projects, the local power holders also attempted to get support from the state authority and residents. Furthermore, due to the importance of social capital in the residents' construction of their resistance, the local authorities also tried all possible means to "slash" protesters' social capital. However, due to the illegal nature of their projects, the local power holders also preferred to use informal networks to strike back rather than formal channels.

To Get Support from Higher Ranking Authorities and Residents

As mentioned above, in this movement, the local government attempted to establish personal vertical networks with municipal government officials and journalists by treating them banquets and presenting them gifts¹². Through these informal connections, the local government asked some municipal government officials to modify the construction plan of the neighborhood. They also asked a delegate of the N District People's Congress to deliver the appeal letter to it. With their links with some familiar journalists, the local government also asked the latter and resident committees to praise them warmly for the achievements of the local government on newspaper and resident meetings. By this, they hoped to gain trust and support from state authorities and residents.

To Disintegrate Collective Resistance of Residents

Local power holders also used their networks to paralyze residents' resistance. The SEDC not only utilized the W Street Office and its subordinate network of the F Resident Committee to exert pressure on Fang, but also set a trap to disintegrate residents' trust to Fang.

The local government also used a similar strategy. However, their means were more diversified. By their connections with the Propaganda Department of Party Committee of Shanghai City, they requested the latter to prohibit journalists from broadcasting on their illegal project. By their subordinate networks of the resident committees, the local government succeeded in disintegrating the alliance of estate owner committees. These all hit protest activists and imposed great pressure on them.

To Negotiate with Some Higher Ranking Government Sectors

Especially, in the end, because of the pressure from the SBXNA and the municipal government sectors, the local government agreed to cease the project. However, by their connection with the old party member, the local government succeeded in mobilizing some old residents to express support for them. With this excuse, the local government repudiated their agreement. In other words, with support from these old residents, the local government tried to negotiate with the municipal government sectors.

Therefore, in the community movement, social capital was also the main weapon used by the local power holders.

¹² These are normal means for Chinese people to establish personal networks and to solve their problems. For a detailed analysis, see Yang (1994).

Discussion: Reflection on the Nature of Social Capital and Its Working Way under the Context of China's Authoritarian State

The nature of social capital and its working way

The study displays the vital role of social capital in the urban China's community movements. And it also provides a good case for us to reflect on the nature of social capital and its working way, which are related to present heated debates between researchers.

1. the origin and changing mechanism of social capital

Influential theorists have explored the origin of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993a, 1995) and its changing tendency at the level of nation (Putnam, 1995, 2000). However, its origin and specific changing mechanism at the individual and community level remains unclear. For example, these influential theorists believe that social capital originated from the individual interactions within the volunteer associations. However, in the community without volunteer associations, where does social capital come from? How does it emerge? Why does it emerge in one place and not in another? What is the relationship between collective action and social capital formation? Specifically, is collective action based on a prior "stock" of social capital, or does it lead to the emergence of social capital? If the latter, what accounts for collective action in the first place? What is the changing pattern of the "stock" of social capital?

This study shows that the success of the resistance of the Z Neighborhood was based on the initial "stock" of social capital within it—the ties between Tan and his former neighbors which originated from their common requirements in their past residential community. Furthermore, the successful collective action also strengthened the ties between Tan and his partners, and contributed to the rise of both individual and collective social capital, which provided a strong base for their collective resistance against the more powerful local government. Therefore, social capital comes from successful initial interaction and cooperation amongst citizens which are based on their common requirements and pressure.

Fang's case provides a reverse evidence for this point. Facing the common pressure that their green space would be occupied and the common requirement to resist the SEDC, Fang spared no efforts to seek for other residents' support. At the beginning, some residents in the F Neighborhood were obliged to cooperate with her. Therefore, the common pressure and requirement led to the initial cooperation. However, residents in this new residential

neighborhood live in their relatively big and independent flats, and they didn't know each other before. Therefore, their initial cooperation was lack of base of strong trust and networks among them. Without the "lubricating" of trust and norms, the cost to organize collective action is very high, and rational actors tend to be free-riders. When facing the pressure from the F Resident Committee and the lure of the SEDC, Fang counted the cost and interest for her to stick to collective action, and she tended to compromise with the SEDC. However, Fang's free-rider behavior collapsed the initial trust between her and other participants, which resulted in the failure of their initial collective action. The failure also made it impossible for them to cultivate trust and networks between them, and to launch collective action again. Thus, in the F Neighborhood, the cultivation of social capital and occurrence of collective action fell into a vicious circle.

