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Social cohesion and neighbourhood governance in contemporary urban China

by

Ying Wang

Thesis for the degree of <u>Doctor of Philosophy</u>

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<u>Abstract</u>

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The last three decades have witnessed significant socio-structural transformations in urban neighbourhoods, where the observations of liberated communities and diminishing neighbourhood cohesion seem contradictory to the preoccupations of geographically concentrated social policies and the rise of neighbourhood governance. Given this geographical puzzle, it is worth re-examining the social and institutional processes that generate and sustain neighbourhood cohesion in otherwise liberated urban communities, including questions of where and how new forms of neighbourhood governance fit into debates about social cohesion.

In this study, these questions are addressed via a case study of Nanjing, China. Here, the interplay between 'actually existing neoliberalism' (Brenner and Theodore, 2012) and 'resilient authoritarianism' (Chung, 2017) provides new opportunities to revisit the cohesion debate in an institutional environment different from where it initially emerged (North America and Western Europe, for the most part). Drawing on fieldwork in 32 urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing, including a survey of almost 1000 residents and interviews with 60 key informants, this research aims to explore the geographies of urban communities and answer the following questions: how neighbourhood cohesion is distributed in different neighbourhoods, what the major forms of governance arrangement are, and how neighbourhood governance arrangements and neighbourhood social cohesion are related in urban Nanjing.

From these considerations, when filtered through social cohesion theories and current debates of neighbouring, neighbourliness and neighbourhood governance in urban China, three general points emerge. First, rather than demonstrating assertions of 'community liberated' (Wellman, 2001) or a 'crisis of social cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001), the empirical evidence showed multiple development trajectories of urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing, which depended on the type of neighbourhood and the dimension of cohesion. Second, neighbourhood governance also worked out differently in different neighbourhoods and provided multiple neighbourhood organisational environments to cultivate, sustain or damage neighbourly behaviours and neighbourhood sentiment. Third, a plurality of governance-cohesion relationships was found, indicating that building cohesive neighbourhoods was not only a matter of key stakeholders but was also influenced by the power relationships between these actors, which were deeply embedded in local social and institutional environments. These findings provided new knowledge about the social and political geographies of urban communities. They should supplement empirical research on changing levels of neighbourhood cohesion and multiple forms of governance in urban China—which go beyond debates about whether transitional China fits into frameworks of neoliberalism or authoritarianism. This study also provided further contributions to more general urban theories of social integration and the micro-level mechanisms involved.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

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Definitions and Abbreviations

AHR   Assembly of Homeowners' Representatives

ARR   Assembly of Residents' Representatives

CPC   Communist Party of China

DC   Deliberative Council

HA   Homeowners' Assembly

HOA   Homeowners' Association

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

PMC   Property Management Company

RC   Residents' Committee

SMA   Self-Management Association

SO   Street Office

SOE   State-owned enterprise

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The liberation of communities versus the rise of neighbourhood governance: a geographical puzzle

1.1.1 Liberated communities and the crisis of neighbourhood cohesion

The last four decades have seen tremendous social and economic changes, which have triggered the emergence of debates on social cohesion. Recent developments in transportation and information technology have disrupted traditional work-residence links and given rise to fragmented, fluid, and spatially dispersed social relationships, which some argue have been 'liberated' from geography (Fernandez, 1993; Urry, 2010). Detrimental effects have been observed of this 'liberation': traditional social bonding mechanisms based on kinship, family, and community values have been interrupted, resulting in a 'great disruption' of social norms and social orders and a 'new crisis' of social cohesion (Fukuyama, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Flint and Robinson, 2012).

More specifically, this kind of crisis is a crisis of territory-based social cohesion, particularly neighbourhood cohesion. Rather than having a fixed connection to their next-door neighbours, nowadays people are often embedded in more fragile, open, and dispersed networks that transcend the geographical barriers of their neighbourhoods (Wellman, 1979, 1996). Wellman terms this decline of neighbourly connections as 'community liberated' (1979, 1996), where densely knit, tightly bounded solidarities are replaced by sparsely knit, spatially dispersed, and disposable relationships that no longer contribute to local forms of cohesion (Fischer, 1982; Andreotti, 2014). This replacement can be observed in cities across most parts of the world, from Europe and North America (see e.g. Putnam, 2000; Hulse and Stone, 2007; Sander and Putnam, 2010), to Australia and East Asia (see e.g. Adams and Hess, 2001; Forrest and Yip, 2007; Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012).

The 'new crisis' of neighbourhood cohesion can be understood from a variety of perspectives. First, the sweeping influence of economic globalisation, characterised by the free flow of goods, services, knowledge, and people, has created new production relationships that transcend local boundaries (Castells, 1997; Lockwood, 1999). Such a process, argues Bauman (1998), has entirely transformed the nature of work-residence links. As a consequence, Chaskin (1997) comments that local communities no longer perform major social functions (e.g. production and distribution), and are granted with only 'limited liabilities' based on contingent attachment, instrumental values

and self-interest. At the same time, advancements in transportation trigger high rates of spatial mobility (Urry, 2010). Mobility and migration, claim Kearns and Forrest (2000), are one of the main causes of the 'social malaise'. Empirical studies indicate that when individuals and families become more mobile, they are more likely to become inward-looking and less likely to invest in territorial forms of social cohesion that cannot move with them (Sampson, 1988; Guest and Wierzbicki, 1999; Rofe, 2003). Furthermore, a majority of scholars regard the spread of information technology and associated changes in lifestyle (such as individualised leisure time) as the 'ringleaders' of the recent decline of neighbourhood cohesion (Putnam, 2000; Putnam, Feldstein and Cohen, 2004). Despite the rise of weak online ties, they contend that the internet shifts individuals from socialising outside the home to home-based activities, which are closely associated with the apparent decline in neighbourly interactions, voluntary participation and neighbourhood attachment (Nie, 2001; Forrest and Yip, 2007).

1.1.2 The rise of neighbourhood governance

The last four decades have also seen a significant restructuring of urban governance across most parts of the world. In the transition from 'government' to 'governance' (Jessop, 1998), the neighbourhood is believed to be part of the mainstream government agenda (Chaskin, 1998; Meegan and Mitchell, 2001; Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008; Somerville, Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2009; Wills, 2016a). It develops from the objective of receiving top-down governmental interventions into a 'calculable space', where social policies are territorialised and community interests are collectively organised to cultivate initiatives which facilitate bottom-up decision making and self-regulation (Raco and Flint, 2001; Durose and Rees, 2012; Cochrane, 2016). The neighbourhood also opens up new avenues of urban governance that are modelled on both moral relations among responsible citizens and contractual relations between social and political agencies (Rose, 1996; Harvey, 2005). New identities, as Rose (1999) comments, have thus been bestowed on the neighbourhood: it can no longer be viewed simply through the rubric of 'civil society', nor seen as the natural home of 'traditional moral values', but must instead be recognised as a component within flexible new techniques of governance.

The revived interest in neighbourhoods as 'governing spaces' (Raco and Flint, 2001, p.591) has transformed it into an 'institutional laboratory' (Fyfe, 2005, p. 537) for diverse routes towards citizens' engagement and service improvement (Rose, 1996; Giddens, 1998). In the UK, for instance, the neighbourhood has become one of the key targets of public policy as a consequence of localism and the 'double devolution'—the transfer of power 'not just to the Town Hall but beyond, to neighbourhoods and individual citizens' (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Office, 2005). The repositioning of the neighbourhood in urban governance was a crucial

part of New Labour's welfare reform and anti-exclusion projects in the 2000s (Fyfe, 2005; Durose and Rees, 2012). A similar agenda was followed by the Conservatives under the banner of the 'Big Society' in the 2010s. This agenda granted local levels of government and the third sector more power, resources and responsibilities to better develop customised and cost-effective services, and cultivate local social networks, moral norms and civic responsibility that could enhance the overall cohesiveness of society (Sage, 2012). Parallel with the UK experience, the Chinese government has also initiated neighbourhood-centred reforms since the 2000s. The state 'reorganised' itself and established new governmentality through housing monetisation policies, the national community building (*shequ jianshe*) programme and various local policy innovations (Bray, 2006a; Shieh and Friedmann, 2008; Heberer and Göbel, 2011). These neighbourhood-centred programs were designed to professionalise social services and cultivate self-governance (Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2000), which, according to Webster (2003) and Wu (2005), transform the neighbourhood into a spatial unit of collective consumption maintained by contractual relationships. At the same time, others argue that these programmes also work towards rescaling the state's soft control strategies and enhancing state legitimacy in the emergence of the civil society (Wang, 2005; Ohmer, 2007; Shieh, 2011). Consequently, neighbourhoods have been re-demarcated and restructured as new governing units in urban China (Yang, 2007), which are so highly institutionalised that are even called 'an entire new level of local government' (Bray, 2006, p.546).

Regardless of its diverse aims and practices, the neighbourhood approach to urban governance restructuring rests on the premise that people are most likely to get involved in decision making and service delivery at the most local level where social connectedness and cohesiveness are geographically concentrated within the neighbourhood. It is through the neighbourhood approach to governance that diverse local needs are most likely to be identified and satisfied (Somerville, 2005; Andreotti, Mingione and Polizzi, 2012), and the governance process is more likely to be responsive and held accountable to citizens (Meegan and Mitchell, 2001; Durose and Lowndes, 2010; Bailey and Pill, 2011). During these place-oriented social processes, networks of social interaction, community engagement and neighbourhood attachment are regarded as essential to the development and operation of neighbourhood governance (Docherty, Goodlad and Paddison, 2001; Meegan and Mitchell, 2001; Fu *et al.*, 2015).

The focus on the spatial functionality of the neighbourhood, as Raco and Flint (2001) comment, would be ineffective if it failed to capture the dynamics of communities. Without the geographically concentrated social connectedness retained by neighbourhoods—as happens in most cases—neighbourhood-based services and decision making have not been as effective and equal as they were intended to be, preventing the neighbourhood from realising its idealised role

of the 'new arena' for governance (Durose and Rees, 2012). The overwhelming evidence of the limited success of neighbourhood-based working, whether in the UK (Durose and Rees, 2012; Watkins, 2017) or in China (e.g. He and Cai, 2005; Tang, Wang and Chai, 2014; Liu and Ma, 2015), demonstrates this view. Instead of reaching a majority of citizens and promoting participatory forms of governance (Hirschman, 1970), empirical cases show that the neighbourhood approach to governance is often exercised among direct participants who have already had relatively high levels of civic capacity and social capital (Durose, Greasley and Richardson, 2009; He and Zhong, 2013; Wang and Zhang, 2017). This neighbourhood approach is thus regarded as a 'technology' of power (Rose, 1999), transforming the neighbourhood into a 'governable' subject that is divided from its otherwise liberated base communities (Watkins, 2017).

1.1.3 The geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood

The changes in socioeconomic structures and the restructuring of urban governance bring two processes to the neighbourhood: the de-territorialisation of local social relations and the erosion of neighbourhood-oriented cohesiveness (i.e. the liberation of communities), and the devolution of resources and reorganisation of neighbourhood-based policy-making (i.e. the rise of neighbourhood governance). While the two processes happen simultaneously in the same space (the neighbourhood), and address the same group of people (residents of the neighbourhood), they point to opposite directions of neighbourhood development. On the one hand, 'community' is liberated from 'neighbourhood' and becomes an extra-spatial phenomenon (Talen, 1999) characterised by the spatial dispersion, fluidity, and virtuality of social relationships (Urry, 2010) and weakened territory-based social cohesion (Fischer, 1982; Putnam, 2000; Andreotti, 2014). On the other hand, the neighbourhood has regained attention as a spatial strategy of governance. Scholars and politicians have revived interest in the neighbourhood as a place where developmental policies and governance arrangements are organised to address both local problems and structural deficits at the most local level (Fyfe, 2005; Shieh, 2011; Durose and Rees, 2012).

Here arises a geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood: the observations of liberated communities and diminishing neighbourhood cohesion seem contradictory to the preoccupation of geographically concentrated social policies and the rise of neighbourhood governance, the premises of which are based on the social functions retained by the geographical locales of neighbourhoods. The geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood reflects the structural confliction between the social and political aspects of the neighbourhood. As a scale of human interactions, the neighbourhood no longer plays a determinant role in everyday life-worlds, since intimate social ties have been liberated from localities and extended beyond the boundaries of the

neighbourhood (Wellman, 1996; Urry, 2010). As a unit of spatial organisation, however, the neighbourhood is being consolidated as the micro-foundation of urban governance. It deals with actors, structures, and relationships in local collective decision making and/or the public service delivery process (Durose and Lowndes, 2010), the effectiveness of which relies significantly on geographically concentrated social connectedness being retained by neighbourhoods (Docherty, Goodlad and Paddison, 2001; Meegan and Mitchell, 2001).

Taken together, when neighbourhoods' production functions have scaled up to the trans-local networks, and their social functions have (at least partly) stretched beyond their territorial boundaries, it remains unclear whether the new governing techniques associated with neighbourhoods have the potential to transform liberated communities into spatially-bounded governable sites and facilitate a greater locally-oriented notion of cohesion. (Wallace, 2010)(Wallace, 2010)The tensions between the liberation of communities from localities and the rise of neighbourhood governance call for a re-examination of the social and institutional processes which generate and sustain neighbourhood connections and social solidarity in otherwise liberated urban communities, especially where and how new forms of neighbourhood governance fit into the debate about social cohesion.

1.2   Why does this study matter?

As too little attention has been paid to the geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood, this research intends to explore that puzzle through examining the everyday practices of neighbouring and the everyday operation of neighbourhood power. It is designed to explore whether there are potential relationships between governance (in a variety of forms) and cohesiveness (both neighbourhood-based social ties and local solidarities) on the most local level of urban life.

1.2.1   Why this study?

Existing theories suggest multiple possibilities for the governance-cohesion relationship. For instance, in their seminal book *Making Democracy Work*, Putnam, Robert and Raffaella (1993) explore the relationship between governance capacity and civic life through the evaluation of the institutional performances of Italian regional governments. Significant variations in governmental performance were found, which they attribute to the varying levels of vibrancy of associational life in each region. From this evaluation, Putnam and his colleagues discover a reciprocal relationship between 'good regional government' and strong networks of associational participation (termed 'social capital' in their book). They argue that these associational networks, as well as the norms of reciprocity and trust embedded in these networks, have a positive impact

on institutional performance since such networks help to overcome problems related to collective action and enable collaborations towards the common good. Another strand of theory investigates the networks linking social and political life together under the rubric of 'state-society synergy' (Evans, 1996; Ostrom, 1996). The key argument, as Evans (1996) puts it, is that 'active government and mobilised communities can enhance each other's developmental efforts' (p.1119). Unpacking the notion of synergy reveals two sets of ideas. The first is that political institutions bring local community 'repositories of developmentally valuable social capital' (p.1120) which cannot be created on its own. The second idea reveals that these 'developmental efforts' are beneficial to the political institution as well, since the involvement of, and cooperation with, citizens also facilitates the work of the political institution through 'co-production' (Roeder, 1989). Drawing on these theories, Read (2003b) develops a specific explanation of the governance-cohesion relationship that applies particularly to East Asian countries (e.g. China, Japan, and Indonesia) and Cuba. In his explanation, Read proposes the concept of 'administrative grassroots engagement' (p.iii) to describe the intensive relationships between community members and state authorities. The personalised connections between the society and the state not only facilitate local governance but re-strengthen localised social networks.

Despite the popularity of these views, empirical evidence, especially quantitative evidence, remains limited. Investigations by Paxton (2002) and Knack (2002) are among the limited studies that adopt robust statistical models to explore the governance-cohesion relationship on a cross-national level. The neighbourhood level, on which social networks and civic engagement are the most observable, and local services and public goods are the most accessible, has seldom been empirically explored. Based on theoretically-derived models of governance and cohesion (e.g. Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993; Stanley, 2003), this research makes the first empirical attempt to quantitatively test whether such theoretically-derived models hold in the everyday life-worlds of the neighbourhood, and whether there are any possibilities for mitigating the structural contradictions between liberated communities and revived neighbourhood governance.

1.2.2   Why China?

The empirical attempt to test potential governance-cohesion relationships will be made with a case study in Nanjing, China. Relative to the study of good governance and social relations since the seminal work of Putnam, Robert and Raffaella (1993), and subsequent research in liberal democracies (e.g. Kearns and Forrest, 2000; Maloney, Smith and Stoker, 2000; Paxton, 2002; Mayer, 2003), little progress has been made in non-democratic regimes (Przeworski and Gandhi, 2007), although they account for half of the world's population. This is especially the case in China, where the interplay between 'actually existing neoliberalism' (Brenner and Theodore,

2012) and 'resilient authoritarianism' (Chung, 2017) provides new opportunities to revisit the cohesion debate in an institutional environment different from where it originally emerged (North America and Western Europe, for the most part).

In this research, the Chinese case is situated in general urban theories with a 'relativist model of causation' (Pickvance, 1986, 2005). Rather than the classic logic of 'comparing for similarities'—a logic that has continuously been criticised for being presupposed to be within existing Western-centric frameworks (Walton, 1998; Huang, 2016)—the relativist models assume that similar social phenomena (e.g. liberated communities and crises in social cohesion) may occur for different reasons in different places (e.g. China, Western Europe, and North America). The Chinese story is thus interpreted in a way that incorporates both similarities and differences. The similarities, or the comparability, of the Chinese case to the Western-centred framework, originate mostly from social geographies of the community. The evolution of urban communities in China in the last four decades—from traditional neighbourhoods bonded territorially (Sun, 2005; Wang, 2012) to dis-embedded social networks in fragmented and privatised urban spaces (Forrest and Yip, 2007; Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012)—coincides with the general development of 'liberated communities' in the Western context (Wellman, 1979, 1996). More importantly, similarities are sought from the major driving forces behind neighbourhood development. Early literature on urban China applies the critical discourse of neoliberalism to explain urban development in the recent economic and governance restructuring in urban China (Lee and Zhu, 2006; He and Wu, 2009; Stephens, 2010; Savitch, Gross and Ye, 2014). Major characteristics of the restructure—the stepping back of the state (and the rise of state entrepreneurialism), the expanding of the market, and the rise of private properties (Wu and Phelps, 2011; Wu and Ning, 2018)—are argued to be manifestations of the 'universality, inevitability and naturalness' (Nonini, 2008, p.145) of the neoliberal principles in China, which corresponds to the global rise of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005).

However, recent research has also questioned whether such a Western-centric framework can capture the key trajectories of China's 'great urban transformation' (Hsing, 2010) and has advocated the differentiation, or the incomparability, of the Chinese case. The incomparability, according to Weber (2018), is due to the fact that China's rapid changing political economy is too massive and diverse to be simplified into one unique concept of neoliberalism, even in its 'variegated' or 'assembled' forms (Brenner, Peck and Theodore, 2010). It is thus not able to infer with one-sided evidence (often collected in one area) that China is, or is not, undergoing a process of neoliberalisation. On this basis, research is emerging that emphasises the distinctiveness of urban development in China, characterised by a different type of state-market relationship conditioned by the authoritarian state, either in a strong or weak sense (Nonini, 2008; Wu, 2010; Lim, 2014; Buckingham, 2017; Zhou, Lin and Zhang, 2019). The continuing presence of the state,

particularly on the local level, questions the ability of Western theories (e.g. neoliberal theories and civil society theories) to provide satisfactory explanations for community building in urban China (Xu, Perkins and Chow, 2010).

The mixture of differences and similarities allows for some conceptual mobility between China and the West, and promotes a more universal comparative approach that opens urban studies to 'a more global repertoire' (Robinson, 2016, p.3). By investigating diverse possibilities that lead to similar social outcomes (e.g. liberated communities and crises of neighbourhood cohesion), I intend to mitigate the deep-seated disagreement between different theoretical genres and social systems (e.g. socialist and capitalist), and further extend the scope of comparative urban studies, especially those which used to be considered incommensurable with existing Western knowledge (Robinson, 2002).

1.2.3   Why Nanjing?

The city of Nanjing is selected for the case study. The simultaneous analysis of a multiplicity of social and political relationships within systematically selected samples in Nanjing provides a significant arena for addressing the structural contestation between liberation (of social relations) and concentration (of power relations). Certainly there are limits to a study which focuses on the single city of Nanjing: how unique is Nanjing as a second-tier city, compared with other global cities in China, such as Beijing (e.g. Read, 2003b; Tomba, 2005; Cai and Sheng, 2013; Chen, Dang and Dong, 2019) and Shanghai (e.g. Lin and Kuo, 2013; Zhou, 2014; Liu, 2016; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2019), that attract more scholarly attention? And how representative is Nanjing, compared with less economically prosperous cities in other parts of China?

Keeping these questions in mind, I argue that Nanjing is still an interesting case for exploring the social and political geographies of urban neighbourhoods in China, for two reasons. First, Nanjing is an 'ordinary city' of the kind often neglected in the construction of urban theory (Robinson, 2006). By focusing on the real-life experiments in community building in Nanjing, this research addresses the 'add-on' case study (Robinson, 2003, p.278) as a co-production of developmentalism (originating from Western experiences) and local culture and history. It expands our understanding of the diverse possibilities of urban development and urban life beyond what happens in the well-researched global cities and offers a more 'cosmopolitan account of cityness' (Robinson, 2002, p.532).

Second, Nanjing is also a 'prototypical' city in the terms used by Brenner (2003) and the context of China. For Brenner, prototypes are the first cases of something likely to become more generalised. Focusing on neighbourhood governance in China, Nanjing appears to be such a case,

which has a particularly strong base of neighbourhood institutions and which acts as a precursor in China's community reforms. For example, it was selected as one of the twelve experimental cities for neighbourhood governance and community building reform in 1999. The community building experiments in Nanjing were well received by the central government and replicated in other cities across the country. If Nanjing is not a stereotypical city in China, its development in terms of neighbourhood organisations and neighbourhood governance presents the general trends that are likely to happen in urban China. The story in Nanjing is thus a starting point for understanding other large cities in China.

1.3   Research aims and questions

Building upon the geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood, this research intends to explore the new geographies of urban neighbourhoods in China. These geographies do not simply unfold in new organisations of spaces (e.g. gated communities) but are rather associated with social and institutional processes within and beyond neighbourhood spaces, such as the liberation of social relations, the privatisation of community services, and the re-invigoration of the local state. Understanding how the sampled neighbourhoods are socially structured and organised in everyday life, as well as addressing the political geography performed in and nurtured by these urban neighbourhoods, provides crucial insight into the changing urban landscapes in Nanjing and contributes to the understanding of cohesion-governance relationships from a more cosmopolitan comparative perspective (Robinson, 2011). Drawing on fieldwork in 32 systematically selected urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing, including a survey of almost 1000 residents and interviews with 60 key informants (government officers, party secretaries, property managers, volunteers, neighbourhood activists, and ordinary residents), this research examines the contested role of the neighbourhood in the context of urban China, and aims to

- map neighbourhood social cohesion in these neighbourhoods;
- describe neighbourhood governance arrangements in these neighbourhoods; and
- analyse the relationship between these two phenomena.

To accomplish these aims, I will address the following research questions:

> **_Research Question 1:_** _How is neighbourhood cohesion distributed in different neighbourhoods in urban Nanjing? Does the claim of 'crisis of cohesion' apply to the case of Nanjing?_

This question addresses the cohesion debate in the context of Nanjing by testing whether the evidence-based relationship—the crisis of cohesion and liberated communities—derived mostly

from research in Europe and North America still holds in the Chinese context. Instead of exploring how liberated communities are, and how the local orientation of cohesion could be 'liberated' from geography (Wellman, 1996), I will instead examine how 'localised' they are, i.e. the extent to which cohesion is territorialised in different neighbourhoods. To be more specific, I set out to explore whether and how the 'neighbourhood' acts as a place of territory-based social cohesiveness, and how such cohesiveness varies across different dimensions of cohesion (measured by neighbourly ties, community participation, and neighbourhood sentiment) and across different types of neighbourhood (traditional neighbourhoods, privatised work units, commodity neighbourhoods, and affordable neighbourhoods).

> **_Research Question 2:_** _What are the major forms of governance arrangement in urban Nanjing?_

This question examines how neighbourhood governance is working out 'on the ground' in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. The focus is on neither national or city-wide policies (a view from altitude that overlooks diversity on the ground), nor just one or two neighbourhoods (a narrow focus that makes generalisation and theory-building difficult). Instead, I take a mid-level view, analysing diverse neighbourhood governance arrangements in the sampled neighbourhoods comparatively, and interrogating whether and how the 'neighbourhood' acts as a spatial scale for organising collective decision making and collective consumption.

> **_Research Question 3:_** _How are neighbourhood governance arrangements and neighbourhood social cohesion related, particularly in the case of Nanjing, China?_

This question attempts to link both the social (e.g. dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion) and political aspects (e.g. arrangements and effectiveness of neighbourhood governance) of the neighbourhood together. It sets out to test whether there are potential relationships between varying levels of neighbourhood cohesion and various roles of neighbourhood organisations in different neighbourhood contexts, particularly whether new neighbourhood governing techniques have the potential to transform liberated communities into spatially-bounded governable sites and facilitate a greater local-oriented notion of cohesion. The cohesion-governance relationships help to mitigate the structural tension between the social identity of the neighbourhood (as a 'place' of social relations) and the political identity of the neighbourhood (as a 'space' of neighbourhood governance), and further inform place-based and people-based policy-making in building a cohesive society.

1.4   Thesis outline

To address these research questions, I structure this thesis into three parts and eight chapters. A brief outline of the thesis is presented in Figure 1.1.

Part 1 Conceptualising neighbourhood cohesion	The geographical puzzle of neighbourhood	*Chapter 1* Introduction
		Chapter 2 In search of cohesive neighbourhoods: an institutional perspective
	The theoretical framework	*Chapter 3* Neighbouring, neighbourliness, and neighbourhood governance in the Chinese context
	Methodology	*Chapter 4* Research design, data, and method
Part 2 Geographies of urban communities in Nanjing: cohesion and governance	The geographies of neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance	*Chapter 5* Beyond crisis: the development of neighbourhood cohesion across different types of neighbourhood in Nanjing
		Chapter 6 Beyond the state-society-market trichotomy: four modes of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing
Part 3 Institutional paths towards neighbourhood cohesion	The relationships between good governance and cohesive neighbourhoods	*Chapter 7* The political construction of cohesive neighbourhoods in Nanjing
Part 4 Conclusion	Main findings, contributions, and policy implications	*Chapter 8* Conclusion

Figure 1.1 Thesis outline

The first part of the thesis, which includes the first four chapters, introduces the research background, theoretical framework and research methodologies. *Chapter 1* is a brief introduction to the research. It outlines the social and political context of contemporary neighbourhood research and proposes a geographical puzzle that most urban neighbourhoods are facing: the structural contestation between the liberation of social relations and the concentration of power

relations. Building upon the geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood, this chapter proposes the research aims, research questions, and thesis outline.

Following the introductory chapter, *Chapter 2* and *Chapter 3* constitute the theoretical framework of this research. *Chapter 2* begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research and introduces the concept of 'social cohesion' to capture the bonding mechanisms that link individuals together. Taking the multiscalar and multidimensional nature of social cohesion into consideration, I then develop a working definition of *neighbourhood cohesion*. The definition emphasises that the neighbourhood is an essential arena for 'normalising' social relations (Forrest and Kearns, 2001) and can be operationalised through both behavioural and cognitive dimensions following a pluralistic analytical approach. After this, I focus on the mechanisms of neighbourhood cohesion and identify three possible approaches to construct a cohesive neighbourhood: the (neo)liberal, the state-centred, and the communitarian approach. These approaches provide different theoretical and empirical paths through which individuals can be linked together in the neighbourhood.

Chapter 3 serves to 'set the scene' in urban China, enabling a contextual understanding of neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance in urban China. This chapter begins with a brief introduction of the urban neighbourhood and its development during China's 'great urban transformation' (Hsing, 2010). Following the pluralistic analytical approach, it then reviews recent studies on each dimension of neighbourhood cohesion in urban China. What follows is a discussion on the rise of neighbourhood governance in transitional China, focusing on the changing roles of the state, the market, and the society. Based on the three approaches towards the cohesive neighbourhood identified in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 incorporates into existing frameworks nuanced interpretations of China's development trajectories, and proposes three hypothesised scenarios of cohesion building in urban neighbourhoods in China: the Residents' Committee–led cohesion building, Property Management Company–led cohesion building, and Homeowners' Association–led cohesion building.

Chapter 4 discusses the operational framework of the research, including research design, case selection, key measurements, data collection, data analysis, and the major conditions and limitations of the fieldwork. Both quantitative and qualitative data are collected during the eight-month fieldwork in 32 systematically selected urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing, including a survey of almost 1000 residents and interviews with 60 key informants. The two sets of data are systematically integrated with a sequential explanatory design, in which the quantitative phase of the analysis (e.g. regression analysis) is conducted in the first stage, and is followed by the

qualitative phase (e.g. thematic analysis) which acts as an explanation, triangulation, complement to, and expansion of the quantitative outcomes.

Chapter 5 and *Chapter 6*[1] constitute the second part of the thesis, which maps out the social and political geographies of the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. *Chapter 5* examines the social geography of the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. It presents the analysis of the residents' survey and provides a comprehensive description of the geography of neighbourhood cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. By doing so, this chapter addresses the first research question and responds to the general inquiry of whether or not the claim of a 'crisis of cohesion' applies to the case of Nanjing. More importantly, following a pluralistic analytical approach, this chapter systematically examines the co-evolution of different dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion that has seldom been captured by existing studies which only targeted one (or two) dimension(s) of neighbourhood life and ignored others.

Chapter 6 investigates the political geography of the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. Drawing on interviews, site visits, and participant observations, I address the second research question in this chapter. It shows how neighbourhood governance is working out 'on the ground' in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing in diverse and complex ways—ways that go beyond debates about neoliberalism and neoliberalisation (state-market relations), and beyond debates about authoritarianism and civil society (state-society relations). Among the multiple arrangements that were discovered in the sampled neighbourhoods, four dominant forms are identified based on the critical actions of governance: neighbourhood partnership, neighbourhood management, neighbourhood empowerment, and neighbourhood government.

The next section of the thesis includes *Chapter 7*. It addresses the fundamental question underlying the geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood by linking the social and political geographies of neighbourhoods together. After a brief discussion of the spatial distribution of self-reported governance effectiveness, this chapter proceeds with the examination of the underlying dynamics of neighbouring and neighbourliness from the less explored institutional perspective. Especially, it tests with multiple regression models whether the hypothesised relationships between neighbourhood governance effectiveness and neighbourhood cohesion exist in each type of governance arrangement, and remain constant when multiple neighbourhood organisations are included simultaneously. These discussions are followed by an experimental study of the interactions between the local state agency and the neighbourhood

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[1] A version of Chapter 6 has been submitted to International Journal of Urban and Regional Research and has received an outcome of revise and resubmit.

civic group in the cohesion-governance relationship in the sampled neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode.

The last section is *Chapter 8*, which concludes by providing comprehensive answers to the research questions. Drawing on the findings of Chapter 5, it argues that neighbourhood cohesion in Nanjing does not manifest a clear trend of 'liberation' or 'crisis', but rather shows multiple development trajectories, which depend not only on the types of neighbourhood being addressed but also on the dimensions of cohesion analysed—indicating the significance of a plural analytical approach. Drawing on the findings of Chapter 6, I present in this chapter the four major types of governance arrangement discovered in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, which go beyond the existing actor-based framework (i.e. the state-society-market trichotomy) and focus on how neighbourhood governance functions are performed by these actors 'on the ground'. This action-based framework is taken into account in Chapter 7, which presents a complicated picture of the governance-cohesion relationships in urban Nanjing. The plurality of relationships indicates that building cohesive neighbourhoods in Nanjing is not only a matter for key stakeholders (e.g. local state agencies, neighbourhood civic groups or market institutions) but is also influenced by the power relationships between these actors, which are deeply embedded in the local institutional environment. Based on the main findings and contributions, Chapter 8 discusses the wider implications of the Nanjing case to China and general urban theories, by reflecting on the literature of neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance. It ends with the limitations of the research and possible future lines of enquiry.

Chapter 2 In search of cohesive neighbourhoods: an institutional perspective

To explore the social geography of urban communities, I introduce the concept of 'social cohesion' into this research. This concept captures the evolving nature of communities by exploring changing bonding mechanisms in communities that link individuals together. To make full use of the concept, much conceptual clarification is needed. The clarification focuses on the following two questions: what constitutes a cohesive neighbourhood? How is a cohesive neighbourhood formed and maintained?

In order to address these two questions, I will divide this chapter into four sections. In the first section, I will summarise widely used definitions of cohesion, taking into consideration its multiple scales (the national, regional, and neighbourhood scale) and multiple elements (collective identity, common goals, trust, social relations, and community participation). On this basis, I will develop a working definition of neighbourhood cohesion. The definition emphasises the neighbourhood as an essential arena for 'normalising' social relations and cultivating new forms of social bonding mechanisms (Forrest and Kearns, 2001), and can be operationalised through both behavioural and cognitive dimensions. After this, I will focus on the mechanisms of neighbourhood cohesion. Putnam's theory of social capital sheds light on the circular relationship between cohesive behaviours/attitudes and good governance, which points to possibilities for investing in neighbourhood cohesion. Such possibilities will be further explored in the third section. The primary question will go beyond the 'What?' and move to the 'How?', i.e. how cohesive neighbourhood is linked to good governance. Based on the classification of Green, Janmaat and Han (2009), I will discuss three possible approaches to construct a cohesive neighbourhood: the (neo)liberal, the state-centred, and the communitarian approach. These approaches provide different theoretical and empirical paths through which individuals can be linked together in the neighbourhood system. This discussion will be followed by the fourth section, which will summarise the main lessons learnt from the review, and the major hypotheses generated from existing theories.

2.1 Conceptualising neighbourhood cohesion

While an inflationary use of the concept of 'social cohesion' can be seen in the recent discussion of social structural changes, a widely accepted conceptualisation of cohesion is still lacking. Social cohesion is conceptualised and operationalised in various ways in different studies: 'how social

cohesion is to be defined depends to a large extent on the substantial problem(s) the researcher or policymaker is focusing on' (Chan, To and Chan, 2006, p. 288). For example, some view the concept similar to social solidarity, trust, and other social norms that regulate individual behaviours (e.g. Durkheim, 1964; Larsen, 2013); some emphasise the networked structures within cohesive groups on the interpersonal level (e.g. Lockwood, 1999; Chan, To and Chan, 2006); some are more theoretically inclined and situate cohesion in the broader discussion of social and system integration of the whole society (e.g. Mouzelis, 1992; Perkmann, 1998); and others are more problem-oriented and incorporate terms like reduced disparity, social inclusion, social capital, and social citizenship into the discussion of territorial forms of cohesion (e.g. Maxwell, 1996; Beauvais and Jenson, 2002; Mirwaldt, Mcmaster and Bachtler, 2009).

The following part intends to work out a clear conceptualisation of cohesion. A pluralistic reflective approach is adopted, in which observable characteristics of cohesion as well as their inter-correlations are identified and aggregated coherently to describe the 'collective togetherness' of the social group (Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017). Notably, I do not intend to settle the definitional disputes but aim to work out a definition that suits the purpose of this research—exploring the relationship between neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance.

2.1.1 Social cohesion on multiple scales

Social cohesion is a multi-layered phenomenon performs on various geographical scales. Major scales of social cohesion are presented in Table 2.1. Notably, the table captures general tendencies rather than clear cuts of the characteristics of social cohesion on multiple scales. The policy efforts to tackle social cohesion issues on each scale can be complementary, overlapping, or contradictory, and are highly sensitive to local contexts.

Table 2.1 Addressing social cohesion across different geographical scales

The scale of social cohesion	Key points	Main approaches
National	National identity, civic culture, and social equality	Civic education, labour, and social security policies
Regional/urban	Social equality, social inclusion/exclusion, social order	Service provision, urban management and urban planning, housing allocation system, labour, and social security policies
Neighbourhood	Neighbourly connections, psycho-social effects (e.g. belongingness, attachment and identity), civic engagement	Routine activities, service provision, and contractual relationships

For some scholars, the most distinctive socialising process occurs within a sovereign state (Maxwell, 1996; Beauvais and Jenson, 2002; Council of Europe, 2008; OECD, 2011). 'Social cohesion' on the national level becomes an ideal goal for the political community, aimed at developing common civic values and reducing exclusion, marginalisation, and disparity through civic education and a wide array of social and labour policies (Jenson, 1998; Europe, 2008; OECD, 2011).

Lower down on the urban/regional scale, the socialising process is not only associated with structural changes on a macro level, but with urban dynamics in local contexts as well (Koramaz, 2014). Socio-spatial inequality is the central point to address at this level. The uneven geographical distribution of resources leads to interregional disparities of wealth, income, social welfare and well-being (Bernard, 1999; Jupp, Nieuwenhuysen and Dawson, 2007; Novy, Swiatek and Moulaert, 2012; Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017). Closely related to social inequality are issues of social exclusion and social segregation, which further exacerbate problems of poverty and disorder that threaten the cohesiveness of the whole society (Berger-Schmitt, 2000; Jenson, 2010; Musterd *et al.*, 2017).

Further down still, the neighbourhood is another crucial arena for social cohesion upon which the other scales of cohesion depend (Docherty, Goodlad and Paddison, 2001). It is an important level of cohesion as it provides the everyday basis for socialisation and consumption (Twigg, Taylor and Mohan, 2010; Mennis, Dayanim and Grunwald, 2013). In terms of socialisation, the contribution of the neighbourhood to social cohesion is closely related to the 'internal spatiality' of human behaviours on the micro-level (Giddens, 1985). The arrangement of material spaces in the neighbourhood creates co-presence of various individuals and social groups. They are provided with opportunities for encounters and communications, as well as creating behavioural and narrative rules of communication, when routinely moving through their residential spaces (Graaf, van der, 2009; Howley, O'Neill and Atkinson, 2015; Zhu, 2015; Arundel and Ronald, 2017). The significance of these 'mundane routines' in the neighbourhood has regained scholarly attention recently since they have the potential to repair and normalise social relations which were damaged in the capitalist modernisation (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Novy, Swiatek and Moulaert, 2012). The routine neighbourly activities also contribute to the development of common values, place attachment and shared identities through the establishment of narrative rules of communication and behavioural norms of social exchange (van der Graaf, 2009).

In terms of consumption, the emergence of new redistribution and consumption mechanisms on the neighbourhood level, such as private governance (Deng, 2008; Zhou, 2014; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018) and self-governance (Rosol, 2010; Davies and Pill, 2012a; Power, 2015), influences the

'politics of behaviour' and gives rise to new forms of social bonding mechanisms based on contractual relationships (Flint, 2004). Neighbourhood contractual relationships aim at protecting the neighbourhood environment and maintaining the value of private assets. One form of neighbourhood contracts is formalised community conventions and agreements, which mobilise 'ethopower' (Flint, 2003) that protects the community environment and private assets through regulating neighbourly behaviours, advocating for civic participation, and mobilising collective decision making (Blandy and Lister, 2005; McGuirk and Dowling, 2011). Other forms of the contract are more informal, such as moral codes and normalised practices. They are sometimes perceived to be more powerful than formal arrangements in maintaining social order, cultivating responsible citizenship, and producing neighbourhood cohesion (Rose, 2000; Power, 2015), since anyone who transgresses against these informal rules is likely to be socially excluded. The contract-based social bonding mechanism sheds light on new possibilities for social cohesion, which are less engaged with production networks or social networks and more with consumption networks characterised by legalisation and depersonalisation (Blandy and Lister, 2005; McGuirk and Dowling, 2011).

It is worth noting that, although neighbourhood cohesion is often treated as the micro-foundation of social life (Docherty, Goodlad and Paddison, 2001), one should always be cautious about making inferences from the neighbourhood level. This is because there are mutual connections between neighbourhood cohesion and wider societal cohesion. For instance, neighbourly interactions and collective identities are meaningful 'springboards' for minority groups to be integrated into society (Liu, Li and Breitung, 2012), but they are not the only sources of social cohesion. Other approaches may work far beyond territorial boundaries of neighbourhoods, such as entitlement through redistribution policies, and participation in work in the global economy (Polanyi, 1992; Turner, 2001). These approaches are not included in the discussion in this thesis.

2.1.2   Social cohesion on multiple dimensions

The multiplicity of social cohesion not only originates from its distribution on multiple scales but also its components in multiple dimensions. Some common components of cohesion are distilled from a review of cohesion definitions (Table 2.2), such as collective identity and place attachment, common goals and shared values, trust and mutual tolerance, social relationships and social networks, and participation. The first three components indicate the attitudinal or cultural aspects of social cohesion, termed as perceived (Bollen and Hoyle, 1990) or ideational cohesion (Janmaat, 2011). The latter two are the objective manifestations of cohesive attitudes, and are termed as behavioural or structural cohesion (Moody and White, 2003). Each component will be discussed in further detail in the following parts.

Table 2.2 A selection of widely-applied definitions of cohesion (since the 1990s)

Authors and date	Definitions of cohesion	Dimensions of cohesion				
		Identity and attachment	Common goals	Trust	Social networks	Partici pation
Braaten, 1991	Group cohesion as the equivalent of good relationships for an individual, which, when present, can help an individual to become the person he/she strives to be.				✓	
Rosell, 1995	Building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community (p.78).	✓	✓			
Maxwell, 1996	Social cohesion involves the process of building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community.	✓	✓			✓
Jenson, 1998	The ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges, and equal opportunity within Canada based on a sense of trust, hope, and reciprocity among all Canadians.		✓	✓		
Lockwood, 1999	Social cohesion is the strength of primary and secondary networks.				✓	✓
Kearns and Forrest, 2000	A cohesive society 'hangs together'; all the component parts somehow fit in and contribute to society's collective project and wellbeing, and conflict between societal goals and groups, and disruptive behaviours are largely absent or minimal.		✓			
European Commission, 2001	Social cohesion as the degree to which individuals and groups within a particular society are bound by common feelings of consensus, share common values and goals, and relate to one another on a cooperative basis.	✓	✓			✓
Peterson and Hughey, 2004	Social cohesion as a construct linked to community participation with notions of trust, shared emotional commitment, and reciprocity.		✓	✓		✓

Authors and date	Definitions of cohesion	Dimensions of cohesion				
		Identity and attachment	Common goals	Trust	Social networks	Participation
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2005	Cohesiveness is created from connections based on a shared sense of belonging and attachment, similar values, trust, and a sense of 'social solidarity' (p.40)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Chan, To and Chan, 2006	Social cohesion is a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society, as characterised by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging, and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations (p.290).	✓		✓	✓	✓
Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009	Social cohesion refers to the property by which whole societies, and the individuals within them, are bound together through the action of specific attitudes, behaviours, rules, and institutions which rely on consensus rather than pure coercion.		✓		✓	✓
OECD, 2011	Social cohesion as a characteristic of a group that works towards the well-being of all its members fights exclusion and marginalization creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility	✓	✓	✓		
Botterman et al., 2012	Social cohesion refers to the presence of structural and attitudinal mechanisms of solidarity, cooperation, and exchange between citizens in a society.	✓		✓	✓	✓
Parsons, 2013	Social cohesion as degrees of order and stability put together by shared norms and values in society.		✓			
Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017	Social cohesion as a descriptive attribute of a collective, indicating the quality of collective togetherness. A cohesive society is characterised by close social relations, pronounced emotional connectedness to the social entity, and a strong orientation towards the common good (p.592).	✓	✓		✓	
Fonseca, Lukosch and Brazier, 2018	Social cohesion is the ongoing process of developing wellbeing, sense of belonging, and voluntary social participation of the members of society, while developing communities that tolerate and promote a multiplicity of values and cultures, and granting at the same time equal rights and opportunities in society (p.16).	✓				✓

2.1.2.1   Common identity and place attachment

Feeling emotional attachment and belonging to a particular social entity/group is one of the most significant dimensions of attitudinal cohesion (Brown and Perkins, 1992). The similar socio-cultural context of the social group put its members on similar trajectories of identity building and membership establishment. This process, according to the common identity group model (Gaertner *et al.*, 1993), influences an individual's cognitive representation of both the group and him/herself through (re)categorisation, comparison, and self-identification (Turner and Oakes, 1986). The affective and cognitive ties arising from these social processes are shared among group members, and constitute the psychological basis of group cohesion.

Scholars and policymakers widely recognise the significance of common identity, a sense of belonging, and attachment to a place. For example, Jenson (1998), Bernard (1999) and Novy, Swiatek and Moulaert (2012) incorporate common identity and attachment to place into their multidimensional frameworks of social cohesion. It is the intertwining of identity and place, contend Kearns and Forrest (2000), that provides social security and self-esteem, and further contributes to shared values and in-group interactions. Compared with other dimensions, such as common goals and civic participation, it is the identification with social groups in geographical spaces that distinguishes social cohesion from the general goodwill manifesting 'universal humanity' (Chan, To and Chan, 2006, p. 289).

2.1.2.2   Orientation towards common goals

The dimension of common values and goals entails 'feelings of responsibility for the common good and the compliance to social rules and order' (Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017, p. 589), which enables individuals to 'identify and support common aims and objectives… [and] conduct their relations with one another' (Kearns and Forrest, 2000, p. 997). It is the 'glue' that sticks the group together, especially in the context of recent erosion of collective morality in the wake of individualism and digitalisation (Fukuyama, 1999; Putnam, 2000). This dimension is closely associated with common identity and attachment to place, and they are sometimes grouped together as the cultural aspect of social cohesion (e.g. Novy, Swiatek and Moulaert, 2012).

The necessity of common goals and collective responsibilities has received increasing attention in policy and practice in recent years. From a common goal–oriented perspective, social cohesion is defined by the Council of Europe as 'a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means' (European Committee for Social Cohesion, 2004, p. 3). A similar perspective is adopted by the World Bank, which treated social cohesion–building as

'demonstrat[ing] an aptitude for collaboration that produces a climate for change that, in the longer run, benefits all' (Ritzen and Woolcock, 2000, p. 297).

2.1.2.3   Trust

Trust is another component of attitudinal cohesion. Social psychologists define trust as intentions or beliefs with which one feels relatively secure, and which make one willing to depend on others with predicable benevolent behaviours (McKnight and Chervany, 2001). By linking individuals morally together with positive intentions and predictable behaviours , trust becomes the moral source of solidarity and the cultural foundation of social orders. Higher levels of mutual trust reduce incentives for self-maximising or free-rider opportunism and encourage social exchange and cooperation behaviours, and lower transaction cost between members of the group whom you may not directly know (Putnam, 2001; Larsen, 2013).

Trust is treated by many as the critical measure of cohesion, indicating the meaning, content, and quality of the interpersonal relationships within the group (Spencer and Pahl, 2006). For Delhey (2007), trust is the ultimate manifestation of a cohesive European Union, as he defined social cohesion as 'the quality of relations between member states' populations, measured as trust' (p.255). This is the same for Larsen (2013): social cohesion is 'belief—held by citizens in a given nation-state—that they share a moral community, which enables them to trust each other' (p. 3). In this definition, interpersonal trust is regarded and measured as the outcome of common identity and belief, indicating the interrelationships between trust and other components of social cohesion.

2.1.2.4   Social relations and social networks

Social cohesion is not only about personal attitudes, perceptions, or social norms about 'togetherness'; it is also about behaviours and acts of 'being together'. The behavioural dimension of social cohesion can be divided into informal types of social interactions and formal types of civic engagement. Social networks created and maintained by social interactions are the everyday basis of 'being together'. Frequent social interactions and dense social networks provide individuals with symbolic and material resources as well as emotional and instrumental support (Mouw, 2003). Interpersonal ties also contribute to the common good of the society, including elements such as reduced prejudice and enhanced mutual tolerance (Varshney, 2001), better adaptation to the new environment (Liu, Li and Breitung, 2012), and increasing chances for active participation (Putnam, 2000).

There is a long-standing belief that a cohesive society is equipped with a high level of social interactions, especially at the neighbourhood level (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). For example,

Lockwood (1999) defines social cohesion as 'a state of strong primary networks at [a] communal level'. The multilevel and hierarchical nature of social interactions—i.e. those among individuals, between the individual and the group, and among groups—are stressed in other conceptualisations of cohesion as well. For instance, for Berger-Schmitt (2000, p. 2), social cohesion is 'characteristic of a society dealing with the connections and relations between societal units such as individuals, groups, associations as well as territorial units'.

2.1.2.5   Community participation

Organisational engagement is another source of behavioural cohesion (Dickes, Valentova and Borsenberger, 2010; Jenson, 2010; Klein, 2013). Compared with informal ties and networks, formal types of engagement describe cooperative and participatory behaviours among members of society which are often driven by a sense of responsibility and well-established arrangements (Fonseca, Lukosch and Brazier, 2018). The engagement networks facilitate communication and develop a collective identity, and provide participants with deepened trust, broadened views and information for better decision making (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993).

Distinctions between different forms of participation should be taken into account to pinpoint their differentiated societal effects. Civic participation, such as being a member of a basket club, a chorus, or a charity organisation, strengthens one's social ties with others in the club who have common interests. Such participation can be overserved through membership and regular attendance of cultural or voluntary activities. Other participatory activities, however, are less recreational or philanthropic, but more politically oriented, such as voting, attending a campaign, or blogging about a public issue. Political participation reflects an individual's willingness to act and take responsibility in the group/society, which is both motivated by and strengthens social trust and social solidarity (Newton, 1997; Ikeda, 2012).

The promotion of civic and political participation has become one of the key themes in social cohesion policies and studies. For example, the Department of Canadian Cultural Heritage regards participation as a practical approach towards a cohesive society. This is underlined in its cohesion policy framework, which states, 'a cohesive and inclusive society depends on respect for all ethnic groups and the fullest possible participation of all citizens in civic life' (Department of Cultural Heritage, 2001, p.7). Moreover, in other conceptualisations, participation is posed among other dimensions, such as a sense of belonging, social order, and social networks (Beauvais and Jenson, 2002; Jenson, 2010; Fonseca, Lukosch and Brazier, 2018), and together they constitute a multidimensional analytical framework of cohesion.

2.1.3   A working definition of neighbourhood cohesion

The discussion on the multilevel and multidimensional nature of social cohesion enables us to work out a set of criteria to explain the state of affairs in which individuals 'fit together well so that they form a united whole' (The Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary, 1988). Any spatially specific forms of group cohesion, including neighbourhood social cohesion, should meet these criteria:

1) The social criterion: group members are closely linked together through repeated actions, whether in terms of horizontal interactions among group members (social interaction) or vertical interactions between individuals and group institutions (participation);

2) The culture criterion: they are attached to a place/group (attachment), and they can trust and help each other (trust);

3) The political criterion: they have common goals, and have the potential to work together towards these goals (collective goals).

According to these criteria, social cohesion on the neighbourhood level can, therefore, be defined as follows:

Neighbourhood cohesion is the degree to which residents within the neighbourhood are bonded together through actions and attitudes. A cohesive neighbourhood is characterised by dense social relations and active participation (as the structural dimension of neighbourhood cohesion), and emotional connectedness, mutual trust, and a strong orientation towards the common good (as the attitudinal dimension of neighbourhood cohesion).

Some clarifications are needed for the conceptualisation. First of all, similar to the original usage of 'cohesion' – 'a condition in which people or things are closely united' (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2016), neighbourhood cohesion is regarded as a degree, a property, or a state of affairs of the neighbourhood. It is a reflection of the outcomes of the cohesion-building process, rather than the process itself (c.f. Maxwell, 1996; Jenson, 1998; Fonseca, Lukosch and Brazier, 2018). Therefore, the term 'cohesion', as *a state of affairs*, is different from 'integration', which describes *the dynamic process* that 'ensures new residents and existing residents adapt to one another' (Commission on Integration, 2007, p. 36).

Second, neighbourhood cohesion measures the 'collective togetherness' of residents within the neighbourhood (Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017). It is a latent variable that cannot be measured directly. Instead, it is a construct of observable behavioural and cognitive characteristics, such as localised social relationships, and commitment between people who live close to each other (Mackenbach *et al.*, 2016). In this regard, the concept of neighbourhood cohesion resembles the

concept of 'social capital' proposed by Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (1993), as both concepts are characterised by a similar collection of community-focused behaviours and attitudes, such as 'connections among individuals' and 'the norms… that arise from them [the connections]' (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). As the two concepts share similar components, discussions under the name of 'social capital', such as those on its self-referential mechanisms, can sometimes apply to the discussion on neighbourhood cohesion as well (Putnam, 1995; Stanley, 2003). They are used interchangeably in some studies (e.g. Dasgupta and Serageldin, 1999; Ritzen and Woolcock, 2000; Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2002; Mok, Leung and Ku, 2010). I decided to use 'cohesion' instead of 'capital' in this study for two reasons: first, the economic implications of social capital (e.g. social networks as access to resources) are not the focus of this study (Perkins and Long, 2002; Hulse and Stone, 2007). Second, while the concept of social capital is criticised for being 'tautological' (Lin, Cook and Burt, 2001) because it is both defined as and measured by its outcomes, the concept of social cohesion is free from such problems (see further discussions in Chapter 2.2.1).

Third, the conceptualisation focuses on cohesiveness as an outcome of the cohesion-building process in a pragmatic manner. While emphasising the outcome, this conceptualisation makes no assumptions about specific processes towards the outcome. In other words, instead of calling for conformity of values, rules, and norms, I embrace multiple possible approaches towards the common good and idealised forms of cohesive neighbourhoods. Assimilation and consensualism might be one such approach, and diversity and multiculturalism might be another (Jenson, 1998; Klein, 2013; Laurence and Bentley, 2016). These approaches will be further explored in the next chapter.

Fourth, while neighbourhood cohesion is defined as a group property, it is often operationalised at the individual level (see. e.g. Bollen and Hoyle, 1990; Subramanian, Lochner and Kawachi, 2003; Liu et al., 2017). This is because measuring cohesiveness on the group level often encounters problems of data inadequacy, especially when the size of each group is large, but the total number of groups is limited. Group cohesion is thus 'internalised' (Coleman, 1994, p.2–3) by aggregating attributes of its components on the individual level, which can be obtained through sample surveys and interviews with independent respondents. This methodological individualism is supported by the 'action-theoretic' mechanism, which articulates that the study of social phenomena on the macro level must be founded on observations at micro levels (Alexander, 1987). Notably, as aggregation may lead to the 'cross-level' fallacy (Smelser, 1976), special attention should be paid to configurations and mechanisms at both the individual and the group level.

Last but not least, the dark side of neighbourhood cohesion should be taken into consideration as well. Higher levels of neighbourhood cohesion, such as dense territorial links and high collective efficacy, may translate into insularity, backwardness, a 'miniaturisation' of community spirit (Fukuyama, 1999) , a reflection of 'isolationism' or 'particularistic consumerist interests' (Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005, p. 345). Neighbourhoods with strong internal cohesion might conflict with the outside world if they either exclude outsiders or close themselves in. The mechanism of closing in on itself is not rare, especially among disadvantaged and migrant neighbourhoods, where group cohesion fails to address inequality and injustice in the society and aggravates residential segregation and social destruction instead (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Slater and Anderson, 2012).

2.2 Cohesive neighbourhoods and good governance: a missing link?

My conceptualisation shows that neighbourhood cohesion is a group aggregation of individual social connectedness. The wax and wane of neighbourhood cohesion can be explored and explained from the levels of both the individual and the collective. The individual processes of neighbourhood cohesion draw primarily on socio-psycho theories and rational choice models to explore mechanisms and motivations behinds individuals' behaviours, attitudes, and predispositions (Buckner, 1988). Existing studies have identified a variety of factors that are correlated with the individual processes of neighbourhood cohesion, including psychological factors (e.g. personalities, attitudes, values, perceptions, and peer pressure), demographical factors (e.g. age, gender and marital status), and past experiences from which an individual's sense of 'self' was constantly being reshaped (Joseph, Chaskin and Webber, 2007).

However, neighbourhood cohesion is not just a simple collection of individual actions and perceptions. The aggregation of individual attributes involves a socio-structural process of contextualisation (Van Vliet and Burgers, 1987). During the contextualisation, a new accent is put on the systematic integration of institutional complexes in which individual behaviours and perceptions are embedded (Perkmann, 1998). The introduction of political institutions into the study of social life, as Levi (1996) argues, helps scholars to better explore the mechanisms of social cohesion, which are not exogenous to local political institutions.

2.2.1 The introduction of political institutions in social life

One seminal work on institutional performances and individual social connectedness is the book by Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nannetti, *Making Democracy Work* (1993). Tracing the history of civic roots in Italy, Putnam explores the general relationship between

politics and society, especially the micro-linkage between the performance of political institutions, and local networks of social interactions and civic participation. By evaluating the institutional effectiveness of twenty Italian regional governments with an index of institutional performance and public service provision, Putnam and his colleagues find that government functioning is closely associated with vibrancies of associational life in each region. To be more specific, governments in northern and central Italy, according to their statistical analysis, outperformed those in southern Italy when other factors were held constant. Such variations in governmental effectiveness can be attributed to differences in political cultures: citizens in the northern part of the country have long traditions and dense networks of civic engagement, whereas those in the southern region participate less in social and political gatherings in their local communities. Putnam explains such a relationship through the lens of 'social capital' – 'trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions' (ibid, p.167).

Recognising the existence of a positive relationship between social capital and governmental performances, Putnam provides a plausible descriptive account of such a relationship: social capital has the potential to promote effective governance because it offers a social mechanism to lower transaction costs, overcome problems related to collective action, and enable collaboration towards the common good. This argument rests on the prior relationship between associational participation and social capital. To be more specific, networks of civic engagement facilitate communication and the development of a collective identity, which provide individuals with broadened views and helpful information for better decision making. Mutual trust can also be generated in the decision-making process. With higher levels of mutual trust, incentives for self-maximising or free-rider opportunism can be reduced. Individuals are more likely to be subject to interactions with fellow citizens where there are common expectations and norms of reciprocity. These norms and expectations contribute to the formation of behavioural rules and moral contracts that guarantee future cooperation. Therefore, associational participation not only reduces conflicts and disputes in collective action, but also builds intensive social networks with horizontal bonds of mutual solidarity, through which social capital can be generated, and social cooperation can be further achieved.

Putnam's explanation is criticised by some as being 'tautological' (Lin, Cook and Burt, 2001) and 'axiomatic' (Boix and Posner, 1996), because social capital is both defined as and measured by its outcomes in the relationship, leaving the underlying mechanism of how social cooperation capacity affects institutional performances underspecified. To address this shortcoming, Boix and Posner (1996) provide a more thorough analysis. They identify four approaches through which cooperative behaviours on the individual level promote effective governance on the

organisational level. The first approach draws on classic democratic theories, arguing that civic participation promotes accountable government (Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer, 2007). This relationship can be understood from two perspectives: on the one hand, civic participation and collective actions transform citizens into 'rational voters' who can overcome self-interest and opportunism, and work collectively to monitor performances of governments and articulate their societal demands clearly. On the other hand, under such pressure, elected political elites tend to listen to citizens' voices and respond more effectively—otherwise, they are likely to be removed from office at election time. The second approach deals with cooperative relationships among political institutions and governmental offices. In this sense, social capital is treated as a potential way to facilitate compromise, coordination, and collaboration among political elites, and to promote more effective policy implementation. The third approach lends more credit to the side of the citizenry. By referring to the civic virtue model, Boix and Posner (1996) argue that engagement in community issues serves to reconcile self-defect and enhance community solidarity in a broader segment of society. These outcomes are achieved through raising the potential costs of defection, improving communication about trustworthiness, promoting norms of reciprocity, and fostering shared identities in the community. Apart from norms and identities, civic engagement also bestows citizens with better coordination and negotiation skills, which enhance citizen–government cooperation and increase governmental effectiveness in the long run. The last approach emphasises social capital's ability to overcome communal divisions, and link otherwise antagonistic social groups to work towards collective goals. Social capital and associational participation make these goals possible through facilitating consociational democracy programs, which resolve conflicts and bridge segmentations of the community at the elite level (Andeweg, 2000).

Further specification points out that the central idea of social capital contains two elements: social networks and collective actions (the structural dimension), and associated social norms allowing for coordinated actions (the cognitive dimension) (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Putnam, 2001; Lorenzen, 2007). These elements bear many similarities with the measurement of social cohesion used in this study. Therefore, the discussions on mechanisms of social capital (e.g. the generation and maintenance of trust and reciprocal behaviours) shed light on the mechanisms of social cohesion as well, as will be discussed in the following section.

2.2.2   The circular relationship: vicious or virtuous?

Institutions and social cohesion/capital are critical components of neighbourhood life as well. However, the debate remains unsettled on the relationship between the two factors. Some studies suggest that it is a substitutive relationship in which, through specific institution design,

we can cultivate social connectedness and compensate for the loss of social capital (Knack and Keefer, 1997). Others focus on the complementarity between effective institutions and social capital (Tabellini, 2008), which relies on a transmission mechanism between the two. Such relationships are interpreted by Putnam as 'self-reinforcing and cumulative' (Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993, p. 177). On the one hand, collective social outcomes can be attributed to the capacity of local political institutions to cultivate the 'civic community' (instantiated as social capital) through supplying and enforcing coordinating mechanisms via networks of associational participation and social interactions (Ostrom, 1990; Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993). On the other hand, such networks of civic engagement facilitate communication and develop collective identities, mutual trust, and norms of reciprocity, which constantly produce social capital on the community level. Communities with higher levels of social capital, argues Putnam (1993), are more likely to have better-performing governments. Consequently, in communities with abundant social trust, dense social networks, and successful cooperation experience, citizens are much more likely to work in coordinated ways under effective collaborative institutions. This leads to a 'virtuous circle'—social capital is self-reinforcing through the 'social equilibria with high levels of cooperation, trust, reciprocity, civic engagement and collective well-being' (Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993, p.177). In societies where existing relationships of interaction, trust, and reciprocity are weak, however, the self-reinforcing mechanism of social capital creates a 'vicious circle', which constantly generates (and is produced by) negative social outcomes. Although equilibrium might be achieved with authoritarian government and patron/client relations, power relations and exchange relationships embedded in patron–clientelism link only leaders and their supporters together. Such vertical structures provide very limited chances of generating reciprocity, mutual trust, and a shared sense of responsibility for collective actions among the wider community.