Therefore, social capital is not the essential condition for collective action, and common requirements and pressure can also lead to initial cooperation and collective action. However, on the one hand, social capital can facilitate actors' success in collective action, as shown by Tan's case. On the other hand, successful collective actions contribute to the rise of social capital while failed ones result in the reduction of social capital. Therefore, the rise of social capital and the success of collective action sustain each other.

Except for successful initial interaction, civic associations are another source for social capital formation. Former researchers pointed out that volunteer associations cultivate social capital because they provide members opportunities for their face-to-face interactions (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993a, 1995). However, in this movement, compared to providing interaction opportunities for residents, the more important role that the main civic volunteer associations (the estate owner committees) played was that they granted the collective resistance of the Z Neighborhood more legitimacy. In China, there are only limited types of legally formal civic associations that deal with citizens' social affairs, and estate owner committee is one of them. At the beginning of the resistance against the local government, Tan organized the collective action at the name of the alliance of the estate owner committees. By virtue of the legally formal nature of this type of civic association, many initially confused residents and officials were convinced of the just nature of the collective resistance and thus tended to support the movement activists, which result in the great enhancement of the latter's social capital.

The sense of justice is another origin of social capital. In this movement, many municipal government officials and journalists supported and provided substantial help to movement activists. Actually, this event was not very relevant to their charge and interests.

They supported the movement activist not only because of their weak ties with the latter, but also due to their sense of justice of citizen's fight for their own environments. Therefore, the sense of justice is one of the sources of citizens' linking social capital, which is very important to their resistance against the local power holders.

Gifts and banquets are also an important source of social capital, especially under the context of China. Former researchers have found that, in China, some people may use the mean of presenting gifts or giving banquets to construct their personal networks (Yan,1993; Yang,1994). As mentioned above, in this movement, to win some important high ranging government officials and journals over, the local government also presented gifts and gave banquets to them, some of which thus supported the local government. Therefore, gifts and banquets also contributed to the formation of linking social capital of the local government.

Coleman (1988) has already identified that social capital can create social capital. However, human capital could also create social capital. Usually, if one has affluent experiences (high human capital) in certain affairs, he or she will be granted much trust by people who deal with such affairs. As mentioned above, in this movement, that the initial group of movement activists chose Tan to succeed in leading the movement was due to Tan's experiences of organizing collective actions. Since then, Tan also taught himself a lot of knowledge about the law of the estate and of the environment protection. Tan's affluent experiences and knowledge help him always win the debates against the SEDC and the local government. Because of this, participants in this movement attach more respect and trust to Tan, and were willing to follow his instructions in the movement. Another case at point is that Lou could organize old people to support the street office also because of her background of high education. Therefore, human capital is one of the origins of social capital.

2. the functions of different types of social ties

The functions of bonding, bridging and linking social capital are also controversial, and such debates are related to earlier debates on the functions of strong vs. weak ties, and on those of horizontal ties vs. vertical ties. As early as in the 1970s, Mark Granovetter published his influential *The Strength of Weak Ties*, and he argues that weak ties can be an information bridge and thus be an important resource for people to make mobility opportunities (Granovetter, 1973); similarly, Burt (1992) argues that the relative absence of ties between two actors constitutes the social capital of the third actor who is related to the both parties. In other words, they believe that, compared to strong ties, weak ties are more important in social capital formation. However, Coleman and Loury claim that strong ties or dense networks are a necessary condition for social capital to emerge (quoted in Portes, 1998, p6).

Based on such ideas, later researchers further identify the different functions of bonding social capital (strong ties) and bridging social capital (weak ties). Concerned with economic development, Putnam argues that bonding social capital provides crucial social and psychological support for poor community members, and furnishes local entrepreneurs with start-up financing, markets, and reliable labor. Bonding social capital is thus good for mobilizing solidarity within community. By contrast, bridging social capital is better for community member to seek after external assets and information (Putnam, 2000).

Another debate on the function of different types of social ties is about the role of vertical ties in social capital formation. Putnam believes that horizontal networks are most important source of social capital, and vertical networks, “no matter how dense and no matter how important to its participants, cannot sustain social trust and cooperation”(Putnam, 1993a:174). Carles Boix and Daniel N. Posner also claim that “vertical relationships, such as exist between patrons and clients, are characterized by dependence instead of mutuality, and are thus highly limited in their ability to generate norms of reciprocity, social trust or a shared sense of responsibility for collective endeavors”, and that vertically structured links have little social capital-building power (Boix & Posner, 1996, p4). However, other researchers argue that vertical networks are also an important source of social capital (Woolcock, 1999, 2000), and they claims that “local leaders and intermediaries able to facilitate connections between poor communities and external development assistance ... constitute an important source of linking social capital” (Grootaert & Narayan & Jones & Woolcock, 2003, p7).