The self-reinforcing mechanism can be applied to social cohesion as well. Stanley (2003) identifies a feedback mechanism in his causal model of social cohesion. In this mechanism, improved social outcomes, such as collective actions and successful cooperation—which can result from policy intervention—produce higher levels of cohesion. Increased cohesion, in turn, engenders behavioural rules, norms of general reciprocity, and networks of associational participation, which reduce transaction costs and opportunism, and make future cooperation easier: a 'reciprocal help' scenario (Knack and Keefer, 1997; North, 1990). Alternatively, adverse social outcomes, such as free-riding, group conflicts, and non-cooperative behaviours, trigger the deterioration of social cohesion, which leads to bleak outcomes of collective actions, such as distrust, defection, exploitation, lawlessness and ineffective government—an 'always defeat' scenario. Therefore, as Stanley (2003) comments, social cohesion can either spiral upwards through the 'virtuous circle'

towards 'always cooperate', or spiral downwards through the 'vicious circle' towards 'always defeat'.

Given that these circles are iterative, whether local communities and social cooperation move towards better-off or worse-off situations depends on the initial conditions of the circle (Stanley, 2003). In other words, social cohesion, operationalised as community-focused behaviours and attitudes towards collective wellbeing, can sustain itself or increase in a self-referential fashion only if specific criteria are satisfied at the initial stage. These criteria centre on the prior existence of at least a modicum of social trust and cooperativeness. That is to say, an initial investment of cohesive behaviours, attitudes, and predispositions in the system will cause considerable profits in terms of the self-reinforcing mechanism of social cohesion/capital.

The question arises: where do these initial conditions come from? According to Putnam (1993; 1995b), the initial conditions of the circles are formed over hundreds of years through the 'virtuous circle' of social interaction, civic engagement, and good government. This explanation works well in his study of Italy but faces problems in less 'fertile' grounds. In most third world settings, for example, there is hardly any associational history and few strong civic traditions. Their limited resources of associational participation and social trust are hardly enough to initiate the 'virtuous circle' (Evans, 1996). Then, in these social capital–deficient societies, how does collective action appear for the first time? Putnam's theory does not provide answers to this question. Other scholars turn to external forces for help. Disaster, war, public policies, mega projects, and other forces outside the social system might play a pivotal role in the generation of social capital by closing the vicious circle off and initiating the virtuous one (e.g. Dekker and van den Broeck, 1998; Lowndes, 2000; Sander and Putnam, 2010)—all pointing to the possibility of studying the investment in and construction of social cohesion.

2.3   Towards cohesive neighbourhoods: three approaches

The reciprocal mechanisms in the co-evolvement of social cohesion and good governance highlight potentials for bidirectional causal arrows—patterns of social interactions, civic engagement, and reciprocal norms are no longer only causes of effective governance and responsive institutions, they might also become outcomes of policy interventions and institutional behaviours (Levi, 1996; Tarrow, 1996) —pointing out potentials for the political construction of neighbourhood cohesion.

Despite the popularity of these views (Skocpol, 1996; Lowndes and Wilson, 2001; Lelieveldt, 2004), empirical evidence, especially quantitative evidence, remains limited. Investigations by Paxton (2002) and Knack (2002) are among the limited studies that adopt robust statistical

models to explore the governance-cohesion relationship on a cross-national level. The neighbourhood level, on which social networks and civic engagement are the most observable, and local services and public goods are the most accessible, has seldom been empirically explored. The lack of empirical support, especially quantitative evidence, indicates an analytical disconnection in theories of social cohesion and social capital when they travel from macro-level structural changes to micro-level real life experiences. More details need to be filled in before the theory can be brought into real life scenarios. For example, both social capital and social cohesion theories highlight the roles of 'effective political institutions', but neither study provides clear definitions for political institutions, especially on the local level. There are different types of organisations involved in neighbourhood governance—not only traditional political institutions (e.g. local state agencies), but emerging institutions of the market and civil society (e.g. community-based organisations, local branches of NGOs, and commercial companies). These organisations, as commented by Boix and Posner (1996), can be expected to have varying aims, objectives, operational rules in use, and cohesion-building capacities—all pointing to different institutional approaches towards cohesive neighbourhoods.

Green, Janmaat and Han (2009) reviewed recent academic debates and policy papers on social cohesion and identified three distinctive approaches towards cohesion: the liberal approach, the communitarian approach, and the approach of the welfare state. Each approach is deeply rooted in political philosophical traditions and captures the vital features of institutional arrangements and social linkages in different social systems, which contribute to various social bonding mechanisms (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 A summary of major discourses of social cohesion

		Traditions of social cohesion		
		Liberalism	Institutionalism	Communitarianism
Basic principles	The notion of the individual	Rational, self-fulfilment, autonomy, free choice	Not always rational, institutional power over individuals	**Within the limits of communities**
	The notion of community	Instrumentalism, voluntary, based on social contract and associative ties, towards individual good	Communities based on common identity (e.g. work status and citizenship), towards the common good (from above)	**Communities based on shared values, towards the common good and guaranteeing individual rights**
	Attitudes towards the state	*Laissez-faire*, decentralisation, and the minimal	The welfare state, redistribution from above	**Cooperation between the welfare state and civil society**

		Traditions of social cohesion		
		Liberalism	Institutionalism	Communitarianism
		state as the night watchman		
Attitudes towards aspects of socialisation	Identity	Civic identity	Common identity from ethnocultural backgrounds	**Civic identity**
	Moral bonds and behavioural norms	Common beliefs in (economic) success; market principles (the invisible hand)	Social contracts originate from direct and participatory forms of democracy	**Social contracts, 'common good' of the community**
	Civic participation	Positive, the individualistic notion of civil society	Positive, the holistic notion of civil society, self-organisation	**Positive, the holistic and individualistic notion of civil society**
	Paths towards social cohesion	The spontaneous philosophy: segments of society are linked together by individual transactions guided by a common belief in (economic) success	State-sponsored approach: the state is institutionalised in welfare policy frameworks, dissemination, and social protection when social contradictions fail to be meditated by individuals and the market	**The golden rule: people can acquire individual autonomy if they follow the moral order and common good of their community (where common good comes from public discussion and deliberation)**

2.3.1   The liberal and neoliberal approaches towards neighbourhood cohesion

Originating from British liberal philosophers in the nineteenth century, the liberal discourse of social cohesion champions fundamental roles of individual freedom, private property and free choice in bonding societies together. Classical liberalists, such as John Locke, Adam Smith, and Jeremy Bentham, believe that individuals are born into a 'state of perfect freedom' (Locke, 1963) with natural tendencies to exchange goods and natural equality in exchange relations, and can therefore finally achieve a 'natural harmony of interests' in civil society (Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009, p.26). The natural process of accumulating self-interest follows the endogenous order in the market system, which is described by Smith (1776) as 'an invisible hand to promote an end which was not part of his intention—the common weal' (p.611). Therefore, the establishment of the liberal market order is in parallel with an implicit process of socialisation, whereas the virtues of

social cohesion are produced as unintended benefits of free individual transactions in private institutions maintained by market contracts—a 'spontaneous philosophy' (Jessop, 2002, p.455).

Classical liberalism provides ideological roots for the neoliberal regime of social cohesion that has prevailed in public policies and political debates since the collapse of the Keynesian welfare state in the 1980s. Neoliberalism extends the scopes of classical liberalism to a broader range of economic and political subjects, which can be summarised as

> the liberalization and deregulation of economic transactions, not only within national borders but also—and more importantly— across these borders; the privatization of state-owned enterprises and state-provided services; the use of market proxies in the residual public sector; and the treatment of public welfare spending as a cost of international production, rather than as a source of domestic demand (Jessop, 2002, p.454).

The establishment of social cohesion in the neoliberal regime still follows the 'spontaneous philosophy'—segments of society are linked together by individual transactions guided by 'a common, unifying belief in the chance of success (in the market)' (Mitchell, 2000, p.4). More importantly, neoliberal theorists argue that it is through *laissez-faire* economies that people can maximise their wealth, and that society can maximise its welfare and guarantee the wellbeing of all members. The success of individuals and the market, they argue, is also able to cushion the negative social influences of the neoliberal market economy, such as unemployment, inequality, and the loss of civic spirit (e.g., Jessop, 2018; Lazzarato, 2009).

The neighbourhood has become a key platform for the neoliberal regime shift since it is conceived to be the most effective and efficient level for the delivery of local services and consumption of local resources (Pill, 2009). Neoliberal principles and managerial strategies are widely applied in local governance through multiple approaches, such as the transfer of decision-making power to non-state actors (e.g. community-based organisations), the transfer of public services to various frontline service delivery institutions (e.g. property management companies), and the integration of market-type mechanisms (e.g. provider competition and user choice) into service delivery processes (Jessop, 2016; Lowndes, 2002).

Market-oriented techniques have redefined local societies from multiples perspectives. Some practitioners have found evidence showing that new types of social solidarity have emerged when new information technology and open opportunities from the global market reorganise the society on extra-local scales (Barnett, 2008; Thye, Yoon and Lawler, 2002). Downscaled to local levels, however, the neoliberal transition produces contrasting social effects. For some neoliberal

theorists, the community has been rediscovered in the neoliberal regime shift, both as part of civil society and as a management vehicle through which individuals are rebonded by contractual relationships that emphasise 'ethopower' (Flint, 2003). The contract-based social bonding mechanism sheds light on new possibilities for social cohesion, which are less engaged with production networks but more with decentralised consumption networks characterised by responsible self-governance and community obligation (Blandy and Lister, 2005; McGuirk and Dowling, 2011). It is worth noting that the neoliberal rediscovery of community distinguishes it significantly from the communitarian approach. The former approach, as commented by Jessop (2002), is no more than 'a flanking, compensatory mechanism' (p.455) for maintaining the stability of the individualistic and neoliberal market.

However, a variety of empirical cases show that market-oriented techniques erode territorial forms of social cohesion due to the strategic dilemma between producers who aim at maximising economic benefits, and the neighbourhood as a collective consumer which calls for equal distribution (Jessop, 2012). Galster's (2001) analysis indicates that the neighbourhood, as a primary unit of consumption, is incapable of cultivating Durkheimian 'organic solidarity' as it is not involved in the production and the division of labour. The contractual relationship between individuals as consumers and private institutions as service providers is vertical. It replaces horizontal links between citizens in civil society and produces governable but alienated individuals (Kipnis, 2007). Besides, based on the principles of contractualism, self-interest is promoted over general interest, leading to the dissolution of social solidarity, which is described by Larbi (1999) as 'falling ethical standards in public life with increasing incidence of greed, favouritism or conflicting interests' (p.34). What is more, the marketisation of community services strengthens social inequalities in the redistribution and consumption of neighbourhood-based resources (Andreotti, Mingione and Polizzi, 2012; Coburn, 2000). 'Market niche-seeking' behaviours are produced, which exclude the access of disadvantaged groups who depend on the neighbourhood, rather than the extra-local networks, for life resources. The profit-oriented nature of neoliberal management strategies may thus increase the risk of territorial fragmentation, social exclusion, and social segregation, which seriously threatens the cohesion of the neighbourhood and the wider society (Jeannotte et al., 2002; Andreotti, Mingione and Polizzi, 2012.

2.3.2   The state-centred approach towards neighbourhood cohesion

The fundamental principles of the liberal school—the natural equality in exchange relationships, and the natural harmony of interest—are often challenged by increasing social inequality and rule-breaking behaviours, which threaten, rather than cultivate, the cohesiveness of the society. As a direct response to these social problems, Marxist socialists argue that it is collectivism (such

as the collective folk, collective culture, and nationalism), rather than individualism, that characterises a cohesive society (Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009). Socialist cohesion depends on the integrative mechanism of the party-state, the priority of which is social equality and justice rather than individual liberty (Lukes, 1973; Zon, 1994). Republicanists and social democrats hold similar attitudes towards social equality and the proactive role of the state in social life. The emphasis on institutionalism and egalitarianism is often neglected or underestimated in the liberal tradition of social cohesion. These characteristics, as commented by Esping-Andersen (1985), could be 'the basic organisational principle for the construction of solidarity' (p.176). In these regimes, some, albeit not all, of the responsibility for creating and sustaining social cohesion is transferred from private institutions and individuals to public institutions (Jenson, 1998). Instead of the party-state itself, republicanist discourse argues that social order and social solidarity originate from direct and participatory forms of democracy. The social contract underlying direct democracy thus becomes the basis of social cohesion (Rousseau, 1762, cited in Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009).

The proactive role of the state lies at the centre of the institutionalist tradition of social cohesion, whether in the socialist regime, the republican regime, or the social-democratic regime. Public institutions, especially the welfare state, have important implications for social cohesion, which can be understood from the following angles. First, the involvement of the state in the establishment of social order has been institutionalised in the policy frameworks of welfare, education, and redistribution. Equality and equity hold the central place within these policy frameworks. Although not direct constituents of social cohesion, they are strongly correlated with key measures of social cohesion, particularly the cognitive dimensions of trust and belongingness, with a number of pieces of empirical evidence cross-nationally (e.g. Alesina and La Ferrara, 2000; Keefer and Knack, 2005; Twigg, Taylor and Mohan, 2010). Second, the state is not just a guarantor of social rules and individual transactions, but an active provider or co-producer of social welfare and social services, extending the scope and quality of social provision and social partnership with both market- and civil society–based organisations (Byrne, 2003). Third, the state's roles in dissemination and social protection are also beneficial to social reorganisation. By promoting civic education and political participation, the state helps to foster a collective identity and a set of shared values and social morals, which form moral and emotional bonds which go well beyond interest-based attachment in the market economy.

The institutionalist tradition of social cohesion and the welfare state operate through everyday governing practices in neighbourhood life. As summarised by Evans (1996), there are at least four approaches through which neighbourhood social cohesion is produced and maintained by local public agencies. Firstly, the state shapes the social context in which neighbourhood social capital

is generated, through the provision and enforcement of universalistic rules and specific policy frameworks. The rule-governed environment increases the efficiency of local organisations, contributing to social cohesion 'from a distance' (Blakeley, 2010; Onyx and Bullen, 1998). Secondly, government policies and development strategies can 'downscale' to the group and individual levels and affect the generation and distribution of neighbourhood social cohesion. Thirdly, neighbourhood governance operates in a way that incorporates civic education in service delivery and social mobilisation. These civic educational programmes advocate public participation in agenda-setting, negotiation, and decision-making. Fourthly, social cohesion, in some cases, comes appears as a by-product of community public programmes. Organisational collaborations, whether effective or not, provide opportunities for residents to meet, discuss and interact even if they are not directly involved in community projects.

The state-mediated nature of the neighbourhood reshapes its role as a mobilising discourse in social re-organisation. Multiple effects have been observed in the social (re)construction of communities. For some scholars, the neighbourhood serves as a policy platform on which 'governing through community' is performed to address a variety of social problems through the cultivation of 'collective efficiency' (Mennis, Dayanim and Grunwald, 2013; Rose, 1996). They contend that the active involvement of public sectors has made a significant contribution to improving stocks of neighbourhood social cohesion, through specific policy frameworks providing universal social insurance and encouraging public participation, voluntary activities, and civic education (Hall, 1999; Lowndes and Wilson, 2001; Maloney, Smith and Stoker, 2000; Rothstein, 2001).

However, other scholars criticise the overemphasis on the neighbourhoods as 'politics of local', as communities become connotations of the good life set by the state as outsiders rather than by the people themselves (Nelson and Wright, 1995). Governing through community tends to downplay existing inequalities in social networks and power relations across neighbourhoods (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). In addition, some found evidence for the 'carving-out' effect of the welfare state which would be otherwise paternalistic. The detrimental effects of the welfare state are summarised by Wolfe (1989) as a 'historic irony': when social problems are taken over by the government, individuals are no longer horizontally linked together, 'thus undermining the very moral strengths the welfare state has shown' (p. 22).

2.3.3 The communitarian approach towards neighbourhood cohesion

Another school standing in strong opposition to the liberal principles of personal autonomy and individual good is the communitarian school. Rooted in classic republican ideas, such as Plato's

Republic, Aristotle's analogy of 'political animals', and Hegel's account of 'civil society', the communitarian school emphasises the common good of the community and calls for a re-examination of the relations between individuals and the community/society (Etzioni, 2015). First, the communitarian school challenges the liberal portrayal of the 'self'—it is no longer 'radically unattached or radically detachable' (Buchanan, 1989, p.865), but instead becomes a social creature whose identity and character are shaped, if not determined, by its social, economic, and historical contexts (Bellah et al., 2008; Sandel, 2009). Social consciousness and community embeddedness thus become essential sources of solidarity, as they contribute to one's sense of self as well as one's associations with other members of the community (Jailobaeva, 2008; Sage, 2012). Second, communitarians hold that the liberal perspective fails to recognise the significance of civic virtues and the common good (which originate from public life), constitutive communities, and civic participation (Sandel, 1985; Sandel et al., 1990). These civic activities are 'independent sources' of values, duties, virtues, and norms, which further provide moral foundations (e.g. trust and reciprocity) and operational rules (e.g. formal and informal social control) for the government, the market, and civil organisations (Cohen and Arato, 1994). The communal formulation of the 'common good' sets the communitarian theory aside from other theories, as it promotes a relative form of community-based solidarity, which is distinctive among the spontaneous form (of the liberals) and the universal form of solidarity (of the social democrats) (Walzer, 1983).

However, contradictions between liberals and communitarians are not irreconcilable. Attempts were made by Etzioni and Galston, who established a responsive communitarian school and offered a 'new golden rule' as a synthesis of traditional liberal and early communitarian theories: 'respect and uphold society's moral order as you would have society respect and uphold your autonomy to live a full life' (Etzioni, 1996, p.xviii). This balance between individual right and societal responsibilities reminds us of the spontaneous philosophy in liberalism, whereas the 'glue' linking individual choice and community wellbeing changes from market order (liberalism) to the common good (communitarian). This is why many scholars put forward communitarianism as a revised version of liberalism, with an emphasis on the improvement of the liberal organisation of the society (Łucka, 2002). Even in some case, such as Manchester (Blakeley, 2010), the community-centred development approach made way for more neoliberal strategies in the 'new realist' turn towards urban entrepreneurialism, and has been incorporated into the soft governing strategies of the state (Cowden and Singh, 2017).

The neighbourhood is the primary level on which communitarian principles are exercised, and there are different approaches towards exercising these principles. According to Rauch (2000), communitarianism can be classified into 'hard' and 'soft' versions, depending on how individual

freedom and social responsibilities are balanced. With hard communitarianism, akin to authoritarian communitarianism in East Asia (Heberer, 2009), social norms and moral values generated from the social context become a more-or-less coercive form of social control. Individuals are 'pushed' (usually by the state) to follow the commonly accepted rules and shared values, and contribute to the common good at the price of individual preferences (Etzioni, 2015). In contrast, soft communitarianism focuses on the role of civil society organisations and is less oppressive and more voluntary. It offers more spaces for individual freedom: one can choose whether to obey the social norms and moral values of one's community or not. Rather than being enforced by the state, these norms and values are produced by social institutions (e.g. community-based organisations) and will be recast with changes in the social environment and demographic composition of the community.

Empirical studies have revealed different communitarian ways that civic life can be reshaped and revitalised on the local level, leading to new forms of social cohesion. One of the most widely applied strategies is the encouragement of community participation, whether economically, socially, politically, or service-specifically (Pestoff, 2009). Projects for consultation and community participation create new governance spaces for residents to express their needs and priorities and expand their capacities and influences, which not only ensures a better match between local needs and service delivery but promotes participatory modes of citizenship (Ghose, 2005). Furthermore, citizens are increasingly engaged in policymaking through a wide range of empowerment mechanisms and deliberative institutions, such as citizens' panels, deliberative councils, and neighbourhood forums (Newman et al., 2004), which strengthens community trust and generalised reciprocity (Knack, 2002). Besides, a range of civic education and capacity-building programmes are organised towards 'responsible citizens', who are more self-regulated, community-minded, civically capable, and engaged in public issues (Sage, 2012). The cultivation of responsible citizenship relies both on existing levels of neighbourhood social capital and community moral bonds and contributes to the civicness and social connectedness of the whole community (Putnam, 2000; Fyfe, 2005; Power, 2015).

However, a growing dissonance has been revealed between the policy statements of communitarianism and the revival of civic spirits and active citizens, and the realities of what has actually been revitalised on the ground (Bailey and Pill, 2015). As illustrated by cases in the US and the UK, communitarian values are extensively pursued in neighbourhood regeneration and urban renewal projects, which mostly take place in less economically competitive neighbourhoods (Bailey, 2010; Boyle and Silver, 2005; Jessop, 2002). These neighbourhoods are often assumed to be weakly regulated and to the lack of civic capacities to support the informal coping system of participation and empowerment, leaving governance space for external interventions (Taylor,

2007). The domestic form of empowerment is thus regarded as a technology of citizenship (Cruickshank, 1999), or means of social regulation (Blakeley, 2010), which would probably lead to an aggravation of social inequality and fragmentation of local power, as those engaged in it are still 'peripheral insiders' (Jones, 2003, p.582) whom the power is 'shared with' rather than 'transferred to' (Boyle and Silver, 2005, p.244).

To sum up, the approaches towards neighbourhood cohesion discussed in this section can be summarised in Figure 2.1. In the (neo)liberal approach (Figure 2.1 (a)), social cohesion in a neighbourhood is maintained by market rules, such as property management contracts. A cohesive community will come without having been intended when all the residents are self-regulated and obey the rules voluntarily. When the 'spontaneous philosophy' (Jessop, 2002, p.455) of neoliberalism is constantly being challenged by increasing social inequality and rule-breaking behaviours, local authorities and other state agencies are introduced back into the governance network in the institutional approach (Figure 2.1 (b)). The local state acts as both a coordinator (of market rules) and producer (of universal welfare). The problems of neoliberalism are also addressed in the communitarian approach, in which social contracts replace (Figure 2.1 (c)) or supplement (Figure 2.1 (d)) malfunctioned market rules in maintaining social order and social solidarity.

```
┌─────────────┐     Market rules (e.g. contracts)      ┌─────────────┐
│ Individuals │ ─────────────────────────────────────▶ │  Cohesive   │
└─────────────┘                                         │neighbourhoods│
                                                        └─────────────┘
```