However, the points of neither party of the above debates are always in the case. In this movement, as mentioned above, strong and horizontal ties between community members were the base for mobilizing both movement leaders and ordinary participants. However, the movement activists’ vertical ties with sympathetic municipal government officials and journalists, although relatively weak, enabled the former to get support from higher ranking authorities and the mass media, and to collect information or evidence against their opponents. This ensured activists to win the movement. Without the strong ties, movement activists couldn’t mobilize participant to put pressure on municipal government sectors; but without weak ties, they couldn’t access the state authority and might lose direction in the movement at all. Therefore, both strong and weak ties contribute a lot to actors’ collective action, and it is hard to say which one is more important.

As to the role of vertical ties, this study shows that some of the municipal government official and journalists supported movement activists because they were friends, neighbours, or relatives of the latter; others did so because of their sense of justice. Therefore, these types

of vertical ties were characterized by mutuality, and could generate social trust and “a shared sense of responsibility for collective endeavors”; and the personal vertical links of the local government with some municipal government officials, journalists, and old party members were also based on the trust and norms of reciprocity between them. Therefore, different from the opinions of Putnamists, vertical ties were also an important source for the social capital formation of both parties of the movement.

However, far from Woolcock’s optimistic view of linking social capital, in this movement, both the SEDC and the local government utilized their linking social capital (the networks between the street office and the resident committees) to put on restrictions on the movement leaders. Furthermore, the local government not only utilized linking social capital (its vertical ties with some municipal government officials) to control the influences of the citizens’ resistance, but also made use of link social capital (its vertical ties with the old party member) to be against the movement activists who fight for their environment rights and the common interests of most community members. In other words, linking social capital not only can facilitate the powerless to resist the local power holders beyond the community, but also be helpful for the latter to control the community.

Therefore, this study concludes that the functions of different types of social capital or social ties are not static, and they may change along different contexts.

3. the real nature and consequences of social capital

According to Bourdieu, social capital equals social networks and resource which can be utilized by actors to seek for their interests (Bourdieu, 1986). Coleman also claims that social capital is a kind of resource that facilitates actors to achieve their common goals (Coleman, 1988). Therefore, for both of them, just like financial and human capital, social capital can be utilized to achieve both good and bad goals; in other words, social capital itself is morally neither good nor bad. However, the later researchers disagree on the nature of social capital. On the one hand, Putnam attaches morality to social capital and argues that social capital is good stuff for community development and local governance (1993a, 1993b); following him, many researchers regard social capital as the key factor for economic development and political stability. On the other hand, other researchers have identified the downside of social capital: exclusion of outsiders, restrictions on individual freedom and business initiative, and downward leveling norms (Portes & Landolt, 1996; Portes, 1998); and Putnam(2000) himself, in his later studies, also pays attention to the possible negative consequences of social capital (Putnam, 2000). However, both parties of the debate ignore the possibility that social capital can be utilized by outside power holders to be against the public

within communities and against grass-roots democracy. As discussed above, in this movement, the vertical ties facilitated not only movement activists' collective action to seek for justice, but also local economic and political power holders' "conspiracies against the public".

Therefore, as far as its real nature is concerned, social capital, including bonding, bridging and linking social capital, is neutral. As shown above, social capital may lead to both positive and negative consequences, and its political implications will be further discussed below.

4. the analysis level of social capital

Social capital theorists also disagree on the analysis level of social capital. Some researchers regard social capital as an attribute of individual actors (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Portes & Landolt, 1996; Portes, 1998), while others consider it an attribute of communities (Putnam, 1993a, 1993b, 2000; Cox, 1997). Therefore, most of them insist on the dichotomy of analysis level ignoring the possible link between the individual social capital and collective social capital.

However, social capital can belong to both individuals and the collective, and individual social capital and collective social capital can sustain each other. Logically, if collective social capital is high, it means much interaction, dense networks and high trust between community members. In such an environment, new community members will be involved into dense interaction, which will bring them much individual contact with others and thus contribute to their individual social capital formation. Therefore, the level of individual social capital is also high. On the other hand, if one has many individual ties with other people, he or she may introduce his or her friends to each other, which will bring more interactions and higher trust within the community, and will lead to the rise of collective social capital.