(a) The (neo)liberal approach towards neighbourhood cohesion

```
┌─────────────┐     Market rules (e.g. contracts)      ┌─────────────┐
│ Individuals │ - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -▶│  Cohesive   │
└─────────────┘   Enforcement ↑ Redesign               │neighbourhoods│
                 ┌─────────────┐                        └─────────────┘
                 │    State    │
                 │  agencies   │
                 └─────────────┘
```
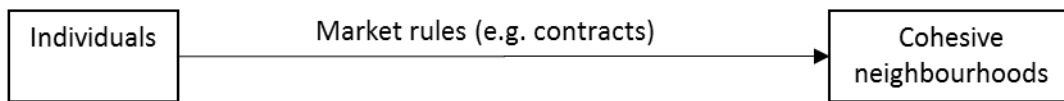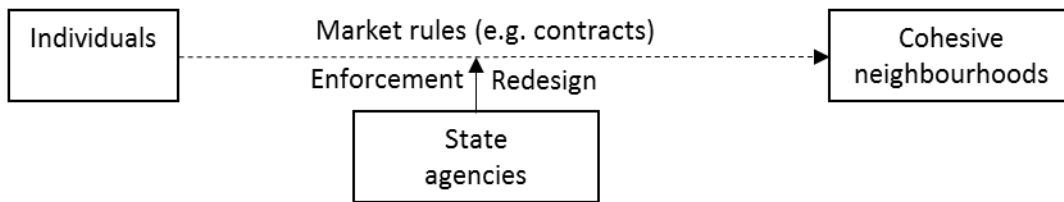
(b) The institutional approach towards neighbourhood cohesion

```
┌─────────────┐ Consensus ┌─────────────┐  Social contracts   ┌─────────────┐
│ Individuals │ ─────────▶│ Communities │  (e.g. Covenants,   │  Cohesive   │
└─────────────┘           └─────────────┘  Conditions &       │neighbourhoods│
                                           Restrictions)       └─────────────┘
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(c) The communitarian approach towards neighbourhood cohesion

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┌─────────────┐     Market rules (e.g. contracts)      ┌─────────────┐
│ Individuals │ - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -▶│  Cohesive   │
└─────────────┘   Enforcement ↑ Social contracts       │neighbourhoods│
        │                                               └─────────────┘
        │ Consensus   ┌─────────────┐
        └────────────▶│Civil society│
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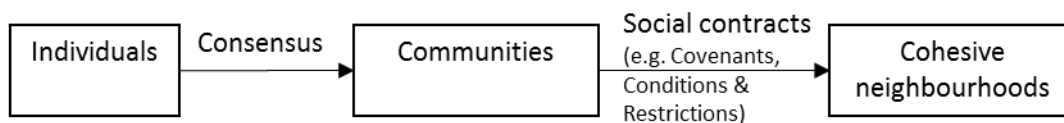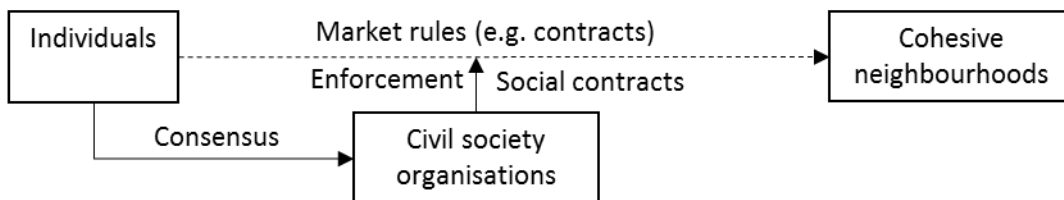
(d) The communitarian adaption of the (neo)liberal approach towards neighbourhood cohesion

Figure 2.1 Institutional approaches towards neighbourhood cohesion

2.4 Summary

'Social cohesion' captures the general mechanisms that bond individuals together into a social entity. Realising its multilevel nature, cohesion on the neighbourhood level is of particular interest to this research, as the neighbourhood provides 'scenescapes' to repair and normalise social relations damaged through urbanisation and modernisation (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Novy, Swiatek and Moulaert, 2012). It also serves as a foundation for new forms of redistribution and consumption mechanisms (Davies and Pill, 2012b; Deng, 2008; Power, 2015). A review of widely accepted definitions of cohesion helped me to distil the common components of neighbourhood cohesion: neighbourly interactions and community participation (behavioural cohesion elements), and neighbourhood attachment, trust and reciprocity, and orientation towards collective goods (cognitive cohesion elements). Incorporating the five dimensions, I then developed a working definition of neighbourhood cohesion, which reflects the outcome of multiple possible cohesion-building processes, and is constructed of observable individual behavioural and cognitive characteristics that are similar to measures of social capital.

On this basis, I explored mechanisms of neighbourhood cohesion, focusing on the roles of local political institutions. I borrowed ideas from classical works from Putnam (1993; 1995b), who recognised the existence of positive relationships between social capital and governmental performances, and explained such relationships as being in a 'virtuous circle'. The self-reinforcing mechanism can be applied to social cohesion as well (Jeannotte *et al.*, 2002; Stanley, 2003). Putnam's theoretical explanations for such circulations work well in his study of Italy, but face problems when applied to other contexts, since in some third world countries, for instance, there might be hardly any associational history nor strong civic traditions to initiate the 'virtuous circle' of the cohesive neighbourhood and good governance. Then the question becomes: how do collective action and neighbourhood cohesiveness appear for the first time in civic-less societies?

Further readings of cohesion theories highlighted the potential for bidirectional causal arrows to answer this question—patterns of social interactions, civic engagement, and reciprocal norms might be outcomes, as well as causes, of institutional behaviours (Levi, 1996; Tarrow, 1996). The 'reversed' causal arrow—cohesion as an outcome—pointed out a new set of explanations of variances in neighbourhood cohesion—an explanation from the perspective of governance and institutions (Lelieveldt, 2004; Lowndes and Wilson, 2001).

I then expanded and differentiated these explanations into three approaches towards cohesive neighbourhoods, based on Green, Janmaat and Han's (2009) identification of cohesion regimes. In the first approach (the (neo)liberal approach), a cohesive neighbourhood appears spontaneously as a byproduct of market success when market rules can be effectively enforced among responsible homeowners voluntarily. In the second approach (the state-centred approach), the local state becomes an active participant in neighbourhood governance. It effectively enforces market rules, engages in the delivery of community services, and enhances participatory forms of democracy, which promote the emergence of local social order and social solidarity. In the third approach (the communitarian approach), neighbourhood cohesion is believed to be built from the bottom up. Social contracts are formulated from public discussion and deliberation concerning the common good of the community, and they replace or supplement market contracts in neighbourhood development.

These approaches set up three hypotheses of neighbourhood cohesion building:

Hypothesis 1: Neighbourhood cohesion, in terms of neighbourhood interactions, civic participation, community attachment, common goals, and neighbourly trust, is correlated with the performances of neighbourhood market institutions—the (neo)liberal/market-centred approach of cohesion building.

Hypothesis 2: Neighbourhood cohesion, in terms of neighbourhood interactions, civic participation, community attachment, common goals, and neighbourly trust, is correlated with the performances of neighbourhood state agencies—the state-centred approach of cohesion building.

Hypothesis 3: Neighbourhood cohesion, in terms of neighbourhood interactions, civic participation, community attachment, common goals, and neighbourly trust, is correlated with the performances of neighbourhood civil society organisations—the communitarian/society-centred approach of cohesion building.

These hypotheses, together with the hypotheses generated from the Chinese context which will be explored in the next chapter, provide potential explanations for variations of neighbourhood cohesion in China and will be further explored in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 with the empirical evidence from Nanjing, China.

Chapter 3   Neighbouring, neighbourliness, and neighbourhood governance in the Chinese context

Departing from Western experiences, in this chapter, I will turn to the Chinese context of cohesion. The main objective of this chapter will be to test whether the theoretical framework of social cohesion developed mainly in a European and North American context can be applied to Chinese society. To be more specific, the applicability of social cohesion theories will be explored with the following questions: what do neighbourhood and neighbourhood cohesion mean in the Chinese context? What is the general trend of evolution of different dimensions of cohesion in urban neighbourhoods in China? Speaking of the formation and maintenance of neighbourhood cohesion, can the three approaches developed from Western philosophical traditions find their institutional basis in urban China? Does Chinese society/neighbourhoods have specific ways to cultivate cohesive behaviours and attitudes?

To address these questions, I will review in this chapter recent studies on neighbourhood social cohesion and neighbourhood governance in urban China. The review will start with a brief introduction of the major types of neighbourhood in urban China. It will then disaggregate neighbourhood cohesion into key components, following the pluralistic analytical approach established in Chapter 2. As there have been fewer published works on the development of neighbourly trust and orientation towards collective goals, the discussion will centre on informal neighbourly interactions, community participation, and sense of community, with the former two as indicators of behavioural cohesion and the latter as the indicator of cognitive cohesion. What follows will be a discussion on the rise of neighbourhood governance in transitional China, focusing on the changing role of the state, the market, and the society. On this basis, I will transplant and adopt the theoretical framework of social cohesion into the Chinese context, and develop China-specific scenarios of cohesion building. In the final part, I will briefly summarise the findings of and gaps in existing studies and propose research questions and hypotheses for this research.

3.1   Neighbourhood and neighbourhood cohesion in the Chinese context: terminology and typology

The basic idea of social cohesion—the bonding mechanism of a society—manifests itself in Chinese society in similar and different ways compared with its European counterparts. Literally translated into Chinese as *shehui ningjuli* (a force that binds the society together), social cohesion

is a key theme of China's national social and community policies. These policies share similar overall objectives with social cohesion policies formulated in Western contexts, such as relieving social tensions and advocating moral, responsible, and socially active citizenship (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2017).

These objectives, however, are achieved in China through a variety of approaches, some of which display very different characteristics from those in European countries. This is because, first of all, China is a society that is often regarded as less ethically heterogeneous and more culturally stable (Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009). Its cohesion policies are thus less engaged in multiculturalism and focus more on assimilation, such as how to integrate marginalised populations (e.g. rural migrants) into urban society (Liu, Li and Breitung, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2016; Liu, Huang and Zhang, 2017). Second, existing frameworks of social cohesion (as discussed in Chapter 2) often originated from European or North American experiences, the assumptions of which—a functioning welfare state, the traditions of civil society, and an intellectually grounded social citizenship (Turzi, 2008) —are not fully satisfied in China. Third, the Western definition of social cohesion, as criticised by Xu, Perkins and Chow (2010), is too 'culturally individualistic' to explain the evolution of social cohesion in the context of China. As for traditional Chinese society, social networks are rooted in graded personalised networks of kinship and friendship, in which '*guanxi*' (associating oneself with others in a hierarchical manner in order to maintain social and economic order), '*mianzi*' (social status, propriety, prestige, or a combination of all three), and '*renqing*' (the moral obligation to maintain a relationship) play significant roles (Fei, Hamilton and Wang, 1992). The predominant values in these networks lie in parochial and particularistic feelings associated with kinship or geographical closeness (Chen and Lu, 2007). Fourth, individual responsibility and public participation in cohesion partly, if not always, feature the party-state's top-down efforts. A cohesive neighbourhood can be constructed through the interplay between civic discourse and state power performed by its territorial agencies, such as the Street Offices (SOs) and Residents' Committees (RCs) (Ohmer, 2007; Wan, 2013). The prevalence of local state agencies in building neighbourhood cohesion makes the Chinese case an intriguing topic in community research.

Neighbourhood cohesion acts as an essential foundation for social cohesion in urban China (Cui, 2012; Wu and Li, 2013), performing not only across different social groups (e.g. among rural migrants and disadvantaged groups) but through specific geographical spaces as well. Most existing studies on neighbourhood cohesion in China have only focused on cohesion across social groups (e.g. groups divided by hukou, income and other individual sociodemographic factors), but failed to address adequately spatial factors of neighbourhood cohesion (Wu and Ning, 2018). Few writers have been able to draw on any systematic research into spatial variations of cohesive behaviours and perceptions across urban neighbourhoods—both in terms of levels of

cohesiveness, and their varying mechanisms. Therefore, in this section, I will begin the discussion around specific roles and general characteristics of Chinese urban neighbourhoods, which serve as the spatial foundation of neighbourhood cohesion.

3.1.1   Definitions of the 'neighbourhood' in urban China: a triple identity

'Neighbourhood', in this research, is taken to mean *shequ* in the Chinese context—'the collective social body formed by those living within a defined geographic boundary' (Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2000). Defined in this way, neighbourhoods often cover one or more residential estates (*xiaoqu*s) and coincide with the administrative territory of the RC —an important grassroots organisation sponsored by Chinese local government (Yip, 2014).

These associations with *xiaoqu*s and the RC bestow the neighbourhood in urban China with a triple identity. As a spatial entity with clear boundaries, the neighbourhood is a platform for material exchange based on contractual relationships and clearly defined property rights. It shares an identity with the 'housing estate' which is defined as 'a group of houses… erected on a tract of land by one builder and controlled by one management' (*Housing development*, no date). As a social entity, the neighbourhood is where social ties develop, and collective actions get organised based on shared values and common goals. It shares an identity with the 'community', where individuals are 'connected by durable relations and interactions that extend beyond immediate genealogical ties' (Mah and Carpenter, 2016, p. 2). Some observers have been reminded by these first and second identities of neoliberal policies emphasising private property and market exchange alongside social capital and community self-governance. However, the Chinese neighbourhood is also a unit of administration. The residential space is institutionalised by the state through the RC system, which serves as a vehicle for party leadership and enforces the rules of membership of the community (Tomba, 2014). Through the RC system, policy interventions are made, access to resources is provided, and opportunities for participation are selectively offered through RC-led venues.

The triple identity of the 'neighbourhood' bestows 'neighbourhood cohesion' with multiple possibilities in the Chinese context: emphasising the economic identity of the neighbourhood (neighbourhood as a housing estate), neighbourhood cohesion can be viewed as the capacity of homeowners to guarantee effective consumption (of both services and real estate) by pooling property rights over collective resources (Webster, 2003). Focusing on the social identity of the neighbourhood (neighbourhood as a social community), neighbourhood cohesion is closely related to neighbourly interactions and neighbourliness, and is thus involved in discussions of 'community liberated' (Wellman, 1979, 1996). Finally, referring to the neighbourhood in terms of

its political identity (i.e. the neighbourhood as an administrative unit), we can associate neighbourhood cohesion with local capacities of civic engagement, the abilities of the grassroots administration, and the state's local control strategies.

3.1.2 The typology of urban neighbourhoods in urban China

The multiple possibilities of neighbourhood cohesion in urban China can be realised in various types of urban neighbourhood, which are regarded not only as different types of 'containers' of social ties and reflections of community sentiment, but also as varying symbol of social identities and lifestyle, and multiple targets towards which neighbourhood governance works (Wu, He and Webster, 2010; Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2016).

An overview of neighbourhood studies shows that there are three major types of urban neighbourhoods in China: traditional neighbourhoods, privatised work units, and commodity housing estates (Li, Zhu and Li, 2012). In addition, large-scale social housing projects initiated since the late 2000s have led to the emergence of new types of social housing specially designed for low-to-middle income residents and relocated residents (Wu and He, 2005; Zhou and Ronald, 2017). These types of social housing, including public rental housing, low-rent housing, relocation settlement and affordable housing, are grouped under the name of 'affordable housing' in this study. Urban villages are not included in the classification as they are not a legal type of housing arrangement with formal governance arrangement. Table 3.1 presents a comparison of major features of the built environment, demography and institutional arrangements of each type of neighbourhood.

Table 3.1 Typology of urban neighbourhoods in major Chinese cities (adapted from Wang, 2015)

	History	Built environment	Social composition	Governance arrangements
Traditional neighbourhoods	Including lane- or courtyard-based housing, and other types of housing built before the 1998 housing reform, except work units	Usually located in inner-city areas, compact design, often with outdoor and shared facilities, open communities with hardly any green spaces	Primarily native residents and migrants with low incomes, who cannot afford to move into commodity housing estates. Tightly-knitted networks, intensive neighbouring, high sense of trust and reciprocity, and place attachment among native residents (Whyte	Under the administration of the SO and the RC

	History	Built environment	Social composition	Governance arrangements
			and Parish, 1984; Li, 1993)	
Privatised work units	Built during the socialist era (1949-1980s), privatised during the 1990s	Self-contained 'micro-region' with juxtaposed space of workplaces, residential areas, and social service areas (Wu, 2005)	Primarily native residents who were allocated housing by their work units. Intensive neighbouring, high levels of community attachment and collective identity originating from dependence on the state and on colleagueship networks (Walder, 1986; Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012).	Under the administration of the SO and the RC. The work unit system remains influential in some neighbourhoods
Commodity housing estates	Proliferated since the 1998 housing reform	Newly built housing estates, usually gated and guarded with private amenities	Nouveau riche and new middle class, composed of both native residents and migrants who can afford the housing price. More inclined to anonymity and 'weaker, more fluid ties of association' (Forrest and Yip, 2007), but strong neighbourhood attachment (Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012)	Triangular power relationships among the grassroots government (the SO, and RC), self-governance organisations (HOA) and PMC
Affordable housing estates	First appeared in the 1980s, sprung up in late 2000s	Design and quality of affordable neighbourhoods depends on the developer	Residents who used to live in villages and traditional neighbourhoods offered replacement housing after redevelopment; migrants and residents with low income	Privately managed by PMC, some are assisted or subsidised by the SO

3.1.2.1 Traditional neighbourhoods

The term 'traditional neighbourhood' (*laojiu xiaoqu*) is a relatively broad concept covering many types of house, such as lanes, courtyard housing and some public housing areas. They were usually built in the inner city by the private or public sectors before the housing reform in the 1990s. Residents in these neighbourhoods have often shared collective living experience for a long time, leading to the formation of tightly-knitted networks, intense relationships between neighbours, and a high sense of trust, reciprocity, and attachment to place (Whyte and Parish, 1984; Li, 1993). An extreme example of intensive neighbouring is patrilineal kinship networks, as documented by earlier researchers in some traditional communities (Li, 1993). When extended families live close to each other within a neighbourhood, graded personalised networks of consanguinity can be developed (Fei, Hamilton and Wang, 1992; Yang and Hou, 1999). *Guanxi* (associating oneself with others in a hierarchical manner in order to maintain social and economic order), *mianzi* (social status, propriety, prestige, or a combination of all three) and *renqing* (the moral obligation to maintain a relationship) play significant roles in these networks (Fei, Hamilton and Wang, 1992).
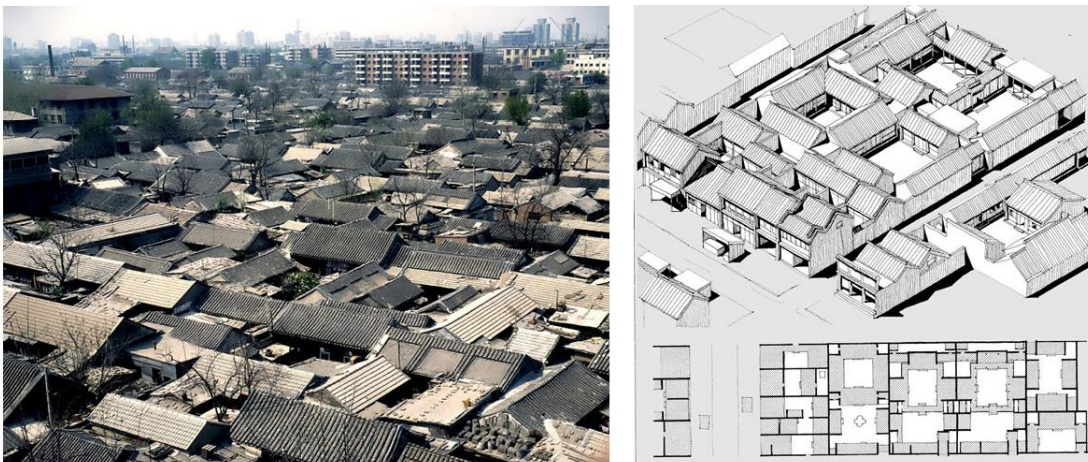
Figure 3.1 A typical traditional neighbourhood in Beijing

(Source: http://projectivecities.aaschool.ac.uk/portfolio/yuwei-wang-beijing-collective, accessed on July 5, 2017)

Traditional neighbourhoods were built by public sector organisations in the pre-reform era, and some of them are still managed by these organisations, such as municipal housing bureaus, nowadays. The 'patron-client' relationship in the planned economy exerts a long-lasting effect on

neighbourhood life in traditional neighbourhoods (Walder, 1986). SOs and RCs[2] (*juweihui*), as local state agencies, remain influential in social and political life in these neighbourhoods (Figure 3.2). These neighbourhoods are therefore termed '*juwei* neighbourhoods' in some research (e.g. Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012).
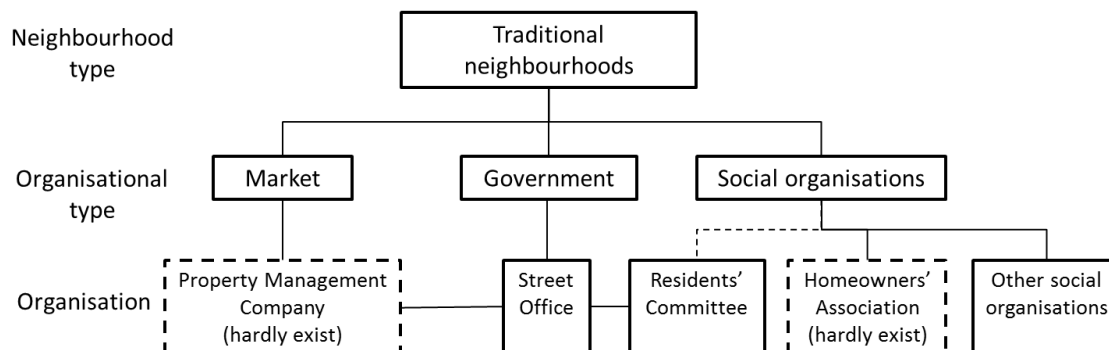
Figure 3.2 Neighbourhood organisations in a typical traditional neighbourhood

3.1.2.2   Work units

The dominance of traditional neighbourhoods was gradually replaced under the socialist regime (pre-1978) by work units—state-owned, self-contained 'micro-regions' with juxtaposed spaces of workplaces, residential areas, and social service areas (Wu, 2005). Various studies demonstrate that the proximity of work, housing, and social facilities in work units led to widespread colleagueship networks and neighbourhood-based life patterns (Whyte and Parish, 1984; Li, 1993; Lu, 2006; Du et al., 2012). According to Lu (2006), by 1978, 95% of urban workers lived in work units, and a significant proportion of their social networks were confined within their neighbourhoods. Some features of traditional neighbourhoods were replicated in these neighbourhoods: intensive neighbouring, and high levels of community attachment and collective identity (Walder, 1986; Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012). It is worth noting that such colleagueship networks are specific to socialist China. The intensive neighbouring and neighbourliness in work units (horizontal links among co-workers) originated from individuals' dependence on the state (vertical links with state agents in terms of workshop leaders), rather than a long history of

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[2] Although, by definition, an RC is a mass organisation voluntarily formed by the residents rather than a government agency, it indeed serves as 'the field office of an upper-level Street Office and an arm of the Communist Party' for dealing with local affairs (Fu and Lin, 2014). Considering the distinctive roles of RCs and other neighbourhood social institutions (such as homeowners' associations) in neighbourhood governance, the RC is viewed as a quasi-political institution. For a discussion of the classification and function of grassroots state agencies, see Wu (2002) and Tomba (2005).

cohabitation (Xu, Perkins and Chow, 2010). Therefore, Walder (1986) terms work unit–based neighbourly relationships 'communist neo-traditionalism'.
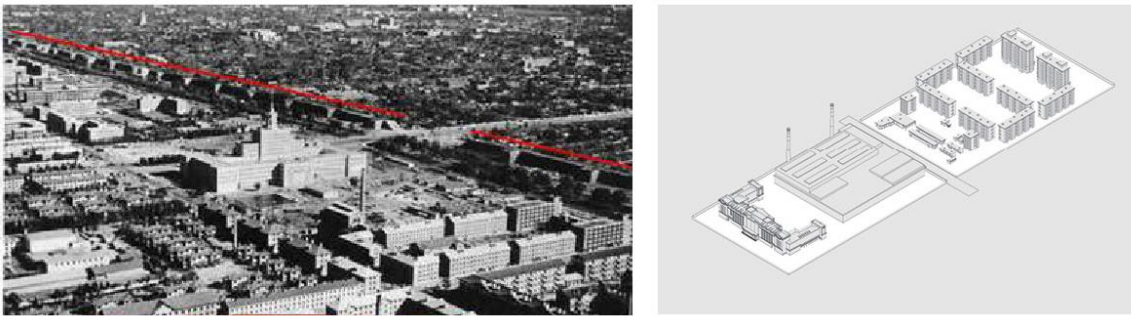
Figure 3.3 A typical work unit in Beijing in the 1960s

(Source: http://projectivecities.aaschool.ac.uk/portfolio/yuwei-wang-beijing-collective, accessed on July 5, 2017)

Since the progressive launch of urban housing reform in the 1990s, state-owned enterprises have gradually retreated from social life. Self-contained work-unit compounds were privatised—they were sold to the house users at discount prices. Although they have been commodified, privatised work units are less affected by market forces, and the work-unit system remains influential in some neighbourhoods. Some powerful state-owned enterprises may even run their own property management companies to provide essential services for their employees. Their labour unions may also provide support for neighbourhood organisations, such as Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) or Self-Management Associations (SMAs) (Figure 3.4).
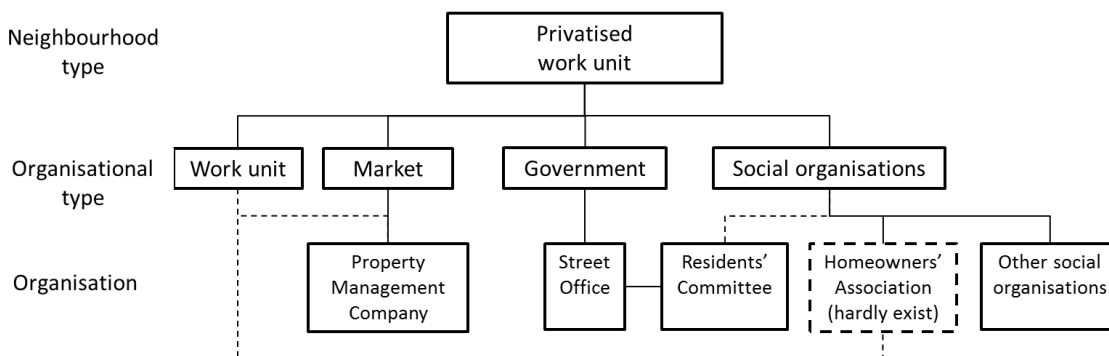
Figure 3.4 Neighbourhood organisations in a typical privatised work unit

3.1.2.3   Commodity housing estates

The privatisation of work units in the 1990s paved the way for market-oriented housing sectors and triggered a boom of commodity housing estates in urban China. As housing becomes a commodity in the market, housing price acts as a filtering mechanism in the social and spatial

reorganisation of urban spaces, resulting in congregations of people of similar socioeconomic status (Wu, 2005; Li and Li, 2013). Property-based interests replace work-unit affiliations in organising neighbourhood interactions in these commodity neighbourhoods. Substantial evidence has been found showing that new homeowners in commodity housing estates no longer stick to traditional lifestyles and engage in such intensive relationships as neighbours (e.g. Wu and He, 2005; Forrest and Yip, 2007; Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012). Instead, they are more inclined to 'weaker, more fluid ties of association' (Forrest and Yip, 2007) and follow behavioural rules under cooperative laws and regulations (Fu, 2015; He, 2015).

Figure 3.5 A typical commodity housing estate in Beijing

(Source: http://projectivecities.aaschool.ac.uk/portfolio/yuwei-wang-beijing-collective, accessed on July 5, 2017)

Compared with other types of neighbourhood, commodity housing estates in China are significantly affected by market forces. Neighbourhood governance in commodity housing estates usually operates based on a triangular power relationship between the grassroots government (SOs and RCs), self-governance organisations (HOAs and other voluntary associations), and property management companies (Figure 3.6). During the governing process, policies, ideas, and information are transmitted from the local government to the grassroots level through community leaders, representatives, and activists, which encourage civic engagement and cultivate neighbourhood social cohesion at the same time.
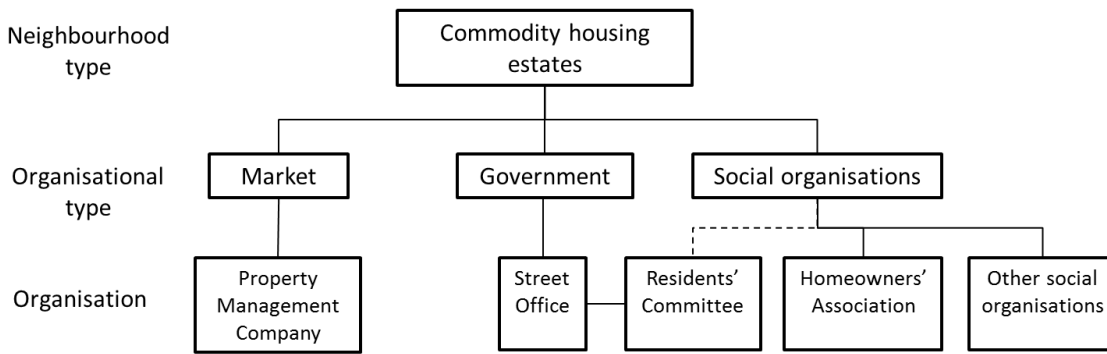
Figure 3.6 Neighbourhood organisations in a typical commodity housing estate

3.1.2.4 Affordable housing estates

Apart from privatised work units and commodity housing estates, affordable housing is another component of the diversified provision system produced by the housing reform. Targeting low-to-middle-income urban households, affordable housing is provided by either the public sector or private developers with a subsidised price controlled by the government. Resettlement housing is one type of affordable housing, in which low-cost housing is provided as compensation for households affected by urban redevelopment and infrastructure projects. Instead of in-situ resettlement, which used to be the norm before the early 2000s (Li, 2000), relocation now appears to be the dominant form of resettlement. Households receiving resettlement include residents of traditional neighbourhoods in the old city core and villagers in suburban areas.
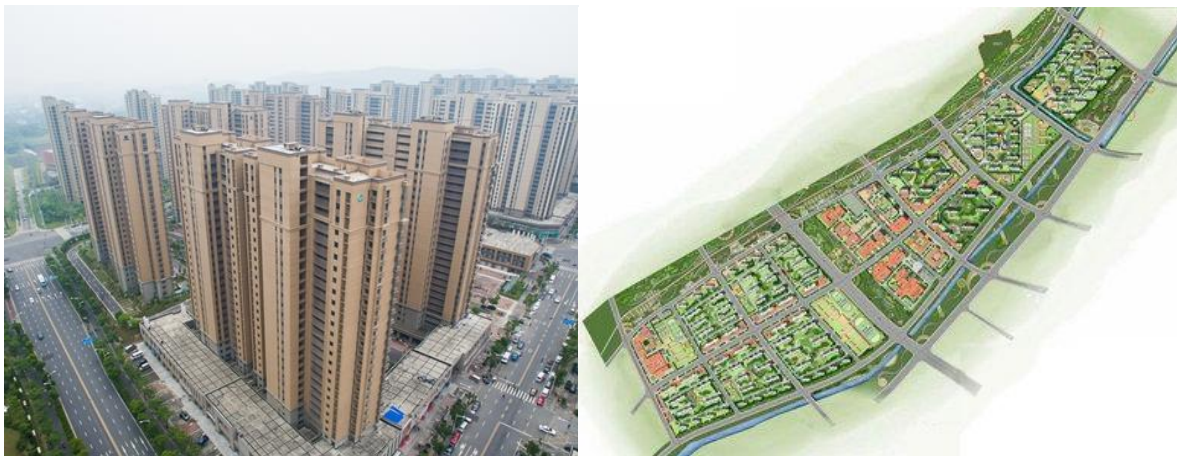
Figure 3.7 A typical affordable housing estate in Nanjing

(Source: http://zhishi.fang.com/xf/jn_37765.html, accessed on July 5, 2017)

As part of the public housing scheme, the construction and management of affordable housing estates involve the active participation of the public sector. Grassroots governments take on most responsibilities in the neighbourhood, including some responsibilities of the property management companies and HOAs. This omnipotent-government model, involving limited roles

for the market and community civic groups, may further influence neighbourly behaviours and neighbourhood social cohesion.
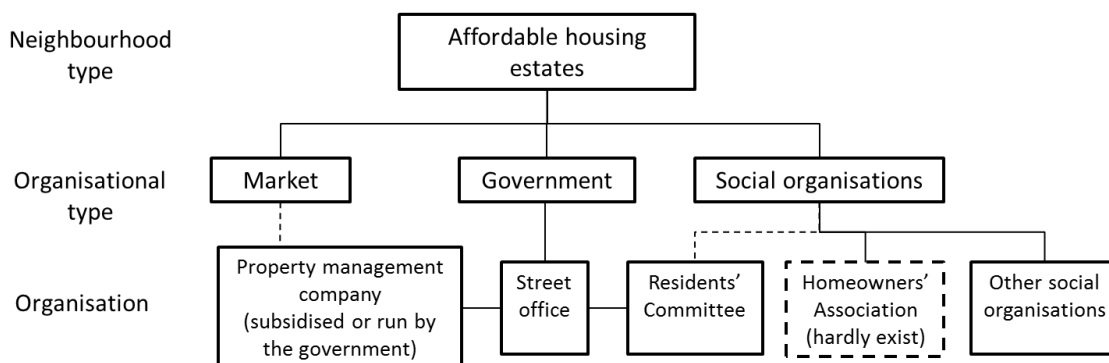
Figure 3.8 Neighbourhood institutions in a typical resettlement housing estate

3.2 The development of neighbourhood cohesion in urban China

The multiplicity of urban neighbourhoods implies multiple possibilities for neighbourhood cohesion in urban China. As longitudinal studies are hardly possible due to limited historical data, most existing studies utilise cross-sectional analysis to explore the development of social cohesion in residential areas in urban China (e.g. Forrest and Yip, 2007; Li and Chen, 2008; Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2016). By putting different types of neighbourhoods built in different historical periods together, it is possible to spatialise the development of neighbouring and neighbourliness through meaningful comparisons across neighbourhood types.

3.2.1 The decline of neighbourly ties

Regarding the behavioural dimension of cohesion, it is widely acknowledged that traditional neighbourhoods, who bonded territorially under state socialism, were transformed by urbanisation and marketisation (Wu, 2012). This led to a general decline of neighbouring, neighbourhood connections and community engagement (Ruan *et al.*, 1997; Gui and Huang, 2006).

As early as the 1990s, scholars found empirical evidence showing that close ties were diminishing and making way for social isolation in neighbourhoods in urban China (Liao, 1997). This decline was widely distributed in different cities across China, such as Tian's (1997) survey in Wuhan, Farrer's (2002) study in Shanghai, Wu and He's research in Nanjing (2005), and Forrest and Yip's (2007) study in Guangzhou. Although some persistence of neighbourly ties has been observed in traditional neighbourhoods and privatised work units (Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012), the decline of

strong neighbourly relationships is most evident in gated communities, where new petty bourgeoisie seek individualism and privacy, and their social networks are no longer confined to the territorial boundaries of the neighbourhood (Tomba, 2005; Huang, 2006; Pow, 2009). As newly established commodity housing estates become a major type of neighbourhood in urban China, the loose ties and social isolation found in these neighbourhoods, as commented on by Gui and Huan (2006), shed light on the future decline of neighbourhood cohesion in urban China.

Apart from these neighbourhoods, scholarly attention has also been paid to affordable and resettlement neighbourhoods. In these places, urban redevelopment is another destructive force for local social networks. Regeneration projects in these neighbourhoods, as observed by Wu and He (2005) and Liu, Wu and their colleagues (2017), were likely to erode neighbourliness by disrupting existing local social ties without establishing new ones.

3.2.2 The emergence of political participation

Community participation and collective activities have also undergone tremendous transformations in the past 30 years, both in terms of strength of participation (e.g. frequency of participation and organisational membership) and approach to participation (e.g. state-sponsored and self-motivated).

Early research shows that in the pre-reform era (pre-1978), the 'neighbourhood' (mostly work units) operated as joint systems of production, distribution, and socialisation. Consequently, community participation and collective activities were mostly organised around the interests of production (Bray, 1997; Tang and Parish, 2000). Community participation at this stage, as argued by Xu, Perkins and Chow (2010), was derived mainly from the Chinese tradition of mutual help, and bore little similarity with participation in civil societies that engage in collective decision making and local politics. Social participation, such as the provision of community services and mutual help, was the dominant form of community participation in this period. Political participation, on the contrary, received less attention, since almost all political demands and potential conflicts could be mitigated, controlled, or absorbed by the work unit (Cai, 2008; Gui, Ma and Muhlhahn, 2009; Fu et al., 2015).

The marketisation and state-owned enterprise (SOE) reforms in the 1990s witnessed the separation of production and residence in work units, leading to a transformation of community participation. On the one hand, similar declining trends have been discovered in residents' voluntary involvement in community affairs (Farrer, 2002; Forrest and Yip, 2007; Li and Chen, 2008). On the other hand, the state's effort to reinvigorate neighbourhood governance, and the emergence of commodity housing estates and private governance provide new platforms for

political participation; the most effective ones are the state-sponsored organisation of the RC and the civil society organisation of the HOA.

3.2.2.1 RC-led participation

The national community building project and related neighbourhood governance innovation projects devolved power and resources to the grassroots level, and transformed the RC into a guided and supervised platform of community participation (Wong and Poon, 2005; Bray, 2006b). A growing body of academic works has documented the development of state-sponsored participation in various cities across China. Some positive outcomes have been observed, such as the institutionalisation of legally binding elections systems and decision-making bodies (e.g. the Deliberative Council and Assembly of Residents' Representatives), and booming turnout rates for elections both in old and new neighbourhoods (e.g. Liu, 2005, 2016; He and Warren, 2011; Ngeow, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2018).

These positive outcomes, however, should be interpreted with caution. Some scholars remain in doubt whether the increase in state-led community participation would lead to perceived benefits to local governance, such as efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability (Xu, 2007; Read, 2014), for the following reasons. First, high turnout rates do not equal high willingness to contribute to community issues (Xiong, 2008). This is because most participants are not self-motivated but are mobilised through *mianzi* (Gui, 2004), critical mass, neighbourhood activists (Liu, 2007b; Guo and Sun, 2014), material incentives (Chen and Yao, 2005) or social exchanges (Li, 2008). As observed by Gui, Ma and Muhlhahn (2009), 'various levels of political activists engaged in propaganda work on elections, and personal connections were often exploited for political mobilization' (p.411). The RC-led participatory behaviours are thus interpreted as 'atomistic and informal' (Xu, 2007), and not intended for mutual benefit (Guan and Cai, 2015). Furthermore, a large proportion of those who participate through RC-led platforms are not 'genuine decision-makers'. Xu's (2007) survey in Beijing and Yang's (2007) observation in Wuhan all point to the 'pseudo participation' nature of RC-led community engagement. Most active participants in RC-led community activities, they argue, are likely to be older, impoverished, and members of vulnerable groups who receive benefits from community programs (welfare-oriented participation), or else neighbourhood activists and members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) who are closely linked to RC's local networks (commitment-oriented participation).

3.2.2.2 HOA-led participation

Of those who are sceptical or apathetic about state-sponsored forms of participation, many turn to the second platform of community participation—often organised by and around the HOA (or

other residents groups) as a civil society organisation (Read, 2008). In contrast to 'pseudo participation' in RC-led activities (e.g. welfare-oriented participation and commitment-oriented participation), HOA-led participation originates from one's legitimacy and responsibility to protect her property (Chen, 2010, 2016; Lo, 2013), and is often observed in commodity housing estates and privatised neighbourhoods.

Chen (2013) classified HOA-led participation into two types: contentious actions (e.g. right-defending activities) and self-governing activities (e.g. giving opinions to local authorities and voting for neighbourhood groups). As empirical data on everyday self-governing practices is limited (ibid), discussions on HOA-led participation focus mostly on contentious actions, which have been recorded in many studies and news reports (e.g. Tomba, 2005; Read and Michelson, 2008; Shi, 2008; Luo, Chen and Yin., 2011; Cai and Sheng, 2013; Yip, 2014; Wu, 2016; Xia and Guan, 2017). Various tactics have been observed in these actions, such as negotiation, litigation, appealing to the government, appealing to the media, and more antagonistic approaches, providing residents with a variety of participatory venues (Huang and Chen, 2008; Chen, 2010; Yip, 2014). Whatever their approaches to participation, empirical studies point out that successful neighbourhood protests are the combined results of responsible activists, active mobilisation, abundant social capital, proper strategies, and political opportunity structures (Cai, 2005; Zhang, 2005; Shi, 2008; Yip and Jiang, 2011; Cai and Sheng, 2013; Wang et al., 2013; Tang, Wang and Chai, 2014).

3.2.3 The transformation of neighbourhood-based sentiments

New logics have also been identified for the cognitive dimension of neighbourhood cohesion. While existing studies demonstrate a decrease in neighbourly interactions caused by rapid urbanisation, privatisation, and associated changes in lifestyle, one might expect that attachment to, and responsibility for the neighbourhood has also been weakened (Wu, 2005; Fischer, 2009; Yan, 2010). This assumption is partially supported by studies focusing on urban villages and low-income groups, but opposed by those on commodity neighbourhoods and the new middle class, leading to significant variations in neighbourhood-based sentiments across social groups and localities.

On the one hand, research on poverty, migration, and social integration highlights the positive relationship between local social ties and community sentiment. For instance, Du and Li's (2010) survey in Guangzhou shows that migrants in urban villages are less emotionally attached to their neighbourhoods. The low levels of attachment, they argue, are built upon low levels of neighbourly ties, especially intergroup ties between migrants and local residents. Similar

phenomena have been observed by Wu (2012) and Liu, Zhang and their colleagues (2017), who document the weak sense of community and neighbourhood identity among rural migrants.

On the other hand, however, contrasting evidence is provided when taking other social groups and other types of neighbourhoods into consideration. Researchers have observed a transformation in the foundation of neighbourhood cohesion. As the only longitudinal study, the work from Liu, Wu and their colleagues (2017) present how people's affective ties with their neighbourhood developed after a redevelopment project in Guangzhou. While neighbourhood attachment declined after redevelopment, they argued that sources of attachment changed from neighbourly contact to satisfaction with the living environment. Environment-oriented community sentiment has drawn widespread scholarly attention in recent years. For example, by comparing commodity neighbourhoods and traditional neighbourhoods, Zhu, Breitung and Li (2012) found stronger neighbourhood attachment among residents in commodity housing estates. Unlike migrants and low-income groups, homeowners' attachment to commodity housing estates is less influenced by their local social networks, since commodity neighbourhoods are more liberated and have fewer neighbourly interactions than traditional neighbourhoods. Instead, their neighbourhood attachment is more influenced by satisfaction with the physical environment. The existence of the environment-attachment relationship is also verified by Li, Zhu and Li (2012). Their structural equation models indicate that community attachment and satisfaction with the living environment mutually reinforce each other. The emphasis on the built environment is further expanded in the study of Breitung (2012). His observations in newly established commodity housing estates in Guangzhou show that gates and walls, as the widely acknowledged ringleaders of residential segregation and social disorganisation (see, e.g. Vesselinov, 2008; Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Deng, 2017), are an essential source of belonging and identity, since they symbolise security and safety. Apart from urban structures (e.g. gates and walls), Liu and Zou (2010) found that community sentiment is also influenced by satisfaction with neighbourhood services, such as health services and transportation, calling for more attention to be given to the design and implementation of neighbourhood governance arrangements.

To sum up, existing studies in China do not provide conclusive evidence about changing neighbourhoods in the post-reform era (Wu, 2012). Comparing the 'quantity' of neighbourhood social cohesion (e.g. numbers of neighbourly ties and frequency of community participation), empirical evidence suggests that neighbourhoods are declining substantially as platforms for social restructuring, leading to 'spatially dispersed social networks' with 'attenuated communal solidarities' (Wellman, 2001; Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012). That is to say, urban neighbourhoods in China are experiencing a crisis of social cohesion, as happened in the West during the industrialisation of the early twentieth century and the global era of the late twentieth century.

However, considering the 'quality' of neighbourhood social cohesion, we may find a transformation in the forms and organisation of cohesive behaviours and perceptions. Political participation has been strengthened by new participatory platforms (e.g. various community decision-making bodies), and new forms of neighbourhood-based sentiment have emerged from people's satisfaction with the built environment in newly established neighbourhoods. As a majority of community studies only focus on one or two elements of social cohesion separately (e.g. only addressing neighbouring or neighbourliness), they fail to systematically examine the co-evolution of elements of cohesion, and therefore fail to answer the question of whether China faces a 'crisis of neighbourhood cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). To address this gap, we need a pluralistic analytical approach, which covers multiple dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion simultaneously, to systematically explore the spatial distribution of neighbourly behaviours and neighbourliness in urban China.

3.3 The development of neighbourhood governance in China: the state, the market and the society

Let us now turn to the other end of the cohesion-governance story. As the micro-foundation of urban governance, neighbourhood governance deals with actors, structures, and relationships in the collective decision-making and/or public service delivery process consisting of neighbourhood-based organisations (Durose and Lowndes, 2010). The following section reviews the existing studies of neighbourhood governance in China along three lines. First, the top-down promotion of neighbourhood governance by way of strengthened local state agencies will be considered. Then, I will consider the marketisation of neighbourhood services and bottom-up shaping of neighbourhood governance by civil society organisations. The three types of neighbourhood organisations—the RCs (representing the state), the PMCs (property management companies; representing the market) and the HOAs (representing the society) —correspond, at least partly, to the theoretical framework of cohesion building established in the previous chapter.

3.3.1 The Residents' Committee (RC): constructing neighbourhood governance from the top down

The 're-organisation' of the Chinese state (Sigley, 2006, p. 497) in the 1990s, witnessed in cities particularly in terms of the demise of state-owned enterprises and the privatisation of housing, left a vacuum in urban governance at the neighbourhood level (Wu, 2002; Huang, 2006; Liu, 2016). However, contrary to the Western experiences that the vacuum would be filled by newly

established market institutions and/or civic groups, the local state has made great effort to fill this vacuum (Tomba, 2014; Wong, 2015; Wu, 2018). Since the 1990s, the local state has 'refashioned' its governing techniques (L. Zhang, 2006) through a national community building programme and various neighbourhood governance innovation projects. The principles of community building, as summarised by Shieh (2011), include the state retreating from welfare responsibilities; maximising the contribution of societal actors to service provision; and strengthening neighbourhood-based self-governance.

This process of state-led neighbourhood governance reform has been 'fragmented' and 'ambiguous' (Wu, 2000; Shi and Cai, 2006; Zhou, 2014). In some communities, RCs, although legally defined as 'autonomous mass organisations' (National People's Congress, 1989), have been revitalised as 'nerve tips' of the state with new powers and responsibilities (Read, 2000). New neighbourhood service systems have been established, made up of local CPC branches, outposts of government departments, professional community working stations, and RC-led civic groups (Zhang and Wang, 2016). The new administrative systems are absorbed into the traditional socialist loyalist–activist networks consisting of interpersonal ties and localised resources, and have produced what Read called 'administrative grassroots engagement' (Read, 2003, p.iii). Administrative and local state control has been exercised through much softer and noninstitutional approaches, such as *renqing, mianzi*, and *guanxi* (literally translated as favour, reputation, and network) (Gui, 2007, 2008; Liu, 2007a; Guo and Sun, 2014), which ultimately integrate neighbourhood activists into governance networks of local authorities and lead to a strengthened form of state-mediated governance extending into every urban neighbourhood (Ohmer, 2007; Heberer, 2009). Apart from institutional innovations, RCs also actively engage in democratic empowerment, such as through direct election and deliberative councils (DCs) (Liu, 2005). With an emphasis on party leadership, these devolution and democratic practices are regarded as a rescaling of the state's soft control strategies in the wake of the civil society, which aim at maintaining social stability, creating infrastructural power, and ultimately enhancing state legitimacy (Wang, 2005; Heberer and Göbel, 2011; Huang and Yip, 2012; Yip, 2014). This political rationale differs significantly from devolution reforms in liberal democracies, which focus on accountability and responsiveness (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008).

However, in other communities—especially gated communities—the refashioning of the local state is counterbalanced by emerging societal and market forces in the neighbourhood, transforming RCs into relatively marginal figures (Min, 2009; Wang, Yin and Zhou, 2012). On the one hand, due to limited financial and administrative resources, many rights and responsibilities have been transferred from local state agencies to neighbourhood civic groups and self-governing organisations (e.g. the HOA) (Fu, 2014). Consequently, the actual power of the RC is 'minimised' in

community participatory initiatives—only restricted to 'paper works to higher government' (Chang *et al.*, 2019). However, the marginalisation of the local state agency is regarded by some as a re-organisation, rather than a retreat, of state power (Sigley, 2006). Such re-organisation, as commented by Zhang and Ong (2008), is akin to the neoliberal rationality. By emphasising 'self-management, self-education, self-service and self-supervision' (Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2000), the state transforms communities and individuals into resources of self-governance, which assists the state to 'govern at a distance' (Rose, 1996; Isin, 2000). On the other hand, others argue that emerging new organisations in the neighbourhood and an increasing plurality of governance arrangements constantly challenge the legitimacy of the state in neighbourhood governance (Shi, 2010; Yip, 2014). With overlapping membership, roles, and responsibilities (e.g. organising self-governance), HOAs and RCs compete for support and trust from residents. One consequence of such competition, as observed by Read (2002) and Shi (2010), is that the HOA 'soaks up' participatory energies from local residents and challenges the basis of the state-sponsored organisation's legitimacy.

Furthermore, where decentralisation has failed to find new social and private actors capable or willing to participate in neighbourhood governance, there has been a 'return of the state' via traditional socialist approaches towards governing—through intense interaction, direct intervention, and bureaucratic supervision (Wu, 2018). These 'micro-governing' (Tomba, 2014) strategies are adopted by local authorities not only in dilapidated neighbourhoods but in all possible areas whenever 'a social crisis is looming' (p.173).

Adding to the fragmented nature of the RC in neighbourhood governance, its relationships with other neighbourhood institutions are also ambiguous. Disparities are often found between de jure status and de facto power relations. According to the National Property Management Regulation (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2018), the RC should, under the guidance of the corresponding SO, coordinate and supervise the formation of the homeowners' assembly, as well as the re-election and daily operations of HOAs (Article 20). According to the regulation, the official role of the RC is not mandatory or authoritative, but coordinative and adjudicative. Therefore, the relationships between the RC and the HOA should be reciprocal, at least theoretically (Fu, 2014). On the one hand, RCs and local governments provide vital administrative and political support for HOAs. It is from local Real Estate Bureaus that an HOA can acquire a legal identity of 'homeowners' representatives', but only when all requirements are satisfied, including a high quorum requirement (Wang, Yin and Zhou 2012). It is also from local SOs and RCs that HOAs often appeal to for assistance, solutions and arbitrament during neighbourhood disputes (Zhou, 2014). On other hands, HOAs also reduce the administrative burden for local governments since they serve as a cushion between the government and the society. As representatives of

homeowners, HOAs set up community behavioural rules and deal with neighbourhood conflicts which would otherwise be faced by the RC directly (Fu, 2014).

In practice, however, HOAs can be both arms of state policies and discontented civic groups, causing a dilemma for local governments about whether to facilitate or contain the civic groups (Gui and Ma, 2014). HOAs do not always have interests in common with RCs and local government. More often than not, clashes of interest have been observed between RCs and HOAs, particularly in extreme situations, such as housing disputes (Tomba, 2005; Read and Michelson, 2008; Gui and Ma, 2014; Yip, 2014; Zhou, 2014). Such clashes, according to Huang (2014), are 'inevitable' due to the contested priorities of the state—to maintain social order (a political rationale)—and the citizens—to protect spatial interests (an economic rationale). The relationship between an RC and an HOA is thus determined by how such clashes are viewed by the RC and the local government, and their capacities to deal with the clashes (Zhou, 2014; Chen, 2016). Existing studies have documented multiple strategies used by the state in neighbourhood contentions, such as compromise, cooperation (e.g. HOA board members being appointed as RC board members, and vice versa), procrastination (e.g. tightening up or denying approvals of HOAs), control (e.g. through gaps in the legislation), incorporation (e.g. encouraging state-guided HOAs), and mobilisation (e.g. mobilising CPC members to oppose activism) (Ding, 2009; Huang, 2014; Chen, 2016). The intervention of RCs and SOs has been criticised by some liberal intellectuals as an over-politicisation of economic issues, since state agencies would disregard, disintegrate, divide, and demoralise any behaviours that they view as potential threats to local stability or the dominant position of the state in local governance (Gui and Ma, 2014; Huang, 2014). Others point out that how HOAs and homeowners act in contentious actions also affect the RC/HOA relationship. It is likely that a HOA will acquire what it seeks if it has the capacity to manipulate the local governance system in a strategic manner, such as through 'rightful resistance' (O'Brien and Li, 2006; Shi, 2007; P. Chen, 2009), 'loyal appealing' (Xiong, 2018), and exploiting discrepancies between local and higher levels of government (Shi and Cai, 2006).

Regarding the RC/PMC relationship, de jure status also differs significantly from de facto power relations. According to the National Property Management Regulation, it is the district government's housing department that is in charge of supervising real estate management within its administrative areas. In reality, however, local government often lacks effective means to regulate the misbehaviours of property management agencies. Instead, a cooperative relationship often develops between local state agencies and PMCs, leading to blurred boundaries between the state and the market on the local level (Nonini, 2008). The alliance between the RC/SO and the PMC has been well documented in existing studies across China (e.g. Shi and Cai, 2006; Read, 2008; G. Li, 2009; Fu and Lin, 2014; He, 2015; Sun and Huang, 2016). For property management

agencies, maintaining good relations with state agencies (including but not exclusively RCs) helps the private institution to win political support from local government. Such support is of particular significance in housing disputes (Fu and Lin, 2013, 2014; He, 2015), during which local officials tend to side with the PMC or remain silent (Breitung, 2014; Huang, 2014; Zhu, 2014). There are various strategies that PMCs adopt to establish and maintain close links with local state agencies, ranging from small favours (such as offering office spaces in the residential compound) and daily assistance (such as information collection and activity organisation), to personal benefits to local officials (G. Li, 2009; Fu and Lin, 2013; Breitung, 2014). Beyond these material benefits, Huang (2014) points out that property management performance has become part of the evaluation framework of the 'civilised neighbourhood' towards which RCs are working. Therefore, for local state agencies, the territory-based coalition with PMCs help them to gain the 'administrative absorption' of market forces, which assists them in accomplishing administrative tasks and maintain social control and social stability (Kang, Lu and Han, 2008). A scrutiny of the formation of the RC/PMC coalition further reveals the entrepreneurial nature of the state and the economic nature of the state-market coalition (Nonini, 2008; Wu, 2017). Situated in China's pro-growth politics, the coalition between the RC/SO and the PMC is viewed by Sun and Huang (2016) as an extension of the 'growth coalition' in real estate development (Zhu, 1999; Zhang, 2002; Fu and Lin, 2013). Although land-based interests are not the primary target for the coalition in the post-development phase, they are closely associated with property-related conflicts which not only jeopardise the economic benefits of PMCs but also challenge the political legitimacy of local state agencies. Moreover, Huang's (2014) study in Shanghai shows that RCs and SOs try their best to avoid a sudden retreat of the PMC from the neighbourhood (due to pressures from the HOA or non-cooperative homeowners); otherwise they would temporarily have to shoulder property management responsibilities as required by the municipal government. The extension of the state-market coalition is therefore inevitable to enable both PMCs and RCs to manage neighbourhood conflicts and promote urban growth in the long term.

3.3.2 Property Management Companies (PMCs): the neoliberal representation of neighbourhood governance

Along with the transformation of the state, housing privatisation and urban governance reforms also led to changes in homeownership patterns (from collective ownership to private property) and consumption modes (from state welfare to market allocation), which entirely transformed the institutional landscapes of neighbourhood governance from the bottom up. While the state and work units retreated from the housing market, professional PMCs and other commercial organisations were introduced to take over responsibility for property management in urban

neighbourhoods (Fu and Lin, 2014). The privatisation and professionalisation of neighbourhood services soon became a popular mode all over China after the housing reform in 1998. Almost all newly built urban neighbourhoods are assumed to be served by PMCs (Zhu, 2014). What is more, some privatised work units, traditional neighbourhoods, and affordable neighbourhoods that can be gated and walled are also managed by commercial organisations under a contractual relationship with homeowners.

The springing up of PMCs can be seen as a byproduct of the emerging housing market initiated by the housing reform, which not only privatised urban housing but also marketised the management of privatised neighbourhoods, and provided business opportunities for management trading (Yip, 2014). With its features of private property and market principles, the emergence of PMCs in urban China resonates with neoliberalist policy frameworks (Zhang and Ong, 2008; Chen, 2014; Yip, 2014), although it is still debatable whether China, as a massive and rapidly changing political economy, is entirely neoliberal or not (Lee and Zhu, 2006; Nonini, 2008; Wu, 2010; Cartier, 2011; Weber, 2018; Zhou, Lin and Zhang, 2019). For a privatised neighbourhood, its PMC can either be appointed by its developers in the earliest stage of property management or chosen by the homeowners through public bidding (Zhang, 2013). PMCs act as professional providers for 'territorial collective goods' (Foldvary, 1994) in neighbourhood governance. What they provide ranges from essential services, such as amenity maintenance, sanitation, and security, to shared-property maintenance, landscaping and gardening, and even housekeeping (Fu and Lin, 2014; Zhu, 2014). Furthermore, PMCs' management responsibilities may extend from the properties to the people who reside in these properties. According to the Regulation on Property Management, PMCs are bestowed with legal rights to maintain social order, administer local affairs, and recast residents into a new kind of subject (Article 2). The PMCs and market-led neighbourhood governance are thus interpreted by Huang (2006) and Li (2009) as a continuation of the work unit system, which manages the society through managing the space collectively. Citizens in these neighbourhoods may experience a rise in new disciplinary power from the PMCs, which govern them 'through community' (Rose, 1996; Zhang and Ong, 2008).

The private provision of public goods through professional property management agencies is designed as an economically efficient approach towards managing neighbourhood affairs—more efficient than other approaches led either by local government or voluntary organisations (Yip and Forrest, 2002; Chen and Webster, 2005; Deng, 2016b). One way to understand this is by using Buchanan's (1965) club theory. In this view, privatised neighbourhoods belong to a spatially bounded, consumption-sharing agreement, where community services are allocated by entrepreneurial suppliers as 'clubbed goods' (Webster, 2003; Wu, 2005). When buying into these

neighbourhoods, individuals are filtered by house price, and automatically acquire club membership when they become homeowners (Wu, 2005; Song and Wu, 2010). For club members, community services are not provided by the state but are allocated by the market, which is more capable of meeting the increasing demand for productivity, quality, cost-saving, and responsiveness in public service delivery (Hansen and Lindholst, 2016; Bel and Fageda, 2017). This allocation is made economically efficient, at least in theory, through gating and privatisation, as homeownership limits free-riding while membership fees (i.e. property management fees) structure collective consumption through contractual relationships (Webster, 2001; Chen and Webster, 2005). Another way to understand the effectiveness of PMCs is from the institutional economy perspective. Such effectiveness, as interpreted by Deng (2016b), originates from the *ex-ante* design of private communities and *ex-post* efficiency competition among PMCs. Deng's analysis in Chongqing reveals the natural tendency of developers in designing effective systems of service provision in privatised neighbourhoods: they are more likely to install divisive amenities to satisfy the heterogeneous property interests of homeowners, which in turn would lower the potential transaction costs of collective decision making in property management.

In practice, however, the contractual relationships between PMCs and homeowners (usually organised in a collective form, e.g. the HOA) do not always guarantee effective neighbourhood governance. Despite the lack of literature directly documenting the practices of PMCs in neighbourhood governance, there is a proliferation of research on highly relevant topics, such as housing disputes, neighbourhood collective actions, and *weiquan* (literally 'right-defending activities'). The many reports and papers on these topics are a reflection of the failure of market-oriented neighbourhood governance that has been widely observed in a variety of cities across China (Tomba, 2005; Cai and Sheng, 2013; Yip, 2014; Wu, 2016a; Xia and Guan, 2017). Drawing on twenty-six newspapers across eight years from four major cities in China, Yip (2014) finds that more than two-thirds of housing disputes are related to the poor performance of PMCs. In the absence of adequate supervision systems, these profit-driven entrepreneurs work towards maximising profits, and gain unjustified benefits from exorbitant management fees, the appropriation of revenues from collective properties, unauthorised changes in neighbourhood planning, saved costs from lowering management standards, and so on (Fu and Lin, 2013; Fu, 2015). The failure in the enforcement of the market contract triggers common grievances among homeowners, and these may transform into contentious actions, such as boycotting property management fees, petitions and protests, appealing to the government or media, and litigation (Tomba, 2005; Yip and Jiang, 2011; Cai and Sheng, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 2013; Fu and Lin, 2014; Yip, 2014; Xia and Guan, 2017).

The failure of effective market-oriented neighbourhood governance can be explained with two strands of theory. From the institutional economics perspective, Webster (2003) argues that the club theory fails to predict the failure of market-oriented neighbourhood governance because it oversimplifies the transaction process in the delivery of neighbourhood collective goods. Apart from transactions between the service provider and the consumers as a collective, costs can also be generated from transactions between individual consumers and collective consumers, and transactions during the management process, such as travel (Webster, 2003), participation (Rydin and Pennington, 2000), bargaining (Shi, 2008), and enforcement (Chen and Webster, 2005).

From the socio-political perspective, sociologists and urban scholars turn to China's unique political environment and micro-social structures for an answer. Some research attributes housing disputes and ineffective governance to the unbalanced power relationship between PMCs and homeowners, whether individually or as a collective (Fu and Lin, 2014; Zhu, 2014; Fu, 2015; He, 2015). The imbalance can be interpreted from two perspectives. From the PMC's perspective, it becomes the actual 'master' of the neighbourhood (G. Li, 2009) although it is employed by homeowners (or in some cases, appointed by the developers). This is because most physical, social, and economic resources in the neighbourhood are captured by the PMC (e.g. neighbourhood security guards and cleaners are hired by and responsible to the PMC rather than to homeowners). From the homeowners' perspective, only under rare circumstances do they obtain enough information, knowledge, and resources to deal with the complicated tasks of property management and the performances of the PMC, given the large sizes and short history of private neighbourhoods in urban China. Otherwise, a hierarchical relationship is commonly found between the service provider (i.e. PMCs) and consumers (i.e. homeowners), which is established by the PMC through various strategies such as guarded cooperation, stalling tactics, and even physical intimidation (Read, 2008; Fu, 2014).

What is more, entrepreneurial endeavours in neighbourhood governance are deeply embedded in local politics. Fu (2014, 2015) points out that PMCs are associated with, or affiliated to, real estate developers, which maintain reciprocal relationships with local government (Shi and Cai, 2006; Read, 2008). Developed from 'growth coalitions' in land conveyance and real estate development (Zhu, 1999; Fu and Lin, 2013), these reciprocal relationships provide local officials with personal benefits and assistance with management tasks (G. Li, 2009; Breitung, 2014), and bestow property managers (especially those directly appointed by developers) with personal ties (*guanxi*) with, and political support from, local government (Fu and Lin, 2013; He, 2015). The mechanism through which PMCs work is thus a combination of market transactions, contract law, and potential monopolies and shared interests with local authorities. This is an adaptation of neoliberal neighbourhood governance in urban China (Weber, 2018).

3.3.3 The rise of Homeowners' Associations (HOAs): constructing neighbourhood governance from the bottom up

Changes in homeownership and consumption modes, as well as burgeoning neighbourhood activism, trigger the establishment of HOAs. According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (2009), an HOA in China is 'elected by a homeowners' assembly, enjoys the rights and assumes the obligations authorised by a homeowners' assembly, executes decisions made by the homeowners' assembly and is supervised by homeowners' (Article 3). The legal rights and obligations of this neighbourhood group are consolidated by the National Property Management Regulation and can be summarised as governing neighbourhoods through drafting and enforcing local covenants, maintaining collective properties, monitoring property management companies, and, more importantly, representing homeowners to assert collective control of the neighbourhood. Although designed as an 'executive body' of the homeowners' assembly, the HOA usually acts as the direct decision maker and implementer in everyday neighbourhood life, since homeowners' assemblies are held infrequently due to the high quorum requirement (Wang, Yin and Zhou, 2012).

Two identities of the HOA can be identified from its legal rights and obligations. First, HOAs act as representatives of homeowners in the negotiation and implementation of property management contracts. In doing so, they champion the common interests of homeowners and counterbalance the power of PMCs in the governance vacuum left by the retreat of the state (Tomba, 2005; He, 2015; Ge and Li, 2016). In this regard, HOAs are regarded as a social mechanism for protecting property rights (Lo, 2013; Chen, 2016). Second, for individual homeowners, HOAs serve as a coordination system for collective consumption in privatised urban neighbourhoods (Chen and Webster, 2005). Through HOAs, individual homeowners can make collective decisions on managing the condominiums where real estate consumption and the delivery of collective goods are bundled up (Tomba, 2005; Read, 2008; Deng, 2016a). Problems with free-riding are managed by formal covenants or norms circulated through social networks (Shi, 2010; Fu and Lin, 2014).