This study also illustrates both of the opposing processes. In their resistance against the SEDC, because Fang was lack of strong individual ties and trust with other neighbors, the collective action failed in the end, which resulted in distrust and little stock of social capital within the F Neighborhood. However, in the case of the Z Neighborhood, the situation was on the contrary. For Tan, the strong ties between him and his former neighbors resulted in high degree of trust and cooperation to him, which constituted his initial individual social capital. By this, Tan succeeded in launching much collective action which in turn involved more and more supporters within and beyond the community, and thus resulted in stronger ties between

all participants. This resulted in the rise of both bonding and linking social capital of the F Neighborhood. Furthermore, the existence of linking social capital constructed by Tan individually instilled more confidence to ordinary participants, which contributed to the community solidarity within the Z Neighborhood. Because Tan could establish personal networks with municipal government officials and got the support for municipal government sectors, ordinary residents also granted more trust to him. In other words, the rise of linking social capital gave further impetus to the rise of bonding social capital. Thus, within the Z Neighborhood, there was a virtuous spiral between the formation of individual social capital and collective social capital. Therefore, the level of collective social capital highly relates to the level of individual social capital.

Authoritarian but disaggregated state as the institutional context for social capital to work

People may be confused by the working way of social capital in China's community movements. In democratic states, citizens can charge the local power holders to court and thus win the resistance by virtue of the illegal nature of the projects of the latter; in authoritarian states, local governments can just suppress citizens' resistance by their administrative power. In other words, in neither situation, do citizens or local government need to use the informal mean of social capital to deal with such local contradictions. However, as Woolcock (2001) suggests, the working of social capital is related to the institutional context within which it is embedded, especially the role of the state, which was ignored by most former researchers. Therefore, I argue that social capital works in the way identified above because of the authoritarian but disaggregated nature of China state. Furthermore, social capital can not only promote civil space to grow up, but also strengthen the autonomy of the state.

The complicated process of the community movement shows that the intervention of high ranking authorities had a great impact on the process and consequences of collective resistance. However, as former researcher suggest, although the Chinese regime is still an authoritarian state, it is not a monolithic. Due to the diverse concerns of different ranking governments, there is a lot conflict and gaps within the administrative system, which includes the contradictions between high ranking governments and local governments (*shang-xia ji maodun*), between one government sector and another at the same level (*tiao-tiao maodun*), between one local government and another at the same level (*kuai-kuai maodun*), between high ranking government sectors and local governments (*tiao-kuai maodun*), so on and so forth (Lieberthal & Lampton, 1992; Lu, 1997). In the time of reform, due to the redistribution of interests, there are more and more of such conflicts. Therefore, local government's interests

are not always identical to those of high ranking government sectors, especially in the situation when the former's projects are naturally illegal. In such situations, local power holders are not empowered to use force against citizens, and they have to make use of social capital to achieve their goals, as was showed in the case of this movement. On the other hand, just because of the authoritarian nature of the administrative system, the local government could control the quasi-official organizations of resident committees and old party members, and utilized these vertical links to serve its goals.

For the relatively powerless citizens, social capital is essential for them to organize collective resistance. Due to the authoritarian nature of the state, the legal system within it does not always work well. In normal situations, when power holders break law, they are seldom punished in accordance with law. Therefore, as mentioned above, in this movement, when facing the local power holders who invade the interests of citizens, it was hard for powerless citizens to solve their problems through formal channels or to win the charge against the former on court. That was the main reason that citizens need to utilize social capital to construct their resistance.

On the other hand, the disaggregated nature of the administrative system provides space for social capital to work. As mentioned above, there are a lot of gaps between different levels of government, and this "political structure opportunity" can be exploited by civil protesters to facilitate their collective resistance (O'Brien, 1996; Cai, 2002). And it is possible for the relatively powerless citizens to utilize the support of a part of the state in their resistance against local authorities which are another part of the state, as was shown in this movement.