The emergence of the HOA has received much attention from the public, academia, and policymakers in recent years. Existing debates on HOAs and related topics (e.g. gated communities and private governance) can be summarised into three strands. The first strand concerns the political effects of the property-based neighbourhood group, in particular, its democratic implications in China—a country with a long tradition of authoritarianism. Although it is still debatable whether the concept of 'civil society' applies to China or not (Gold, 1998; Xia, 2003; Kang and Han, 2007; Zhang and Ong, 2008; Heberer, 2009; Howell, 2012; Yu and Guo, 2012; Yu and Zhou, 2012), pro-democracy scholars document the transformations that HOAs bring to

and beyond the neighbourhood, such as fostering awareness of property rights (Davis, 2006; Fu and Lin, 2014), creating a societal basis for the public sphere (Zhang, 2006), providing 'opportunity spaces' for grassroots democracy (Shi, 2007), and promoting 'democratic citizenship' (Xia and Guan, 2017). Other scholars are less optimistic. They argue that the democratic values of the HOA may have been exaggerated, since most contention-oriented participation in China is merely a 'moral economy–based protest' (Perry, 2002), and does not challenge the existing political order maintained by the party-state, or establish political citizenship (Cai, 2005; Wu, 2016a). Inside 'civil society', Tomba (2014) proposes the idea of 'a consensual arena of interaction' (Tomba, 2014, p.169) to capture the critical features of HOA-led participation in urban China, such as orientation towards material interests, contained interactions and influences (limited to practical problems within the neighbourhood), flexible rules and strategies, and the persistent involvement of the state which is not necessarily confronted.

The second set of arguments finds its theoretical roots in theories of polycentric governance (Ostrom, 1990, 2010) and networked governance (Powell, 1990; Rhodes, 1996). It contends that the HOA, as neither a market institution nor a government agency, has the potential to manage the neighbourhood into a self-organised governance system (Guo, Wu and Liu, 2017). Drawing on rational choice theory, Poteete, Janssen and Ostrom (2010) propose several conditions with which self-organisation can be successful, such as collective choice management, monitoring and sanctions, effective communication, internal trust, and reciprocity. The self-organisation system of the HOA has thus been regarded as a framework in which social ties, interpersonal trust, and the civic capacity of local residents would enhance and be enhanced by cooperative networks (Rhodes, 1996). An empirical study in urban China shows that neighbourhoods are often in situations much more complicated than Poteete's theory would predict (Guo, Wu and Liu, 2017), in which the self-governing system operates in partnership with other governing systems, such as those maintained by the market (e.g. the PMC) and by the state (e.g. the RC) (Chen, 2013; He and Wang, 2015; Liu and Ma, 2015). Such partnerships not only consist of cooperation and collaboration, but of competition and contradictions. With their different values and mechanisms, the state, the market, and the society compete with each other for control over social resources and dominant positions in neighbourhood governance in a 'game-like' manner, and construct a 'fragmented,' 'triply-edged' power structure within the neighbourhood (Zhu, 1997; Li, Huang and Feng, 2007; Fu and Lin, 2014; Ge and Li, 2016).

The third strand of debate connects the emergence of the HOA to the development of private governance and neighbourhood collective actions. Originating from the association–member model (Foldvary, 1994), the HOA is theoretically interpreted as a form of private governance, or private government, where the provision of local public goods is accomplished, directly or

indirectly, by civic organisation of the residents themselves (Helsley and Strange, 1998; Gordon, 2004; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018) However, Lu, Zhang and Wu (2019) argue that private governance has different meanings in the Chinese context, which no longer focus on civic engagement or shareholder democracy and concentrate instead on the commodification of neighbourhood collective goods. He's (2015) study in Guangzhou further indicates that the Western definition of private governance fails to explain the dilemmas in which HOAs in China are trapped. Rather than cooperating with or complementing market institutions, HOAs in China are often found in an antagonistic relationship with PMCs (Read, 2008; Fu and Lin, 2014; Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015). Such relationships are often established where on the one end there is a powerful PMC in charge of essential neighbourhood services and resources, and on the other end is a weak HOA generally lacking in voluntary participation and mutual trust (Shen, 2007; Fu, 2014). Meanwhile, from the perspective of collective action, the effectiveness of the HOA as an institution to coordinate collective consumption has also been questioned (Yip and Forrest, 2002; Chen and Webster, 2005). Although they were designed to govern with formal covenants or social norms circulated through social networks (Shi, 2010; Fu and Lin, 2014), HOAs fail to escape from problems related to free-riding, particularly in neighbourhoods where social networks are weak, and associated levels of trust and sense of community are low (Shi, 2010; Chen, 2014; Fu and Lin, 2014; Zhang and Zhong, 2016). Free-riding in self-governance is more likely to happen, as observed by Chen and Webster (2005) and Zhang (2017) when the cost of participation and mobilisation outweighs individual benefits from collective actions, even when there are high levels of collective gain (Olson, 1965). Further studies indicate that HOA-led activities are often limited to a small number of residents—often well-educated homeowners with strong organising capacities, abundant social capital, and awareness of their property rights (Read, 2008; Chen, 2010; Fu and Lin, 2014). The overconcentration of powers and responsibilities among a small group of activists has triggered the 'paradox of neighbourhood elites' (He and Zhong, 2013). While admitting the catastrophic effects of neighbourhood activists, the concentration of participation may lead to a meritocracy and oligarchy among neighbourhood activists (Shi, 2010; Hu, Zheng and Fei, 2016), exclusion and fragmentation among homeowners (He and Zhong, 2013; Chen, 2016), and, finally, undermine the cohesiveness of the whole neighbourhood.

It is worth noting that, the antagonistic relationship between civil society organisations and market institutions is not rare when situating China's HOA in the global context. Such antagonism reflects the social tensions neoliberalism generates at the grassroots level (Putnam, 2000; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Lazzarato, 2009; Jessop, 2018). In this regard, the emergence of the HOA bears some similarities with the communitarian form of neighbourhood governance. Both approaches recognise the value of community/collective and attempt to mitigate social tensions

through responsible citizenship, and informal networks of social and moral bonds united by the 'common good' of the community (Etzioni, 1998). While the cornerstone of communitarianism lies in individuals' commitment to the 'common good', the HOA associates the 'common good' with property rights, especially collective ownership of the condominium, and crystallises 'commitment' in terms of collective responsibility to management of the property, aiming to protect the value of their investment (Yip and Forrest, 2002). A successful HOA is able to incorporate collective concerns relating to property rights (the 'common good') into neoliberal frameworks (led by PMCs) through soft governing strategies (responsible citizens and local networks of social bonds)—a 'third way' (Giddens, 1998) between the neoliberal free-market model and the state-centred approaches.

3.4 Towards cohesive neighbourhoods in urban China: some hypothetical scenarios

The diverse characteristics of neighbourhoods and multiple arrangements of neighbourhood governance indicate multiple approaches through which neighbourhood life can be organised in urban China—through intensive neighbouring and reciprocal networks (as in some traditional neighbourhoods and work units), market exchange and property rights (as in some commodity neighbourhoods), self-governing organisations and neighbourhood groups (as in some commodity neighbourhoods), or entitlement and relocation by the state (as in some affordable neighbourhoods and pre-reform work units) (Wu and Ning, 2018). In the following sections, I will discuss the three major approaches of constructing cohesive neighbourhood in urban China: the RC-led approach, the PMC-led approach, and the HOA-led approach.

3.4.1 The RC-led approach of cohesion building

The relationships between local state and social cohesion/capital have been explored from a variety of theoretical perspectives. The social capital theory, for instance, proposes a circular relationship between 'good government' and 'social capital', in which higher levels of social ties, interpersonal trust, and associational participation are likely to engender stronger capacity to govern, which in turn guarantees future social interactions and cooperation (Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993; Maloney, Smith and Stoker, 2000; Rice, 2001; Stanley, 2003). Meanwhile, Evans (1996) provides an insightful summary of approaches through which 'developmental social capital' is produced and maintained by local public agencies: design and enforcement of universal and local rules and regulations, downscaled developmental strategies and welfare provision, civic

education and the cultivation of responsible citizens, and state-mediated neighbourhood collaborations.

Whether these theories fully apply to the Chinese context, particularly to the RC as the local state agency, is still under debate due to the distinct political environment in urban China. One major problem with Putnam, Robert and Rafaella's (1993) engagement-based explanation is that it draws on horizontal ties that bring together agents of equivalent status and power, which are different from the vertical networks between the RC and its constituents in urban China. Considering the traditions of weak civic participation and strong clientelism which are rooted in Chinese communities (Walder, 1986), it seems too assertive to conclude that social capital can only emerge in civic communities bounded by horizontal relationships of reciprocity among citizens, and not also those bounded by vertical relations of authority and dependency. On this basis, taking vertical power relationships between the state and the society into consideration, Evans (1996) proposes the 'state-society synergy' theory, stating that 'active government and mobilised communities can enhance each other's developmental efforts' (p.1119). One problem with this theory is that most outcomes of RC-led neighbourhood governance are administrative and political rather than developmental. Addressing the shortcomings of both theories, empirical studies in urban China have demonstrated that vertical networks between the RC and its constituents have the potential to facilitate both neighbourhood governance (in a state-led form) and neighbourhood solidarity (Read, 2003; Liu, 2005a; Wang, 2005; Liu, 2007a; Gui, 2007; Read, 2009; Liu, 2016).

On the one hand, neighbourhood governance is facilitated through personal relationships between the state agency and members of the neighbourhood—a strategy called 'administrative grassroots engagement' (Read, 2003, p.iii). The personal relationships between the RC and its constituents are deeply embedded in interpersonal neighbourhood networks and embed actions of the local state with neighbourhood interactions that often happen face-to-face (ibid). Through these networks, the state is able to communicate with residents smoothly, respond to residents demands rapidly, and implement government policies effectively, leading to better-performing RCs (Wang, 2005). The extensive neighbourhood social networks are also deployed by the state to assist weaker groups in the neighbourhood (Tomba, 2014). Neighbourhood activists (*jiji fenzi*), sometimes referred to as 'loyalists' and 'critical mass' (Liu, 2007b; Li, 2008; Guo and Sun, 2014), play a significant role in these networks due to their abundant personal social capital and strong capacities for mobilisation within the neighbourhood. Working voluntarily, these activists interact with both their followers in the neighbourhoods and 'bigger players' through more extensive networks, and are therefore seen as the 'glue' between the state and the society (Gui, 2007). As an information channel, the activists interpret government policies and transfer them downwards

to residents in more acceptable forms (such as through *mianzi* and *renqing*), which lowers the political costs of the RC (Read, 2003; Gui, 2007). As networks of (potential) civic engagement, neighbourhood activists act as bridges that connect different cliques in the neighbourhood, which expands the political influences of the RC (Purdue, 2001; Guo and Sun, 2014). It is through networks of neighbourhood activists that state actions are legitimated, and the efficacy of RC-led neighbourhood governance is guaranteed (Read, 2003).

However, the activist-centred governance strategy has two caveats. First, the activist-centred strategy suffers in the event of a liberated community (Wellman, 1996) and the crisis of social cohesion (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). The study by Wang and Zhang (2017) shows that neighbourhood activists no longer possess rich social capital or strong capacity for mobilisation within the neighbourhood. Since residents fail to be mobilised by these activists, they are no longer embedded into the state's local governance network, leading to 'suspended activists' and a 'false prosperity' of neighbourhood governance (p.80). Second, Gui (2007) argues that the RC's strategy is an 'informal operation of formal power' (p.7). While personal social networks facilitate the localisation of state policies, the 'formation expression' of such policies would be possibly modified or even distorted during this process, either by activists in transmission or by residents in interpretation (Wan, 2016).

On the other hand, the state also takes an active role in cultivating neighbourly networks, promoting community participation and strengthening neighbourly trust. Although the phrase 'social cohesion' has not been expressed explicitly in policy documents, it is one of the key themes of China's community policies, which emphasise self-governance, responsible citizenship, and harmonious interpersonal relationships (Wan, 2013). Empirical studies have identified two significant approaches through which the state intentionally steps into the cohesion-building process in urban neighbourhoods. First, with great fanfare and effort, the local government has introduced forms of self-governance through establishing local consultation and deliberation venues. These self-governing platforms have become 'an extraordinary source of community sociability and solidarity' (Liu, 2016, p. 61) because they provide institutionalised spaces and structured opportunities for individuals to express their interest and get involved in local issues (Liu, 2007; Wang, Liu and Pavlićević, 2018). More importantly, they absorb and scale up existing neighbourhood social networks (especially those of neighbourhood activists) to form politically efficacious organisations—such as the RC (Fox, 1996). At the same time, the high institutional trust associated with RCs, which is an outcome of the high levels of political support for the party-state (Tang, 2018), affects interpersonal trust. Yang and Tang (2010) explored potential sources of trust in China from a comparative perspective. They argue that the government-controlled

process of politicisation increases people's trust in political institutions, which further strengthens interpersonal trust.

The second approach is associated with the first, and focuses on various voluntary activities organised by RCs. Read (2003) offers a comprehensive empirical analysis of how 'local volunteerism' (p.254) and involvement in RC-sponsored activities shape patterns of cohesion in urban neighbourhoods. These voluntary activities are mostly organised and sponsored by the RC and pertain to matters of common concern for residents, such as sanitation and security. Participation in these activities not only strengthens neighbourhood friendships, as happens in purely recreational get-togethers but also cultivates the 'common good' of the community since those who participate naturally share a common interest in public welfare. Drawing on Read's theory, scholars further uncover the intrinsic implications of RC-led associational participation. Guo and Sun (2014) argue that in a typical committee–activist relationship, individuals participate because they can acquire an 'institutional identification' in serving the neighbourhood. The institutional identification closely links the individual with the party-state by providing a sense of belongingness and building a formal identity. Such an identity, as Read (2003b) argues, represents part of the state domination rather than the community they are serving.

The state-mobilised nature of local cohesion building, however, sometimes becomes a constraint rather than an opportunity. This is because RC-led participation platforms are regimented 'invented spaces' for civic engagement (Kersting, 2014, p. 270). Who is invited, what can be decided, and how the decisions can be implemented are under the supervision of the RC, or firmly policed (Tomba, 2014). This is further demonstrated by empirical evidence from Beijing (Xu, 2007) and Wuhan (Yang, 2007), where active participants in RC-led activities are either welfare receivers or neighbourhood activists who share intimate relationships with the local state agency.

3.4.2   The PMC-led approach of cohesion building

The classic neoliberal theories assume that segments of the society are bounded together by 'a common, unifying belief in the chance of success' in the market (Mitchell, 2000, p. 4). The price mechanism underlying market institutions not only regulates individual exchanges but also intensifies social relations at the same time (Mises, 1962). This 'spontaneous philosophy' (Jessop, 2002, p.455) suggests that the success of market institutions comes in tandem with the union of individuals and social groups. That is to say, the higher the performance of the private sector, the more cohesive a society/neighbourhood is. This theoretical assumption, however, lies in contradiction with some observations in the capitalist world. Instead of horizontal ties within the civil society, what the neoliberal doctrine of private property strengthens are vertical links

between private institutions (as service providers) and individuals (as consumers) (Andreotti, Mingione and Polizzi, 2012). These privatised vertical relationships transform citizens into 'governable' but 'alienated' individuals favouring individualist culture (Triandis *et al.*, 1988; Kipnis, 2007), which threatens, rather than strengthens, territorial forms of social cohesion.

Whether urban neighbourhoods in China support the assumptions of neoliberal theorists (i.e. positive relationships between effective private institutions and neighbourhood cohesion), or the reverse, remains less empirically explored. It is not clear whether market institutions, particularly PMCs, promote or hinder the current generation of cohesive neighbourhoods in urban China. Although hardly any direct evidence exists of the social influence of market institutions, some indirect evidence can be obtained from studies of gated communities and HOAs, which are often closely associated with discussions of PMCs. This evidence suggests multiple possibilities for the relationships between PMCs and neighbourhood social cohesion.

For supporters of privatisation, the new design manifesto of gated communities focuses particularly on branding, neighbourhood identity, communal spaces, and neighbourhood amenities, and aims to design appropriate spaces that promote attributes such as neighbourliness, civic engagement, collective identity, and neighbourhood cohesion (Tomba, 2005; Huang, 2006; Yip, 2012; Tedong, Grant and Wan Abd Aziz, 2015). Therefore, gated communities, a large proportion of which are serviced by PMCs, may not lead to the end of community engagement (Wu, 2012) and closely-knitted neighbourhood life (Huang and Low, 2008). More in-depth analysis concerning governance arrangement was carried out by Lu, Zhang and Wu (2018) in Wenzhou, China. Their large-scale survey compares social life in three types of neighbourhoods with varying degrees of marketisation. Comparisons across neighbourhood types indicate that the private provision of community services is more likely to satisfy the diverse needs of residents and thus cultivate their attachment to the neighbourhood. They argue that PMCs and private governance offer a new social bonding mechanism in privatised neighbourhoods through which residents' neighbourly ties are strengthened through sharing management responsibilities (e.g. paying management fees) and becoming members of neighbourhood organisations (e.g. the HOA).

For those who are sceptical about the 'natural harmony of interests' of neoliberalism (Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009, p. 26), market institutions and private governance would bring alienation, rather than a sense of togetherness among homeowners (Pow, 2009). Existing studies see a decrease of frequency, intensity, and importance of neighbourhood interactions in gated communities (Wu and He, 2005; Gui and Huang, 2006; Forrest and Yip, 2007; Wu, 2012). However, rather than being interpreted as a causal relationship, the alienation effect of private

governance should be better regarded as a proactive selection: those who choose to live in gated and privatised communities are those who prefer privacy and liberty, and do not want to get much involved in neighbourhood life (Tomba, 2005; Pow, 2009; Zhang, 2010; Li, Zhu and Li, 2012).

Furthermore, the emerging housing disputes and neighbourhood activism points to another possible way of reorganising neighbourhoods. Contrasting with the reciprocal relationship between political participation and governance hypothesised by Putnam (1993), political participation in housing disputes in urban China are usually associated with poor performances of property management agencies. This negative association is demonstrated by a variety of cases showing that conflict with PMCs triggers homeowners' collective action (Li, Wen and Xu, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2013; Breitung, 2014; Wu, 2016a), which may further expand homeowners' networks, strengthen mutual trust, and create a sense of community belonging (Zhu, 2011; Wang, Li and Cooper, 2017). Deng (2016b) reinforces the contention-oriented approach towards cohesion building, albeit in the opposite way. His case study in Chongqing demonstrates that residents are less likely to participate in community political actions if they are satisfied with the effective market of private governance. In other words, if the PMC is efficient, residents are more likely to be satisfied with the services it provides. They are thus less likely to organise neighbourhood collective action against the PMC and have less chance of developing collective identities and solidarity (Klandermans and van Stekelenburg, 2013).

3.4.3   The HOA-led approach of cohesion building

Apart from neoliberal theories and practices, a large body of literature has also investigated social cohesion from the perspective of civil society organisations. Communitarian theories are the theoretical foundations of the rise of civil society organisations in neighbourhood governance, and they stress the importance of attitudinal cohesion, such as responsibilities, obligations, and collective commitments, in establishing civil society organisations (Etzioni, 1993). At the same time, civil society organisations are regarded by the communitarian school as a 'panacea' for many social problems faced by neoliberalism, as they promote behavioural cohesion by providing 'place[s] where politics can be democratised, active citizenship strengthened, the public sphere reinvigorated' (Brown *et al.*, 2000, p. 57). In the same vein as the communitarians, neo-Tocquevillians also realise the reciprocal relationship between civil society organisations and social connectedness. In his theory of social capital, Putnam (1993) depicts the cohesion-governance relationship as a 'virtuous circle' (or a 'vicious circle', depending on the direction of the causal arrow). That is to say, a lack of social interactions and mutual trust would render an institution dysfunctional, and a densely connected society may improve the performance of local organisations.

The reciprocal relationship between social cohesion/capital and civil society organisations has also been observed in urban China (Bi, 2006). A rich array of empirical evidence has been provided from both sides of the reciprocal relationship. On the one hand, many studies have documented the potentials of the HOA, as a property-based neighbourhood group, to connect homeowners through common interests in maintaining and increasing the values of their properties (Breitung, 2014; Huang, 2014)—a manifestation of the bonding effects of homeownership (Gold, 1990, 1998; Li and Wang, 2012). Such bonding effects work primarily through HOA's participatory venues (e.g. Homeowners' Assemblies and ad hoc meetings) and mobilisation networks (e.g. activists and building heads, *louzhang*), to address collective action problems in neighbourhoods (He, 2015). Compared with 'pseudo-participation' led by the RC (Xu, 2007), the HOA is regarded by many as 'a step forward' towards meaningful participation and a 'springboard' for civic engagement and democratisation in urban China (Xia, 2003; J. Zhang, 2006; Shi, 2007, 2010; Read, 2008; Fu and Lin, 2014; Xia and Guan, 2017). In this sense, the HOA is viewed as a social mobilisation organisation (Wang, Yin and Zhou, 2012) and a 'school of democracy' (Putnam, 2000, p. 338). It takes great effort to mobilise, encourage, and institutionalise community participation, through which mutual trust is developed and bargaining skills are practiced. In addition, not only political effects, but also social effects of the HOA have been observed in neighbourhood life. It is through self-governing activities that residents form networks of communication and trust, and develop a territory-based common identity (Chen, 2009). Drawing from empirical evidence in Beijing, Bi (2006) points out that even though contentious actions and social networks are mutually reinforcing, it is more likely that the causal arrow runs from the former to the latter. That is to say, neighbourly networks are strengthened during neighbourhood contentious actions, uniting neighbours who would otherwise be strangers (Bi, 2006). Read (2008) explores the multiple approaches through which high performing HOAs strengthen existing neighbourly ties and create new connections, including face-to-face and internet-based methods of networking.

On the other hand, existing levels of cohesiveness, both behavioural and attitudinal, are significant influences on the establishment of HOAs and the operation of neighbourhood collective action. It has been widely acknowledged that the HOA, as a social mechanism for the protection of property rights, is often born out of intensive neighbourhood conflict and large-scale homeowners' rights-defending activities (Davis, 2006; Wang, Yin and Zhou, 2012; Yip, 2012; Chen, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 2013; Breitung, 2014; Fu, 2014; He, 2015). Moreover, local networks of social interaction and neighbourhood attachment are also considered an essential condition for an effective HOA, as demonstrated by research in Shanghai (Shi, 2010) and Guangzhou (Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015). These personal attributes, as contended by Ostrom (1990), contribute to the overall problems with collective action in the self-organised governance system. This is why the

lack of local social ties, attachment, and reciprocity are some of the most crucial reasons that explain the dysfunctionality of HOAs in urban China (Cai, 2005; Zhang, 2005; Jiang, 2006; Shi and Cai, 2006; Shi, 2008; Yip and Jiang, 2011; Cai and Sheng, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 2013; Tang, Wang and Chai, 2014)

However, while some scholars speak highly of the bonding effects of the HOA, others have questioned this, drawing attention to its segregation effects towards those not owning the property, which limit rather than enhance participatory cohesion (Chen and Webster, 2005). They argue that HOA-oriented solidarity, if there is any, operates based on property rights rather than common citizenship, and lacks the legal and democratic basis to represent the general public within the neighbourhood (Read, 2008; Breitung, 2014). Furthermore, even within the homeowners' group, Yip and Forrest's (2002) study in Hong Kong indicates that HOAs lack enough personal and psychological selective incentives for participation when acting as an 'investment-value protection' system. This is why, they argue, HOAs often fail to mobilise the general public, and operate only within a small group of activists who are highly civic-minded or perceive such incentives as relevant—a specific explanation of the HOA developed from the collective action theory (Olson, 1965). What is worse, the right to participation is not taken seriously by homeowners, as demonstrated by observations from both Guangzhou (He and Wang, 2015) and Hong Kong (Yip and Forrest, 2002). For most homeowners, as well as HOA members, democratic participation can make way for management efficiency when necessary. Therefore, Shi (2010) views the concentration of participation to be a natural evolution of high performing HOAs, which may foster faction politics and undermine the cohesiveness of neighbourhoods.

Meanwhile, Yip and Forrest's (2002) study also points out the difficulty for the self-governing organisation of cultivating a sense of neighbourliness and developing a common identity for collective activities. This is because what underlies the social group is 'property-based relations' rather than 'emotion-based relations' (Xu, 2011). A similar finding is achieved by Lu, Zhang and Wu (2018) from their case study in Wenzhou. Compared with market institutions, HOAs are found to have a negative influence on neighbourhood attachment, which can be explained by the inability of HOAs to provide satisfactory neighbourhood services (Chen and Webster, 2005).

Furthermore, the emergence of the HOA in China is also closely associated with the spread of gated communities and private governance, which symbolise the rise of individualistic culture (Triandis *et al.*, 1988; Kipnis, 2007). Rather than a representation of the civil society, the HOA and private governance are interpreted by Bosman (2007) as governing techniques of individual autonomous self-government. Like the PMC-led private governance which was discussed in the previous section, the individualised relationships crowding out community ties and

neighbourhood-based social life (Miao, 2003), and lead to decreased contact, reduced participation (Deng, 2017), and limited trust (Shi, 2010). Such social and political disengagement, according to Duca (2013) and Lo (2013), can be attributed to the underlying disjunction between the communitarian lifestyle advocated by the HOA, and residents' pursuit of privacy and safety. Notably, the widespread social and political apathy in gated communities is not contradictory to the enthusiasm towards establishing HOAs, according to some studies (Read, 2003, 2008), since such enthusiasm is often shared among limited numbers of neighbourhood elites (Shi, 2010; He and Zhong, 2013). Expanding the analytical scope to the wider community, Yang and Chen (2015) found a 'homeowners' paradox', wherein the HOA is perceived as more 'representative' of homeowners' interests, but as less trustworthy than the RC representing the local state. The low level of trust is a result of limited neighbourly interactions and internal differences among homeowners, and a representation of poorly performing HOAs suffering from structural defects. Therefore, what HOAs and individualised relationships finally bring to the neighbourhood might be a hegemonic version of elitism (Duca, 2013).

3.5   Summary

This chapter reviewed recent studies on neighbouring, neighbourliness, and neighbourhood governance in the Chinese context. Extensive research has been conducted on the changing micro-sociology urban life in post-reform China, which shows both similarities with and differences from Western studies. Some trends observed in urban China, such as reductions in neighbourly ties (e.g. Wu and He, 2005; Gui and Huang, 2006; Forrest and Yip, 2007) and attenuation in neighbourhood attachment (e.g. Wu, 2005, 2012; Liu, Zhang, *et al.*, 2017), correspond to general trends of 'community liberated' (Wellman, 1979, 1996) and 'a crisis of social cohesion' (Kearns and Forrest, 2000) that have been widely observed across the capitalist world. However, recent research has also documented some phenomena that are specific to urban China, such as the diversification of community participation (e.g. Ngeow, 2012; Fu and Lin, 2014; Liu, 2015; Gao and Chen, 2016) and a transformation of neighbourhood sentiment (Breitung, 2012; Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012; Liu, Wu, *et al.*, 2017). As most existing studies only target one or two aspects of neighbourhood life (e.g. one or two elements of social cohesion), they fail to systematically examine the co-evolution of different aspects of neighbourhood life and therefore fail to answer the question of whether China indeed faces a 'crisis of neighbourhood cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). To address this gap, I will use a pluralistic analytical approach in this research. Covering multiple dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion simultaneously, the pluralistic analytical approach enables a systematic examination of neighbourhood cohesion in urban China, and intends to answer:

> ***Research Question 1:*** *How is neighbourhood cohesion distributed in different*
> *neighbourhoods in urban Nanjing? Does the claim of 'crisis of cohesion' apply to the*
> *case of Nanjing?*

This chapter also reviewed recent research on neighbourhood governance in urban China. A number of studies have examined the rise of neighbourhood governance in China's urban transformation, especially the emergence of new neighbourhood institutions such as the PMC and the HOA (e.g. Fu, 2014; Yip, 2014; Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015; Li and Liu, 2018), and the reorganisation of the local state (e.g. Read, 2003; Liu, 2007c; Guo and Sun, 2014; Zhou, 2014). There are, however, contradictory opinions about the directions and implications of neighbourhood governance transformation in urban China. While some scholars focus on the persistence of the party-state and its 'administrative absorption' of market forces aimed at enhancing state legitimacy (Perry, 2002; Wang, 2005; Kang, Lu and Han, 2008; Heberer and Göbel, 2011; Huang and Yip, 2012), others realise the fragmented nature of the local state, and favour bottom-up forces from the society to fill the governance vacuum left by the incremental withdrawal of the work unit (Xia, 2003; Read, 2008; Fu and Lin, 2014; Yang and Chen, 2015). These contradictions originate not only from different normative positions and theoretical perspectives (which I do not intend to reconcile in this research) but from the absence of a holistic framework. Existing research tends to concentrate on one dominant organisation in one particular case—the RC, the PMC, or the HOA (Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015). By doing so, existing research separates neighbourhood agencies from each other and fails to address the interrelatedness and embeddedness of neighbourhood agencies adequately. This is because hardly any organisations work in isolation in real life. They collaborate, compete, and interact with other organisations within and beyond the neighbourhood, leading to different configurations/networks of public, private, and community-based organisations (Gui, Ma and Muhlhahn, 2009). The exercise of power in such networks does not (or does not only) work through 'sovereign' acts of coercion of the dominant actor, but manifests through inter-relationships maintained by behavioural rules and social norms that have been well-acknowledged by all actors in the network (Foucault, 1991). Therefore, neighbourhood governance is by no means static (He, 2015)—any slight change in one actor may affect its relationship with other organisations and influence the whole governance network. Admitting the interactions of multiple actors, I propose a holistic analytical framework in the analysis of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing, which helps me to answer:

> ***Research Question 2:*** *What are the major forms of governance arrangement in urban*
> *Nanjing?*

More importantly, one of the most distinctive features of neighbourhood governance in China is the embeddedness of power relationships in local social networks (Read, 2003). A number of studies have assessed the contribution of local social relations to the operation of neighbourhood institutions; yet exploration of this relationship often favours a normative approach in which the mutually enhancing (or deteriorating) effects of the relationship are often neglected (the only exception is Bi, 2006). While existing studies emphasise the transformation of neighbourhood social cohesion and the changing state–society–market relationship at the grassroots level, there is inconclusive empirical evidence on how these two variables are correlated in the Chinese context. Therefore, the third question of this research addresses:

> **_Research Question 3:_** _How are neighbourhood governance arrangements and neighbourhood social cohesion related, particularly in the case of Nanjing, China?_

To answer this question, I examined in this chapter whether, and to what extent, the theoretical framework of cohesion building developed from Western experiences can be applied to the Chinese case. A review of recent research in China reveals three possible approaches towards cohesive neighbourhoods—a state-led, a market-led, and a society-led approach, which are partly informed by or correspond to the state-centred, the neoliberal, and the communitarian approaches developed from Western experiences. Therefore, Research Question 3 can also be expressed as: _Do the hypothesised relationships between neighbourhood governance effectiveness and neighbourhood cohesion exist in Nanjing? If yes, what is the direction and strength of these relationships?_

The review also depicted several hypothesised scenarios of cohesion building in urban China. Regarding the state-led approach, existing research suggests that external forces from the local state have the potential to initiate Putnam's (1993) 'virtuous circle' of cohesion building, primarily through vertical networks between the party-state (e.g. the RC) and neighbourhood activists, and ultimately graduating to horizontal networks among citizens. Therefore, I hypothesis positive relationships between effective RCs and neighbourhood cohesion, which can be expressed as:

> **Hypothesis 1.1:** Behavioural cohesion, measured by neighbourhood interactions and community participation, is _positively_ correlated with the performances of Residents' Committees in urban neighbourhoods in China.

> **Hypothesis 1.2:** Cognitive cohesion, measured by neighbourhood attachment, orientations towards common goals, and neighbourly trust, is _positively_ correlated with the performances of Residents' Committees in urban neighbourhoods in China.

Regarding the market-led approach, existing studies in China suggest for the different relationships between PMC performance and cohesive behaviours, and PMC performance and cohesive perceptions, the former is likely to be negative due to the alienation effect of neoliberalism (Hypothesis 2.1), and the latter is likely to be positive due to satisfaction with the effective private governance (Hypothesis 2.2). The hypotheses can be expressed as:

> **Hypothesis 2.1:** Behavioural cohesion, measured by neighbourhood interactions and community participation, is *negatively* correlated with the performances of property management companies in urban neighbourhoods in China.

> **Hypothesis 2.2:** Cognitive cohesion, measured by neighbourhood attachment, orientations towards common goals, and neighbourly trust, is *positively* correlated with the performances of property management companies in urban neighbourhoods in China.

Regarding the society-led approach, communitarian and social capital theories, as well as some studies in China, provide evidence for positive relationships between HOA performance and cohesive behaviours, which can be explained by the bonding effect of homeownership. This positive association can be expressed as:

> **Hypothesis 3.1**: Behavioural cohesion, measured by neighbourhood interactions and community participation, is *positively* correlated with the performances of Homeowners' Associations in urban neighbourhoods in China.

Meanwhile, because of the segregation effects of homeownership and the disjunction between the communitarian lifestyle advocated by HOAs, and residents' pursuit of privacy and safety in gated communities, the association between HOA performance and cohesive perceptions is likely to be negative:

> **Hypothesis 3.2:** Cognitive cohesion, measured by neighbourhood attachment, orientations towards common goals, and neighbourly trust, are *negatively* correlated with the performances of Homeowners' Associations in urban neighbourhoods in China.

It is worth noting that the state-led, market-led, and society-led approaches towards cohesive neighbourhoods and the hypothesised scenarios of cohesion-building are not mutually exclusive. Different approaches are associated with different neighbourhood organisations, respectively. They coexist within the same neighbourhood and produce different configurations, shedding light on multiple possible futures for cohesive neighbourhoods. As Ostrom (2005) contends, there is no

universal rule to decide which configuration is more effective. The best configuration of cohesion building approaches not only depends on which actor is included and how effectively it works in cooperation with other actors but also rests on local features, such as socioeconomic status and neighbourhood tenure type (Liu, 2007; Breitung, 2014).

Based on the theoretical framework established in this chapter, I will move on to the methodological chapter that outlines the operational framework of the study.

Chapter 4   Research design, data, and method

Based on theories of social cohesion and the general development of urban neighbourhoods in China, this research intends to examine the social and institutional processes that generate and sustain neighbourhood connections and social solidarity in otherwise liberated urban communities, including the questions of where and how new forms of neighbourhood governance fit into debates about social cohesion. The three mechanisms presented in Chapter 3—the state-led, market-led, and society-led approaches—outline possible ways in which neighbourhood social cohesion can be cultivated against varying institutional backgrounds. These possibilities are examined by addressing the sets of questions detailed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Overview of research questions, hypothesis/expectations and methods

Work package	Research question(s)	Hypotheses/ Expectation(s)	Method(s)
1. The geography of neighbourhood social cohesion	***Research Question 1:*** *How is neighbourhood cohesion distributed in different neighbourhoods in urban Nanjing? Does the claim of 'crisis of cohesion' apply to the case of Nanjing?*	*Expectation 1:* According to existing theories, I expect that neighbourhoods in Nanjing are facing a 'crisis of neighbourhood cohesion'. Lower levels of neighbourly interactions, community participation, and neighbourhood attachment are expected to be found in newly established neighbourhoods.	Multilevel regression models
2. The geography of neighbourhood governance	***Research Question 2:*** *What are the major forms of governance arrangement in urban Nanjing?*	*Expectation 2:* According to existing theories, I seek for four modes of neighbourhood governance in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing: neighbourhood partnership, neighbourhood management, neighbourhood empowerment, and neighbourhood government.	Thematic analysis
3. The political construction of neighbourhood social cohesion	***Research Question 3:*** *How are neighbourhood governance arrangements and neighbourhood social cohesion related, particularly in the case of Nanjing, China?* ***Research Question 3.1:***		

Work package	Research question(s)	Hypotheses/ Expectation(s)	Method(s)
	Do the hypothesised relationships between neighbourhood governance effectiveness of the Residents' Committee and neighbourhood cohesion exist in Nanjing? If yes, what is the direction and strength of these relationships?	**_Hypothesis 1.1:_** Behavioural cohesion, measured by neighbourhood interactions and community participation, is *positively* correlated with the performances of Residents' Committees in urban neighbourhoods in China. **_Hypothesis 1.2:_** Cognitive cohesion, measured by community attachment, common goals, and neighbourly trust, is *positively* correlated with the performances of Residents' Committees in urban neighbourhoods in China.	Regression models and thematic analysis
	Research Question 3.2: *Do the hypothesised relationships between neighbourhood governance effectiveness of the Homeowners' Association and neighbourhood cohesion exist in Nanjing? If yes, what is the direction and strength of these relationships?*	**_Hypothesis 2.1:_** Behavioural cohesion is *negatively* correlated with the performances of property management companies in urban neighbourhoods in China. **_Hypothesis 2.2:_** Cognitive cohesion is *positively* correlated with the performances of property management companies in urban neighbourhoods in China.	Regression models and thematic analysis
	Research Question 3.3: *Do the hypothesised relationships between neighbourhood governance effectiveness of the Property Management Company and neighbourhood cohesion exist in Nanjing? If yes, what is the direction and strength of these relationships?*	**_Hypothesis 3.1_**: Behavioural cohesion is *positively* correlated with the performances of Homeowners' Associations in urban neighbourhoods in China. **_Hypothesis 3.2_**: Cognitive cohesion is *negatively* correlated with the performances of Homeowners' Associations in urban neighbourhoods in China.	Regression models and thematic analysis

In order to explore relationships between neighbourhood institutions and neighbourhood social cohesion, the following parts of this thesis will work through a deductive logic: the analytical framework of cohesion building (Chapter 3) will be examined with observations, descriptions, and explanations of the cohesion-building process in the sampled neighbourhoods in the city of Nanjing, China (Chapters 5, 6, and 7). A comparative perspective will be used to systematically evaluate the performances of neighbourhood institutions in different types of neighbourhood, and further explore their varying roles in cultivating localised goodwill and re-territorialising social ties (Lyon and Driskell, 2012).

Addressing the relationships between neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance, two sets of data have been collected in the fieldwork in Nanjing: one focuses on the political aspect of the community from a holistic perspective, through depicting the ways in which the sampled neighbourhoods are governed, and measuring the capacity and effectiveness of each governance arrangement/neighbourhood institution. The other dataset targets the social aspects of the community from an individualistic perspective, through measuring individual behavioural and cognitive bonds with the community, such as socialising and participatory behaviours, and neighbourhood-oriented sentiment. The collection and analysis of the two sets of data are integrated systematically with a cross-sectional mixed-method sequential explanatory strategy, which will be further elaborated on in the first section of this chapter. This is followed by an introduction of the operational framework of the research, including case selection, key measurements, data collection, data analysis, and the major conditions and limitations of the fieldwork.

4.1   Overview of the research design

Focusing on both the social outcomes and the governance arrangement itself as the context, this research generally proceeds with the pragmatism paradigm, which advocates a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches that 'sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality' and focuses instead on 'multiple realities that are open to empirical inquiry and orients itself toward solving practical problems in the "real world"' (Feilzer, 2010, p.8). To investigate the 'multiple realities' (ibid), multiple sets of data, both quantitative and qualitative, were collected with different strategies. The systematic integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches happens at two stages of the study: data collection and analysis.

In the data-collection stage, the study undertakes an equivalent status design. The quantitative data from questionnaires given to residents and the qualitative data from interviews are collected at the same time with equal priority. A similar combination of quantitative survey data and

qualitative interview data has been employed in several previous community studies in China (e.g. Fu et al., 2015; He, 2015). On this basis, different methods are utilised for collecting different types of data at different levels. Qualitative data on governance arrangements and organisational performances was collected at the neighbourhood level via interviews and observations. Quantitative data was collected at the individual level via questionnaire surveys, including self-reported data on cohesive actions (neighbourly interactions and neighbourhood participation) and perceptions (trust and neighbourhood attachment), as well as subjective evaluations of neighbourhood institutional performances.

In the analysis stage, the study follows a sequential explanatory design. The quantitative phase of the analysis is conducted in the first stage and is followed by the qualitative phase which acts as an explanation, triangulation, complement to, and expansion of the quantitative outcomes (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 2008; Creswell, 2009; Wisdom and Creswell, 2013). This sequence is logical, rather than operational, as it does not matter much whether the questionnaire survey was conducted before the interviews or vice versa. What matters is that qualitative data analysis is conducted based on quantitative results, and should therefore logically come after quantitative data analysis (see Figure 4.1 Overview of the research design).
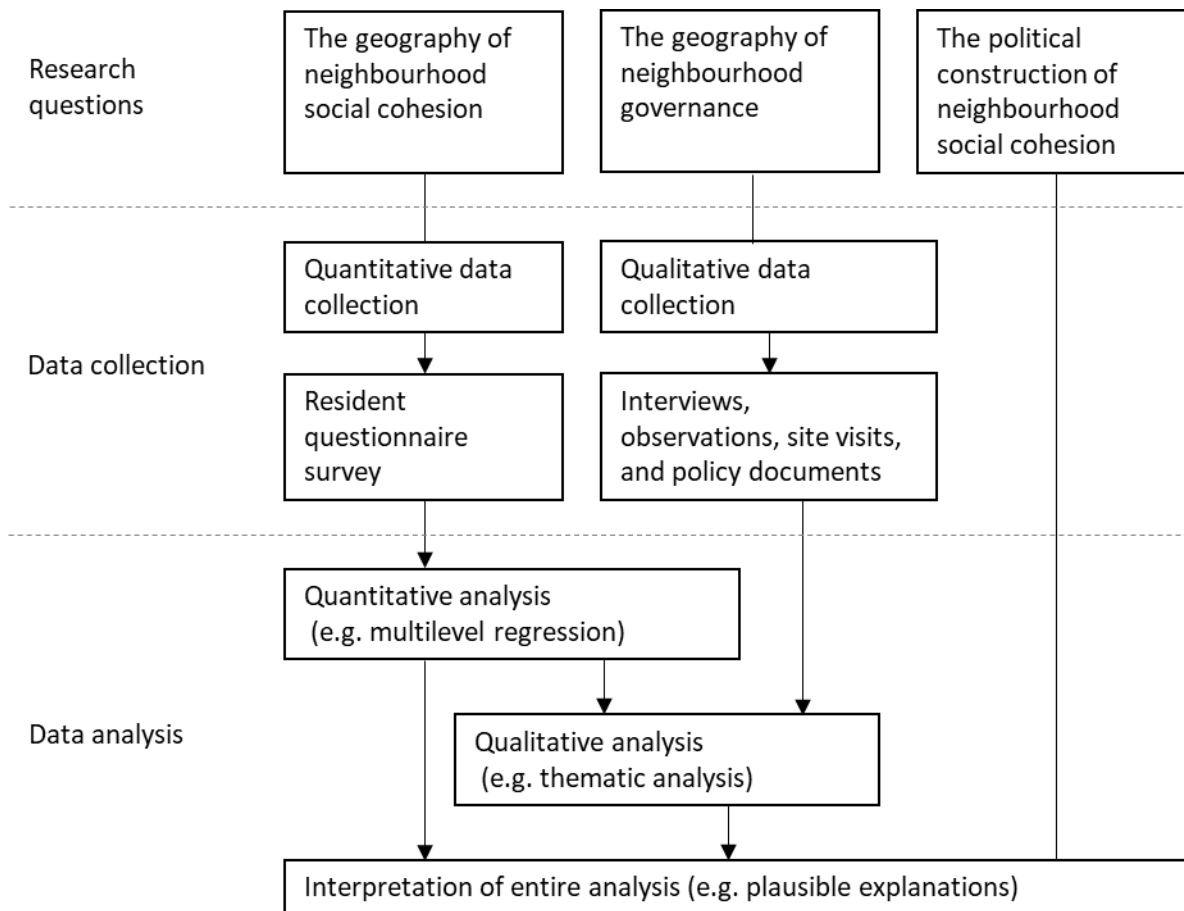
Figure 4.1 Overview of the research design

The sequential design has the following advantages. First of all, the separation of the two phases allows me to 'present thoroughly the paradigm assumptions of each phase' (Creswell, 2009, p.177) and overcome the inherent limitations of both methods, such as reliability, objectivity, and internal and external validity (see discussions from Bryman, 2004, 2007, and Bryman, Becker and Sempik, 2008). This is of particular importance for neighbourhood governance studies in urban China, which have widely explored with qualitative methods (e.g. Read, 2003, 2014; Tomba, 2005, 2014; Bray, 2006; Lin and Kuo, 2013; Huang, 2014; Zhou, 2014; Wu, 2018), but less so with quantitative methods. In this research, the quantitative evaluation of neighbourhood organisational performances with randomly selected samples produces generalisable and transferable outcomes, which expand our knowledge of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing.

Meanwhile, the mixed-method design offers sound ground for complementing and triangulating the quantitative results with qualitative data, and vice versa (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 2008). While the quantitative data depicts a 'general picture' of what is going on 'on the ground' in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, the qualitative data provides interpretive contexts, simultaneous confirmations and detailed explanations of the 'general picture'. To be more specific, while the survey data tells us whether there is a correlation between effective governance and cohesive neighbourhoods, the inclusion of qualitative data provides further opportunities to explore the processes and uncover the mechanisms of cohesion building through a detailed analysis of the thoughts, actions, and experiences of agents. The plausible mechanisms of cohesion building, which are often oversimplified or missed with the 'relatively blunt instruments and analytical procedures' of quantitative analysis (Johnson, Russo and Schoonenboom, 2017, p.12), are explored through comparative analysis on the neighbourhood level. During this process, in-depth information is analysed and compared about how the sampled neighbourhoods are managed and governed through interplays among political institutions, social actors, and individual residents, to see what the cohesion-building processes are and how they generate heterogeneous effects. As existing studies have seldom explored with quantitative data sets (the only exception was the Guangzhou survey on HOAs in 2012), never mind mention mixed methods, this research enables me to settle the cohesion debate with triangulated results, the validity and generalisability of which are mutually enhanced by multiple methods.

4.2   Data, variables, and measurement

To explore the relationship between neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance, two sets of data were collected from the survey: one which targets the social aspect of the community and measures individual behavioural and cognitive bonds within the neighbourhood under the name of 'neighbourhood social cohesion', and the other which focuses on the political

aspect of the community and measures the capacity of neighbourhood governance arrangements under the name of 'governance effectiveness'. The following section presents the variables and key measurements for neighbourhood social capital and governance effectiveness respectively. A list of interviews is presented in Appendix A, and a copy of the interview guide and survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix B and C, respectively.

4.2.1   Measurement of neighbourhood social cohesion

There is still a lack of consensus across studies about the choice of indicators to measure social cohesion. As Anderson, Park and Jack (2007) suggest, the selection of indicators of social cohesion is related to how it is conceptualised with different research aims in various contexts. In a majority of sociological studies concerning individual-based cohesion, the complexity of social cohesion is deconstructed into two types: behavioural (structural), and cognitive (perceived) cohesion (e.g. Bollen and Hoyle, 1990; Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2002; Moody and White, 2003; Liu et al., 2017). In their assessment, *behavioural cohesion* refers to 'established roles and social networks supplemented by precedents, rules and procedures' (Malecki, 2012, p.1026), which promotes collective decision making through networking. It represents 'manifest neighbouring' (Mann, 1954), and is constituted of cohesive behaviours, based on vertical and horizontal interactions among group members, which can be observed externally and objectively. *Cognitive cohesion* is often associated with subjective properties of individuals, such as feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms. It reflects 'latent neighbouring' (ibid) of cohesive attitudes which are relatively subjective and are often quantified through Likert scales.

On this basis, scholars have further examined the components of social cohesion which have frequently been referred to in community studies. Following Forrest and Kearns (2001) and Liu and Wu et al. (2017), neighbourhood cohesion is operationalised in this research into three dimensions: neighbourly ties, neighbourhood participation, and neighbourhood attachment. The former two dimensions belong to behavioural cohesion, and the latter belongs to cognitive cohesion.
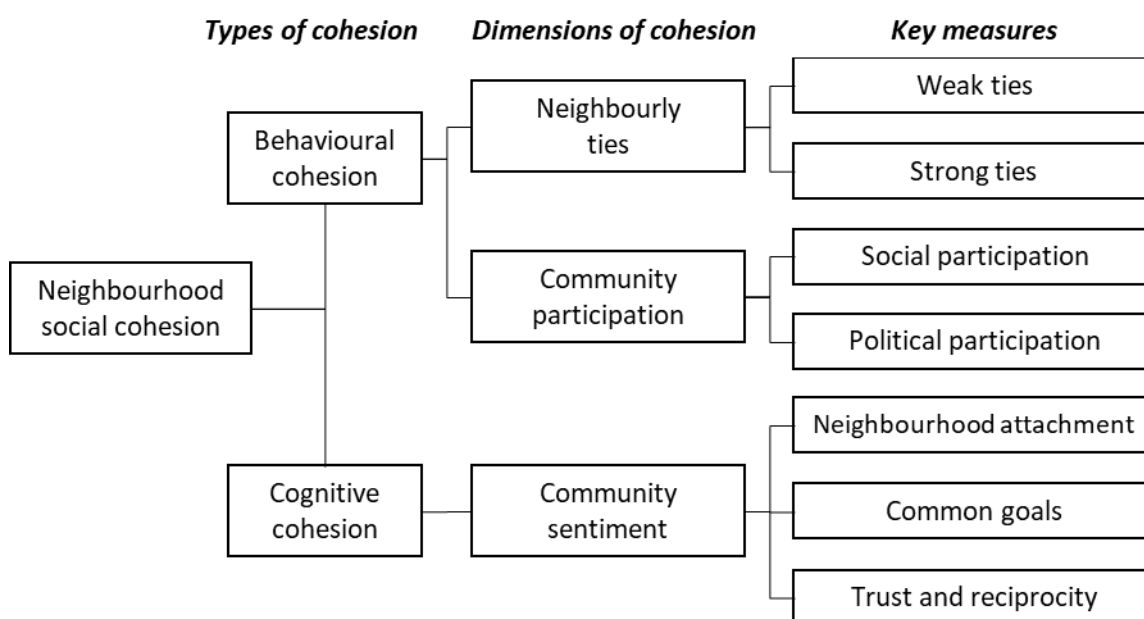
Figure 4.2 An operational framework for measuring neighbourhood social cohesion

To be more specific, *neighbourly ties* construct one's informal social networks within the geographical boundaries of the neighbourhood. These networks offer a wide range of instrumental and emotional support, and can either be established among friends (strong ties) or acquaintances (weak ties) (Granovetter, 1983). There are two measurements for neighbourly ties:

1) *Strength of weak ties*, which asks for the number of acquaintances a person has in the neighbourhood (e.g. neighbours a respondent knows by name or would say hello or nod heads to when meeting in the neighbourhood); and

2) *Strength of strong ties*, which asks for the number of friends a person has in the neighbourhood (e.g. neighbours with whom a respondent is willing to trade home visits and socialise occasionally).

Notably, the retrospective data was generated and collected as a proxy for behavioural data in a hypothesised 'criterion' structure, such as creating real-life scenarios of saying hello and visiting each other's homes. This 'classic' or 'criterion' perspective has been criticised for years for the inaccuracy, uncertainty, and noise caused by the 'recall error' and 'transmission error' of cognitive data reported by socially embedded informants (Bernard *et al.*, 1984; Butts, 2003). However, considering the sample and population sizes (30–50 informants in each neighbourhood, the population of which ranges from 3000–5000, across 32 sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing), more advanced methods of collecting social network data for larger populations (such as the scale-up method) are not entirely effective and practical (Killworth *et al.*, 1998). This is because it is extremely difficult to obtain census data of neighbourhood populations in urban China, based

on which the size of a social network can be scaled up and estimated. Therefore, I adopted the classical approach to study neighbourhood social networks in Nanjing.

Community participation refers to the formal networks that one socially and civically engaged in within the neighbourhood. These formal networks are established by membership in neighbourhood organisations, and involvement in various types of neighbourhood activities, and they provide residents with opportunities to articulate their demands, create collective accomplishments, and generate participatory forms of cohesiveness (Wellman and Haase, 2001). Most existing studies use descriptive methods to explore the nature of participation in community issues, albeit counting the number of memberships and/or the frequency of a respondent's engagement in community affairs (e.g. Hall, 1999; Putnam, 2000). Considering the large number of 'zombie organisations' in urban neighbourhoods in China, membership of which makes little difference to community civic life, measurement of participatory frequency is preferable to quantify associational participation in this project. Drawing on Heberer (2009), two types of community activities are identified for measuring community participation:

1) *Social participation* considers the frequency of participation in community social and recreational activities in the past year. These activities do not necessarily take institutionalised forms and include interest groups, cultural and sports activities, volunteer posts (including work with children, women, and the elderly, and other public works), charity drives, educational activities, online chat groups and forums, and other public activities.

2) *Political participation* considers the frequency of participation in community political and civic activities in the past year. These activities are principally related to institutionalised neighbourhood organisations, and include voting for the RC or HOA, being a member of or participating in meetings/hearings organised by the RC, HOA, or other civic groups, getting involved in the work of the RC/HOA, supervising, and giving opinions to the RC/HOA (both face-to-face and online).

Notably, neighbourly interactions and participation do not necessarily require any assumptions about face-to-face interactions based on geographical proximity. Liberated communities have witnessed a movement of neighbourly interactions from public spaces to private places, which can either be a geographical locale or a virtual community. Recent research on online social networks and e-governance suggests that a considerable proportion of neighbours gets in touch with each other via messages, chat applications, or online forums (Kavanaugh, Patterson and Putnam, 2001; Li and Li, 2013; Huang and Sun, 2014). These new forms of communication and participation are taken into consideration in this research.

For cognitive cohesion, common subjective factors relating to *community sentiment* are covered in the research. Although many scholars equate cognitive cohesion with individual attitudes and emotional attachment towards the neighbourhood (as 'neighbourhood attachment' in this research), and potential for collective actions (as 'orientation towards common goals'), a closer review of classic works on social cohesion shows that trust and reciprocity can be incorporated in this category as well (Jenson, 1998; Lockwood, 1999; Lelieveldt, 2004; Chan, To and Chan, 2006). Therefore, three key measures of community sentiment are included in the survey:

1) *Neighbourhood attachment*, which measures the strengths of a person's cognitive bonds to their community and fellow residents. Interviewees were asked about their levels of agreement with each of the following statements on a 5-point Likert scale: 'I feel attached to the community', and 'As a living space, I like my neighbourhood and I belong here'.

2) *Orientation towards common goals*, which measures a person's sense of responsibility for the common good, indicating potentials for collective actions. Interviewees were asked about their levels of agreement with each of the following statements on a 5-point Likert scale: 'Even without direct benefit, I am willing to devote time in neighbourhood public projects', and 'Even without direct benefit, I am willing to spend money in neighbourhood public projects'.

3) *Trust and reciprocity*, which measures the 'common goodwill' of the community on a more general basis, and is similar to the term 'community social capital' in some studies (e.g. Lin, Cook and Burt, 2001; Zhu, 2014). Compared with the levels of neighbourhood attachment, trust is more experience-based and has a broader impact on future cooperative actions among residents. Interviewees were asked about their levels of agreement with each of the following statements on a 5-point Likert scale: 'Most people in this neighbourhood can be trusted', and 'It is easy to borrow things in the neighbourhood'.

For the index based on scales, we also conducted a reliability test (Cronbach, 1951) to ensure that the groupings of questions for each of the three indexes were acceptable. The test justified the groupings for all three indicators, as all Cronbach alpha values are above the 0.6 level (Setbon and Raude, 2010).

Table 4.2 Measurement of neighbourhood cohesion

	Variables	Description	Type of data	Mean or %	SD	N	Cronbach's α
Behavioural cohesion	Weak ties	Number of acquaintances in the neighbourhood	Continuous	94.16	207.84	822	-
	Strong ties	Number of friends in the neighbourhood	Continuous	24.73	83.76	824	-
	Social participation[3]	Participated in >0 neighbourhood social activities in the past year	Binary	35.53%	-	909	-
	Political participation	Participated in >0 neighbourhood political activities in the past year	Binary	55.34%	-	909	-
Cognitive cohesion	Neighbourhood attachment	The average score of two statements: 'As a living space, I like my neighbourhood', and 'I feel attached to the community'. (5-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)	Ordinal	3.72	0.78	897	0.84
	Orientation towards common goals	The average score of two statements: 'Even without direct benefit, I am willing to devote time in neighbourhood public projects' and, 'Even without direct benefit, I am willing to spend money in neighbourhood public projects'. (5-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)	Ordinal	3.35	0.87	896	0.94
	Trust and reciprocity	The average score of two statements: 'Most people in this neighbourhood can be trusted', and 'It is easy to borrow things in the neighbourhood'.(5-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)	Ordinal	3.66	0.82	896	0.91

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[3] As more than 50% of survey respondents reported never having participated in neighbourhood social activities, and more than 40% reported the same for political activities, I decided to turn the ordinal response (asking for participation frequency) into a binary variable (asking whether they had ever participated or not).

4.2.2   Measurement of governance effectiveness

Governance effectiveness is utilised in this study to assess the performances of neighbourhood organisations. According to the World Bank, governance effectiveness captures the quality, or perceptions of the quality, of public service provided by an organisation, and can thus be obtained either from objective datasets, such as statistical yearbooks, or from subjective datasets, such as censuses or surveys.

Existing community studies in China have rarely measured organisations' performances quantitatively, due to the lack of statistical data and difficulties in quantification and standardisation. The 2012 Guangzhou survey on HOAs is the only large-scale survey in China so far that quantifies governance effectiveness on the neighbourhood level. In this survey, the efficacy of governance of HOAs is appraised internally through residents' subjective assessment of three aspects: accountability, representation, and satisfaction (Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015). Drawing on the Guangzhou survey, in this study the *governance effectiveness* of each major neighbourhood organisation in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (i.e. the RC, the HOA and the PMC) was measured subjectively by survey respondents in three ways:

1) *Accountability*, measuring the extent to what the organisation represents homeowners' interests;
2) *Responsiveness*, measuring the response rate of the organisation if the resident calls the organisation with a complaint; and
3) *Satisfaction*, measuring the extent to which the respondent is satisfied with the service the organisation provides.

The scores for each measure of governance effectiveness are presented in Table 4.4. For each neighbourhood organisation, a single performance score is generated from the average score of the three indices.

Apart from measures of cohesion and governance, several sociodemographic factors are also taken into consideration, both at the individual and the neighbourhood level (Table 4.4). They are identified with relevance to previous studies on neighbourhood cohesion in China (see the discussion in Chapter 3). These variables include demographic factors (sex, hukou status, presence of dependent child), socioeconomic factors (years of schooling, annual household income per capita) and housing status (tenure, length of residence), and neighbourhood level variables (neighbourhood type and residential satisfaction).

Table 4.3 Measurement of governance effectiveness

	Variables	Description	Organisation	Type of data	Mean or %	SD	N	Min	Max
Governance efficacy	Accountability	The score answering the question: 'To what extent do you think the organisation represents homeowners' interests?' (5-point Likert scale, 1 = not at all, 5 = very much)	RC	Ordinal	2.80	1.36	677	0	5
			HOA	Ordinal	2.58	1.47	320	0	5
			PMC	Ordinal	2.50	1.35	667	0	5
	Responsiveness	The score answering the question: 'I would likely get a quick response if called the organisation with a complaint' (5-point Likert scale, 1 = do not agree at all, 5 = strongly agree)	RC	Ordinal	2.85	1.35	677	0	5