However, all civil protesters cannot exploit such opportunities because the latter are usually hidden from ordinary citizens, or civil protestors do not know how to exploit such opportunities even they know the existence of the latter. Therefore, citizens need something like "bridge" to know the existence of, and access, such opportunities, which can be illustrated by the case of this movement. Actually, there were a lot of contradictions between some municipal government sectors and the local government of the N District. The former were quite unsatisfied to the privileges of the local government because the latter threatened their authority. Different from other citizen protesters, movement activists in the Z Neighborhood were quite aware of such gaps through their personal vertical ties with municipal government officials and some just and sympathetic local officials, and they could thus make full use of these opportunities. At the beginning, due to the privileges of the local government, municipal government sectors would not conflict with the local government publicly. However, Tan and other activists continuously reported not only the illegal nature of

the project of the local government but also its contemptuous attitudes towards the municipal government sectors to the SMUPB, the SMGFMB and the mass media. The latter felt insulted and thus chose to support resident protesters in all kinds of ways. The support from the municipal government officials not only contributed to the community solidarity within the Z Neighborhood, but also led to the withdrawal of the local government from its project in the end. Therefore, with the existence of the gaps within the administrative system, citizen protestors could utilize vertical networks to mobilize part of the state against another, through which were able to win their collective resistance.

Under the context of China, social capital is not only helpful for citizens to perform collective action and for civil space to grow up, but also able to promote the autonomy of the state. As discussed above, due to the disaggregation of administrative system, the state cannot superintend local governments efficiently. One of the consequences may be that local governments will engage in lawless activities at will, which will be harmful to the legitimacy and autonomy of the state. Due to the expanding threat of the inflating local authority to both the state authority and the powerless, the state may, by the linking social capital, utilize citizens to watch on the local governmental organizations, which will facilitate its imposing constraints on the latter and thus strengthen its autonomy.

Conclusion

In the present world including authoritarian states like China, collective resistances against local authorities are rising and falling, and this becomes an important issue in grassroots politics. This study, by the conceptual tool of social capital, focuses on examining the dynamics of China's ordinary collective resistance. It will contribute to our understanding of collective resistance and China politics on the one hand, and provide a good case for us to reflect on the nature and working way of social capital on the other.

First, this study discloses the dynamics of cross-class collective resistances, which are quite different from single-class ones. It shows that, in the cross-class residential neighborhoods, social capital is one main factor that contributes to the community solidarity and brings people together for cross-class collective action. In other words, it is social capital that is mainly responsible for the emergence and consequences of cross-class collective action within neighborhoods. Before the Mid-1980s, the basic unit of China's grassroots governance was class-based *Danwei*. Because citizens were organized by work units, their collective action were thus based on work units, which has been extensively documented (Lee, 2000a; Lee, 2000b; Solinger, 2000; Cai, 2002). However, with the disintegration of *Danwei* system and the rise of community-building, both the state and citizens attach great importance to neighborhoods, and more and more collective action are based on cross-class neighborhoods.

Therefore, the examination of the link between social capital and cross-class collective action based on neighborhoods will better promote our understanding of an important foundation of present China's political order.

Secondly, except for examining the role of bonding social capital or horizontal networks between citizen protestors themselves, this study also highlights the nature and role of linking social capital or vertical ties. Therefore, this study discloses the nature of the social capital and its working way in China's collective resistance. It implies that social capital may originate from the common requirements and pressure of communities, volunteer associations, the sense of justice, gifts and banquets, and human capital etc. Both weak ties and strong ties are very important to collective action, and are main components of people's social capital. All types of social capital are neutral, and they can be utilized by both the powerless inside the community and the powerful beyond the community, and thus may be helpful or harmful to community common interests depending on the context. Social capital can belong to both individuals and the collective, and the level of collective social capital highly relates to the level of individual social capital. Furthermore, this study also illustrates the changing pattern of the "stock" of social capital within the community, which is related to the changes of the situations of collective action. This extended examination of the role of social capital will contribute to our understanding of both the dynamics of urban civil resistance and the working way of social capital.

Thirdly, this study also identifies the present institutional context where social capital is embedded, which was ignored by most researchers. It suggests that social capital works in the above ways because of the authoritarian but disaggregated nature of China state. Specifically, it discloses the institutional necessity and feasibility for powerless citizens and local power holders to adopt the informal mean of social capital. As mentioned above, the authoritarian nature of the China state makes it necessary for powerless citizens to make use of informal ties on the one hand, and makes it feasible for local power holders to utilize their vertical links on the other. Furthermore, the existence of gaps within the administrative system makes it feasible for powerless citizens to make use of informal ties to mobilize part of the state to support them in resisting against another part of the state on the one hand, and makes it necessary for local power holders to utilize their informal links on the other.

Fourthly, this study also implies the possible political consequences of social capital. As discussed above, it can either contribute to the growth up of civil space, or be utilized to repress the collective resistance, or be made use of to bridge high ranking governments and relatively powerless citizens and promote the autonomy of the state.

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