			HOA	Ordinal	2.53	1.46	320	0	5
			PMC	Ordinal	2.61	1.42	667	0	5
	Satisfaction	The score answering the question: 'To what extent are you satisfied with social services the organisation provides?' (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied)	RC	Ordinal	2.92	1.32	677	0	5
			HOA	Ordinal	2.62	1.48	320	0	5
			PMC	Ordinal	2.64	1.38	667	0	5

Table 4.4 A full list of measurement of control variables

Variables	Description	Type of data	N	Mean or %	SD	Min	Max
Individual level							
Sex	Ref = female	Binary	911	54.56%	-	0	1
Hukou status	1 = residents with their hukou registered not in Nanjing as 'agricultural', 2 = residents with their hukou registered not in Nanjing as 'non-agricultural', 3 = residents with their hukou registered in Nanjing as 'agricultural', 4 = residents with their hukou registered in Nanjing as 'non-agricultural.'	Categorical	912	2.55	0.93	1	4
Ownership	Ref = homeowner	Binary	886	76.86%	-	0	1
Residence	Length of residence	Continuous	915	11.50	10.22	0	75
Presence of children	Ref = >0 children under 16 years old	Binary	912	58.17%	-	0	1
Years of schooling	Years spent at school	Continuous	878	12.96	3.82	6	19
Household income per capita (10,000 CNY)	The logarithm of annual household income per capita	Continuous	866	2.50	0.77	0	5.30
Neighbourhood level							
Neighbourhood type	1 = traditional neighbourhood, 2 = privatised work unit, 3 = commodity housing estate, 4 = affordable or resettlement neighbourhood.	Categorical	32	2.60	1.06	1	4
Residents' perception of the built environment	Average scores of evaluations of built environment and neighbourhood services by the residents	Ordinal	32	3.11	1.02	1	5

4.3   Case selection

When exploring the social and political construction of neighbourhood cohesion, one of the most important issues is to find cases with observable and variable governance practices that exert long-term influence on neighbourhood socialisation. As government structures and policy frameworks differ from city to city, an intra-city comparison is preferable to inter-city comparison, as the former maximises comparability among cases and minimises systematic differences. Therefore, this study focuses on neighbourhood life in a single city, Nanjing, and explores variations of neighbourhood governance and neighbourhood cohesion across urban neighbourhoods within the city. As pointed out by Wang (2005) and Shieh (2011), neighbourhood types, built environments, local socioeconomic status, institutional settings, and local social networks all contribute to variations in neighbourhood social and political life, which enable systematic and rigorous comparisons.

4.3.1   Nanjing as the field site

The multi-case study was conducted in the city of Nanjing, China. Nanjing is one of the largest cities in the East China region, with an administrative area of 6512 km^2, and a permanent population of 8.34 million (Nanjing Statistical Bureau, 2018). At the grassroots level, the 6.8 million urban residents are organised in over 3500 *xiaoqu*s in 942 RCs, which are in charge of 87 SOs (see Figure 4.3 Geographical location of Nanjing).
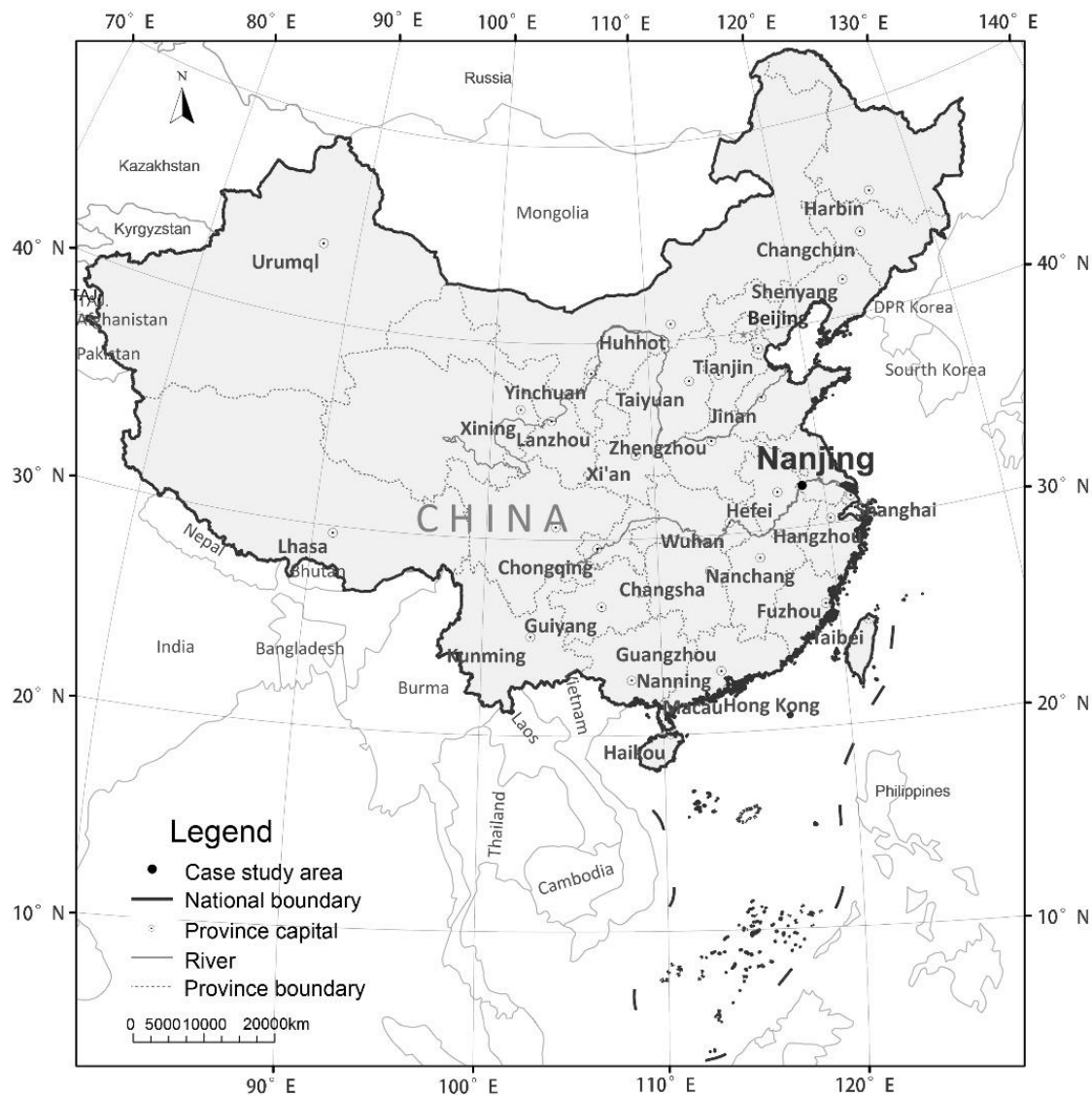
Figure 4.3 Geographical location of Nanjing

Table 4.5 Basic figures on urban communities in Nanjing (by district, 2017)

District	Area (km^2)	Permanent, non-agricultural population	Registered population	Number of Street Offices	Number of urban communities (Residents' Committees)	Population per Street Office	Population per urban community (per Residents' Committee)	Area per urban community (/km^2)
Xuanwu	75.46	600200	477468	7	59	85742.86	10172.88	1.28
Qinhuai	49.11	1000300	694625	12	111	83358.33	9011.71	0.44
Jianye	81.75	472600	331689	6	55	78766.67	8592.73	1.49
Gulou	54.18	1168400	925435	13	118	89876.92	9901.70	0.46
Qixia	395.38	717900	492361	9	85	79766.67	8445.89	4.65
Yuhuatai	132.39	454500	287070	6	56	75750.00	8116.07	2.36
Jiangning	1563.33	1248500	1078989	10	128	124850.00	9753.91	12.21
Pokou	910.51	798800	710810	9	89	88755.56	8975.28	10.23
Luhe	1471	963500	922758	11	88	87590.91	10948.86	16.72
Lishui	1063.68	463900	439146	2	69	231950.00	6723.19	15.42
Gaochun	790.23	446400	446312	2	84	223200.00	5314.29	9.41
Total	6587.02	8335000	6806663	87	942	-	-	-

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Nanjing, 2018.

Nanjing is an ideal sample for conducting comparative research on neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance in urban China. On the one hand, Nanjing is an 'ordinary city' of the kind often neglected in the construction of urban theory (Robinson, 2006), which is less explored than global cities such as Beijing (e.g. Read, 2002; Tomba, 2005; Wang, Li and Chai, 2012) and Shanghai (e.g. He and Wu, 2005; Li and Wu, 2008; Timberlake *et al.*, 2014; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017b).

On the other hand, Nanjing is also a 'prototypical' city, in the terms used by Brenner (2003) and the context of China. For Brenner, prototypes are the first cases of something likely to become more generalised. Regarding being a 'prototype', the diverse urban communities in Nanjing are partly representative of other communities in other cities in urban China. According to Table 4.5, Nanjing is home to nearly a thousand urban communities distributed in eleven urban districts. These urban communities cover a wide range of neighbourhood types, ranging from the most deprived communities with low-income populations, blighted urban villages with rural migrants and floating populations, privatised work units with people working for the state sector, to newly modernised high-rise flats and villas for the middle and upper classes. The diversity of residential communities makes Nanjing a favourable subject for the study of neighbourhoods and neighbouring activities in China (e.g. Cui, Geertman and Hooimeijer, 2015, 2016; Wang *et al.*, 2016; Wu, Zhang and Waley, 2016; Wu, 2018). As urban communities and their governance are 'considerably consistent' (Read, 2003b, p.47), it is conceivable that diverse urban neighbourhoods in a metropolitan city like Nanjing are able to provide representative samples of urban neighbourhoods in other cities in China. The comparative case study in Nanjing is thus expected to reflect some common characteristics of urban communities in China, which further allows for comparisons with Western cases in different institutional backgrounds.

At the same time, Nanjing appears to be a case which has a particularly strong base of diverse neighbourhood institutions, shedding light on the general trends that are likely to happen in urban China. It provides an excellent opportunity to observe different paths along which the top-down process of community building and the bottom-up process of civic engagement are intertwined on the most local level of society. On the one hand, Nanjing is a pioneer city in terms of community-centred reforms in China. It was selected as one of the twelve pilot cities for the community building reform (*quanguo shequ jianshe shiyanqu*) by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China in 1999. According to policy papers formulated by the municipal government, community building in Nanjing was centred on four key aspects: (1) RC elections; (2) the relationship between RC and the community CPC branch; (3) performance evaluations; and (4) the creation of an independent community budget. The community building initiatives had far-

reaching effects on the restructuring of neighbourhood governance, as the reform has conferred 'greater operational autonomy' (Shieh, 2011, p.117) on RCs, and created a governance level which was not entirely a part of the state apparatus. The successful experiences in Nanjing have also been acknowledged by higher levels of governments. In 2014, Nanjing was ranked first among demonstration cities for the national 'harmonious community building' (*hexie shequ jianshe*) programme (Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2014). Based on successful experiences on the municipal level, Nanjing has made some further explorations in community governance innovation on the local level in recent years. Six national 'experimental zones for Community Governance and Service Innovation (*quanguo shequ guanli he fuwu chuangxin shiyanqu)*' were established successively in 2012, 2014, and 2015. The experimental zones cover the six inner-city districts in Nanjing. The 'Community Governance and Service Innovation' project granted experimental zones considerable autonomy in agenda setting and policy formulation. As a consequence, various types of neighbourhood governance framework were established in urban neighbourhoods in the experimental zones (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 National experimental zones for community governance innovation in Nanjing

Name	Year of establishment	Main characteristics
Qinhuai	2012	Neighbourhood grid management Service station (a combination of governmental officials, Residents' Committee members, community party members and neighbourhood activists)
Xuanwu	2014	A linkage mechanism of community neighbourhood organisation social workers
Yuhuatai	2014	Incubators for neighbourhood organisations Venture philanthropy
Jianye	2015	De-administration of Residents' Committee
Gulou	2015	An institutionalised deliberative and consultation mechanism
Qixia	2015	Incorporating charity foundations into neighbourhood governance Time bank

Source: Ministry of Civil Affairs, http://sw.mca.gov.cn/article/yw/jczghsqjs/cxsyq/

On the other hand, with a long tradition of civic culture, urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing also enjoy relatively high levels of autonomy. Just take the HOA as an example. By the end of 2013, nearly 600 HOAs had already been established, accounting for nearly half of urban residential

communities in Nanjing. Compared to 14.5 per cent in Guangzhou and 11.7 per cent in Beijing, Nanjing is among the cities with the highest proportion of self-founded Homeowners' Associations in China, second only to Shanghai (He and Wang, 2015). However, the long traditions of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) set HOAs in Nanjing further apart from HOAs in Shanghai, most of which were founded by local authorities (Chen, 2009; Shi, 2010; Lin and Kuo, 2013). Although the establishment of an HOA does not lead directly to participation in community issues, it acts as an indirect indicator of citizens' awareness of, and the institutional environment for, civic engagement.

Table 4.7 Number of HOAs in China's major cities

City	Total number of neighbourhoods	Number of neighbourhoods with HOAs	Percentage of neighbourhoods with HOAs
Shanghai	7375	6114	82.90
Nanjing	1275	599	46.98
Shenzhen	2003	721	36.00
Haikou	600	210	35.00
Chongqing	3350	1124	33.55
Chengdu	2824	932	33.00
Guangzhou	4000	580	14.50
Beijing	3077	360	11.70
Zhengzhou	1237	102	8.25

Source: He and Wang, 2015.

4.3.2　　　Units of analysis

Considering the multilevel nature of this research, I conducted data collection and analysis both on the neighbourhood and the individual level. The multilevel design is widely utilised as a practical approach in social cohesion analysis both in the West and in China (e.g. Onyx and Bullen, 1998; Subramanian, Lochner and Kawachi, 2003; Gui and Huang, 2008).

On the neighbourhood level, the 'residential community' (*shequ*) becomes the primary unit of analysis, emphasising the collective account of neighbourhood social cohesion and holism of neighbourhood governance system. The *shequ* has distinctive implications in the Chinese context. It is demarcated by clear geographical boundaries and is incorporated into the administrative territories of RCs at the grassroots level of the government system (analysis unit 1 in Figure 4.4). Therefore, the primary analytical unit of this research—the 'residential community', coincides with the administrative territory of the RC in the Chinese context. Considering the size, diversity, and social disparity of residential communities in urban China, a sub-component of the

community—the housing estate (*xiaoqu*, literally translated as micro-district)—is operationalised as the fundamental sampling unit in data collection (sampling unit 1 in Figure 4.4), as has been done in most previous studies (e.g. Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Yip, 2012; Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015; Wang, Li and Chai, 2016; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018). On average, a typical *shequ* in Nanjing consists of two to eight *xiaoqu*s. A *xiaoqu* is equipped with a complete set of living facilities (e.g. water and gas systems, green spaces, public activity centres, kindergartens, and shops) and a management system (e.g. PMCs and HOAs). Although originally a concept for construction and urban planning, the *xiaoqu* has evolved into the everyday 'life space' of people gathered by economic, cultural, or historical similarities. Rather than the *shequ* as an administrative unit, the *xiaoqu* is a spatial unit where neighbourly interactions and community participation take place. The *xiaoqu* works more efficiently than the *shequ* in collecting information about social behaviours on the micro-level.
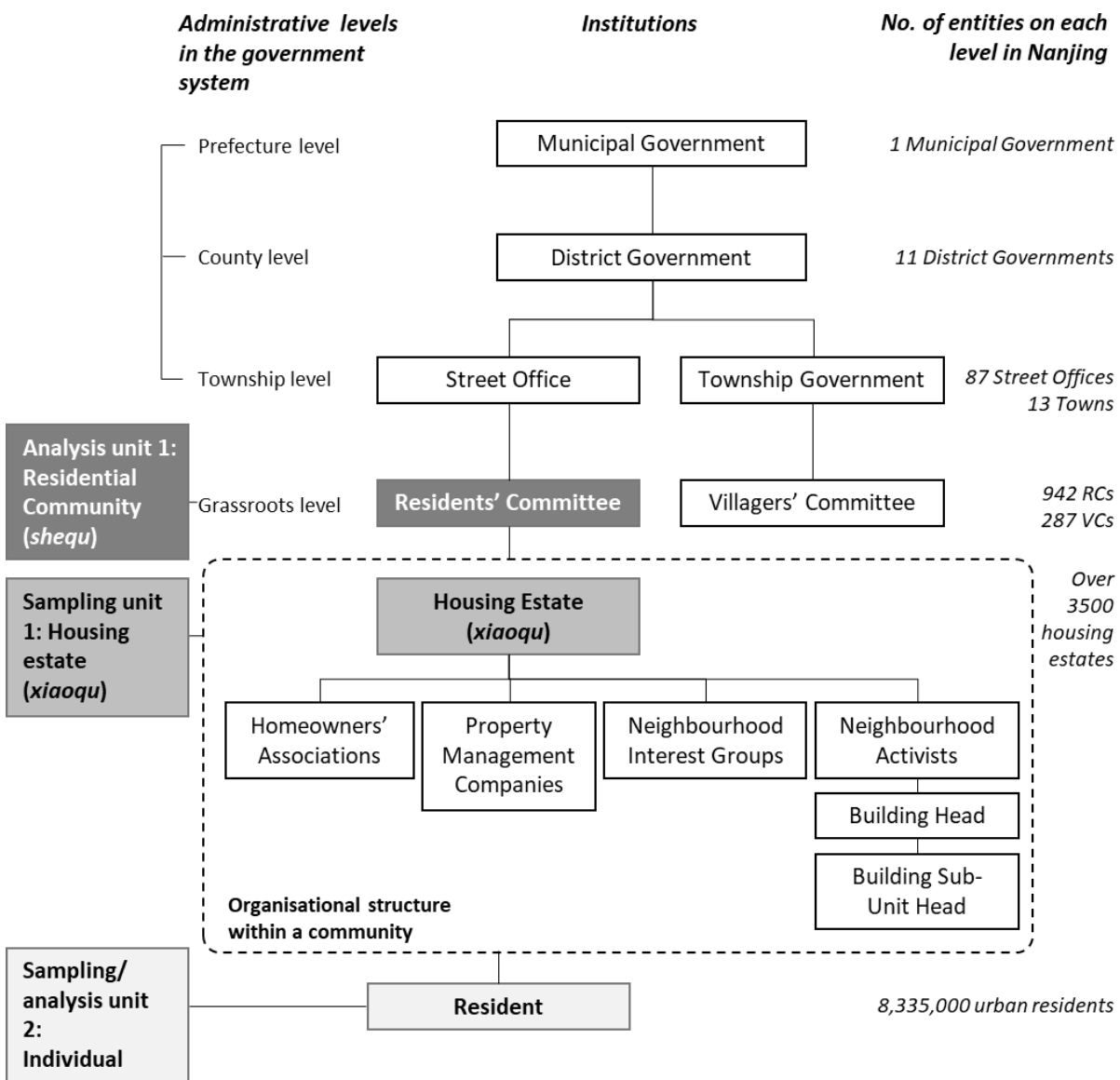
Figure 4.4 Administrative and organisational structures of urban communities in Nanjing

On the individual level, individuals and their interactions with neighbourhood organisations are nested within neighbourhoods. Therefore, the individual respondent is the second sampling unit in the multilevel model. Behavioural and cognitive data concerning individuals' social and civic lives in the neighbourhood are collected and analysed (sampling/analysis unit 2 in Figure 4.4).

4.3.3 Case selection

According to the multilevel design, case selection also proceeded on two levels. On the neighbourhood level, a multistage stratified random sampling method was employed with the neighbourhood (represented by *xiaoqu*) as the sampling unit. There were two stages in the case selection: in the first stage, urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing were stratified into several groups based on a set of criteria, including property ownership (public ownership, private ownership, and mixed ownership), history, built environment, and whether they were welfare housing or not. Neighbourhoods in Nanjing then fell into four 'target groups': traditional neighbourhoods (built before 2000, private or mixed ownership), work units (previously public or mixed ownership), commodity housing estates (built after 2000, private ownership), and affordable housing (welfare housing). This typology of urban neighbourhoods is derived from the Chinese General Society Survey (CGSS)[4] and has been widely applied by existing studies in China (e.g. Yu and Tang, 2018; Zhang, 2018). On this basis, a random sampling method was employed in the second stage. From the sampling pools constructed in the first stage, 6–12 neighbourhoods were randomly selected from each group regarding their geographical location (inner city, outer city, and suburb) and the total number of neighbourhoods in each group. Thirty-two sampled neighbourhoods were selected from different residential communities (*shequ*s) with varying governance arrangements, from the central urban area of Nanjing.[5] The sampled communities included not only typical communities which demonstrated achievements in community building and neighbourhood governance projects, but also ordinary communities, and even some 'poorly performing' communities.

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[4] The CGSS categorises urban communities in China into six categories: traditional neighbourhoods (which have not undergone urban regeneration), work units, affordable housing, ordinary commodity housing, villas and high-end commodity housing, and newly urbanised neighbourhoods or urban villages. Considering the sample size in Nanjing, the six categories in CGSS are reduced to four categories in this research. 'Villas and high-end commodity housing estates' and 'ordinary commodity housing estates' are merged into 'commodity housing estates', and 'newly urbanised neighbourhoods or urban villages' are not included in this study.

[5] By 'central urban area', I refer to the six inner city urban districts of Xuanwu, Qinhuai, Jianye, Gulou, Qixia, and Yuhuatai, and the newly urbanised areas of Jiangning District, which together make up 18.48% of the land area and 80% of the population of Nanjing. Communities in central urban Nanjing are coded as 111 by the National Bureau of Statistics in China, compared with those coded as 112 in outer suburbs.
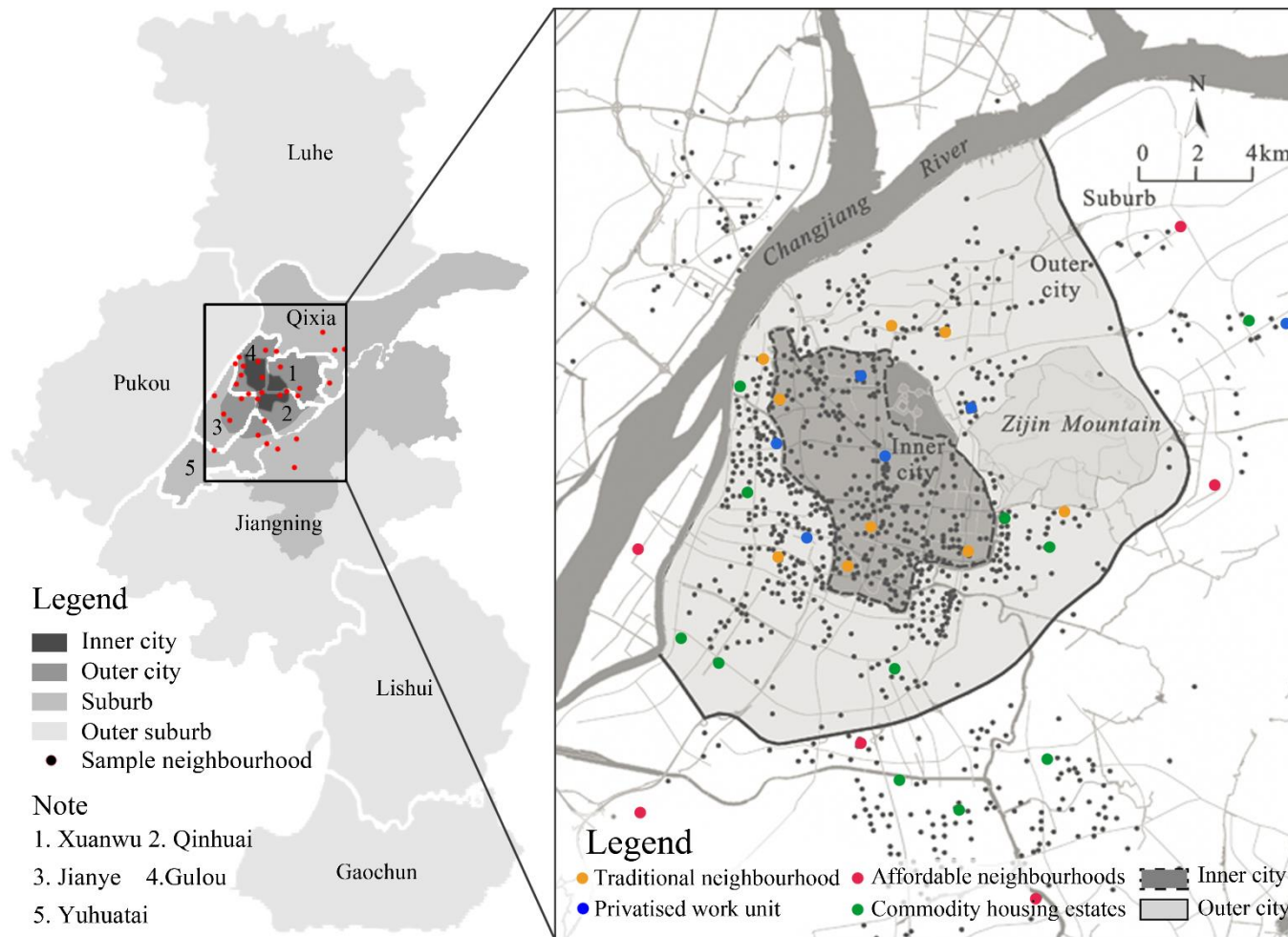
Figure 4.5 Geographic distribution of the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (adapted from Song and Wu, 2010)

Table 4.8 Distribution of the sampled neighbourhoods (by location)

Location	The number of residential communities[6]	The proportion of residential communities by location (%)	The number of the sampled neighbourhoods	The proportion of the sampled neighbourhoods by location (%)
Inner city	127	21.31	6	18.75
Outer city	268	44.97	15	46.88
Suburb	201	33.72	11	37.50
Total	596	100.00	32	100.00

On the individual level, a modified proportional to size sampling method was applied for the questionnaire survey. Respondents within selected neighbourhoods were recruited based on the residential distribution of households within the property. For each neighbourhood, the number of interviewees to be sampled was roughly proportional to the total number of households in that neighbourhood (ranges from 500-7000). With a sampling rate of 1 %, the number of surveys conducted in each target neighbourhood ranges from 5 to 80. To guarantee the validity of the result, at least 20 residents were interviewed in each neighbourhood, which added up to 918 valid samples in 32 neighbourhoods.

Table 4.9 Distribution of questionnaires (by neighbourhood types)

Neighbourhood type	The number of households (2015)[7]	The proportion of households (%)	The number of questionnaires	The proportion of questionnaires (%)
Traditional neighbourhood	497000	17.17	128	13.94
Privatised work unit	670000	23.15	205	22.33
Commodity housing	1440000	49.76	442	48.15
Affordable housing	287000	9.92	143	15.58[8]
Total	2894000	100.00	918	100.00

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[6] Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Nanjing, 2018*.
[7] Source: *http://www.xinhuanet.com//fortune/2017-04/18/c_1120826803.htm*
[8] The household data was collected in 2015. Since 2016, affordable housing has developed rapidly in urban Nanjing, which is beyond the general trend. According to Nanjing municipal government (2017), 14000 affordable apartments have been built by the end of 2017, leading to an increase in the proportion of affordable neighbourhoods. Meanwhile, urban regeneration projects demolished traditional neighbourhoods, leading to a decrease in its proportion accordingly.

Respondents in each sampled neighbourhood were approached through a hybrid method. Participants were sampled randomly by apartment, using an interval sampling based on the residential distribution of households within the property. They were invited to complete the questionnaire on the indoor survey. If the number of respondents recruited by indoor surveys could not meet the lower limit of twenty, the remaining possible respondents were approached in public spaces in the neighbourhood using a quota sampling method. This was particularly the case in gated communities, considering the low response rate of indoor surveys in such neighbourhoods in China (Zhu, 2015). This sampling strategy is appropriate for a study that aims to compare and explore cases that have multiple levels and substantial within-group similarities on each level, and has been widely applied among community studies in China (e.g. Wu, 2006; Li and Yi, 2007; He et al., 2010; Liu, Li and Breitung, 2012).

4.4   Data collection

To address the research questions on neighbourhood governance and neighbourhood cohesion, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the in-depth fieldwork at 32 sites of urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing. Five methods or technologies were utilised during this process, including interviews of organisations and residents, resident surveys, site visits, participant observation, and paper-based contextual works.

Diverse ethical issues were considered before and during the data collection, such as informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. Ethical approval was obtained (ERGO ID 25368) from the Ethics Committee of the University of Southampton to ensure the integrity, quality and transparency of the research and avoid any potential risks of harm to participants and researchers. Survey participants and interviewees were approached with informed consent, knowing that all data collected from them would be anonymised and securely stored so that they would not be identified personally.

Data collection can be divided into two stages (Table 4.10). In the first stage, a pilot study was conducted in March and April 2017 to gain a deeper understanding of local interpretations of community building and relevant neighbourhood projects, and test the research instruments through interviews, observations, policy papers, and a pilot questionnaire survey. Open-ended interviews with community workers and residents were the major methods for data collection in this stage. Results from this phase were utilised to inform the design and revise both the survey instruments and the more structured interview guides. In addition, networks that had been established with government officials and community workers also assisted in selecting and getting access to the sampled neighbourhoods in subsequent stages of fieldwork.

After the pilot study, major parts of the fieldwork were carried out between September 2017 and February 2018. A multi-pronged strategy was pursued for data collection in this stage, in which quantitative data collection via surveys, and qualitative data collection via interviews were organised simultaneously. Resident surveys and semi-structured interviews with both community workers and residents' representatives were the major source of information, complemented by site visits and participant observations in neighbourhood activities. The data-collection process of the major parts of the fieldwork will be discussed in detail in the following sections, including contextual work with policy papers, interviews and participant observation, and the resident survey.

Table 4.10 Phases of fieldwork

Phase of fieldwork	Objectives	Tasks completed
Pilot study (March 2017 to April 2017)	- To gain an understanding of local policies of community building and relevant neighbourhood initiatives in Nanjing - To examine the implementation of community policies on the ground - To test the research design and research instrument	- Conducted library and internet-based research on Nanjing's experiments in community building and neighbourhood governance innovation - Interviewed three officials from Nanjing Civil Affairs Bureau on the development of community building and neighbourhood governance reform in Nanjing - Interviewed 20 representatives from local SOs and RCs, social organisations, and PMCs - Visited fifteen neighbourhoods, observed the built environment in these neighbourhoods, and conducted a pilot questionnaire survey in three of them
Fieldwork (September 2017 to February 2018)	- To gain a deeper understanding of local policies of community-Building and relevant neighbourhood initiatives in Nanjing - To examine the implementation of community policies on the ground and influence the operation of neighbourhood organisations - To explore the social and political influences of community policies	- Interviewed one official from the Civil Affairs Bureau - Interviewed 34 representatives from local SOs and RCs, social organisations, and PMCs - Interviewed 23 residents' representatives and residents - Visited 32 neighbourhoods, observed the built environment and participated in some social activities in the neighbourhood, such as chatting and dancing in public spaces, and some political activities, such as HOA elections - Completed a large-scale questionnaire survey with 918 valid samples in the 32 sampled neighbourhoods.

on residents' daily life
from the residents'
perspectives

4.4.1 Policy documents

Governmental policy documents, reports, and other published materials are an essential source of information on neighbourhood governance. Some of the policy documents and reports were collected online and from university and municipal libraries, such as Nanjing statistical yearbooks, local gazettes, government websites, and archived newspapers. Other materials, some unpublished, were requested from the Nanjing Civil Affairs Bureau during the interview. By reading through and analysing these policy documents, I am able to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the general frameworks of community building and neighbourhood governance innovations are localised in Nanjing on the city level, and a more in-depth insight into how they are further interpreted and translated into operational plans and initiatives on the district level, particularly in the six inner-city districts under the name of 'national experimental zones'. The policy documents provide comprehensive knowledge about the 'public discourse' of community building and its local variations, which are either substantiated or contradicted by the 'private discourse' (Gui, 2008, p.30) of what happens on the ground.

4.4.2 Interviews and participant observation

Interviews were used to obtain in-depth information about experiences and perceptions of living, neighbouring in, and management and administration of the neighbourhoods. During the two-phase of fieldwork, 61 interviews were organised, addressing members of selected RCs, SOs, and the Nanjing Civil Affairs Bureau; and representatives of neighbourhood social organisations, PMCs, and neighbourhood activists. Interviewees were offered anonymity in return for access. Therefore, all interviewees and their neighbourhoods have been anonymised in this thesis. The names of the neighbourhoods are noted using acronyms, and interviews are referred to by the organisation and position of the interviewee and the date.

The interview process in each community was similar. I was introduced as an independent researcher, by the municipal and district Civil Affairs Bureau to the RC director (*juweihui zhuren*) or the party secretary (*dangwei shuji*), who was often also the vice-director of the RC. In some communities, the directors also introduced me to representatives from community-based organisations, including volunteer groups, social organisations, and PMCs. Each interview lasted around one and a half hours. Guiding questions were prepared, concerning the structure of the organisation, their relationships with other social and neighbourhood organisations and higher

levels of governments, local practices of neighbourhood governance, social and political impacts of community policy changes on neighbourhood governance, the operation of self-governing organisations (such as the HOA), and necessary socioeconomic and demographic information of the community (see Appendix B for the interview guide). Most interviews started with these general questions and then continued in a relatively open-ended manner. The interviewees were given the freedom to talk about their personal experiences and what they perceived to be the most critical points in the local settings. These interviews are not only conversations with insiders for data collection but a process of trust-building. In some interviews with higher levels of trust and rapport, some in-depth information was gathered, especially details of their experiences of working and living in the community. These experiences were expressed through narratives concerning personal relationships within the administrative hierarchies, and personal opinions about actions and practices of the community and higher levels of government. The interviews were often interrupted by staff and residents who came for help or just stepped by to say hello. These interruptions provided me with excellent opportunities to observe the nature of community work closely and gave rise to some situation-driven questions.

Moreover, some personal social ties were constructed in the trust-building process. I became friends with some community workers—we added each other on WeChat and kept in touch irregularly. I was treated as both a scholar and a friend, to whom they may occasionally turn for help and advice. These informal connections offered me some opportunities to take part in some everyday community issues in a way that had not been planned beforehand. The opportunity for participant observation in the election campaign in FK community was a product of such personal social ties. I was introduced to the director of FK community by another community director, because of my professional background and access to local universities. I assisted the director in recruiting volunteers from local universities and was thus given the opportunity to observe all activities during the four-day election, such as the mobilisation meeting, the assembly of homeowners' representatives, and the distribution and collection of ballot tickets. Rather than a typical grassroots election where the constituency voluntarily votes for their representatives in local political institutions (e.g. the RC or the HOA), homeowners in the FK community were asked and persuaded by the RC to express their preferences for property management service providers. During this process, I remained as a passive participant, and took notes of what had been observed during the meetings (such as the people and organisations involved, their behaviours and attitudes towards the elections, and verbal and nonverbal conversations) and during the election (such as how community workers persuaded residents to participate, and residents' different behaviours and attitudes towards the elections). The participant observation

enables me to gain a closer look at how collective decision is made with the intensive involvement of local authorities.

The fieldwork data collected from the interviews was recorded in two ways. While a taped record was made of most of the interviews, I also took handwritten notes from the interviews, especially in cases when the respondents refused to be taped. The notes were transcribed into text with details of the conversations, observations, and impressions after each interview and neighbourhood visit.

4.4.3   Survey

Questionnaire surveys are useful tools to collect quantitative information about behaviours and attitudes of the population. In this study, the resident questionnaire was designed to provide a solid measurement of self-reported neighbourhood social cohesion. The survey provided a way to set up the relationships between neighbourhood governance arrangements and neighbourhood social cohesion, which could be further explained and expanded by interviews and observations.

Formal contacts established through interviews with RC members allowed me to receive official permission to enter and conduct resident surveys in the sampled neighbourhoods. To facilitate the survey, I recruited six research assistants from Nanjing University and Hohai University to distribute and collect questionnaires in the sampled neighbourhoods. They received training on fieldwork techniques, ethics, and health and safety. With help from the research assistants, the survey was conducted in the 32 sampled neighbourhoods selected by a multistage stratified sampling strategy. In each sampled neighbourhood, the survey respondents were approached through a hybrid method—either sampled randomly by apartment using an interval sampling based on the residential distribution of households within the property or approached in public spaces in the neighbourhood using a quota sampling method.

In total, the survey yielded 918 valid samples distributed across 32 neighbourhoods in the 'central urban area' of Nanjing. A brief comparison was made between key demographic characteristics of survey respondents/neighbourhoods and the official statistics of Nanjing (Table 4.11). The comparison shows that the survey was slightly biased towards retired females with higher education. This drawback, however, does not significantly distract us from exploring the structural determinants of neighbourhood cohesion. As suggested by existing studies on urban neighbourhoods in China (e.g. Liu and Wu, 2006), the economically non-active population, e.g. retired people, tend to be underrepresented in official statistics. Even if such group is overrepresented in my survey, it is not a problem for comparison across neighbourhoods/types of neighbourhoods, so long as the same group is overrepresented to the same extent in all the

sampled neighbourhoods. Furthermore, this inconsistency is caused by the fact that the survey targets the central part of Nanjing, where the four newly urbanised districts with lower levels in average ages and educational attainment are excluded (Nanjing Bureau of Civil Affairs, 2017). Therefore, the survey data is relatively representative of urban neighbourhoods of Nanjing, especially in the central part of the city.

Table 4.11 Comparison of survey data and official statistics of Nanjing

Variables	Mean or %	
	Survey data in 2017	Official statistics[9]
Age	50.22	—
Above 65	18.61%	14.24%
Female	54.56%	50.08%
Urban hukou	86.00%	82.29%
Educational attainment		
Primary school and below	10.01%	14.34%
Junior secondary	17.86%	23.09%
Senior secondary	26.51%	18.47%
Higher education (college and above)	45.51%	35.36%
Household income per capita (10,000 CNY)	5.05	5.00
Average housing price (CNY/m^2)	30,366	29,000[10]

The questionnaire was designed in seven parts, and key indicators include social behaviours (neighbourly interactions, and community social and political participation) and attitudes (neighbourhood attachment, orientations towards collective goals, trust and reciprocity, and attitudes towards neighbourhood institutions) on the individual level (see Appendix C for the questionnaire). Each questionnaire was completed within half an hour. All data collected from the survey was coded and imported into the Stata 14.0 statistical program for further analysis.

During the survey, some respondents showed rich knowledge and experience of community issues (e.g. being a residents' representative or a member of the HOA), in which case they were then asked for more details about the activities they participated in, and their opinions about neighbourhood governance. The questionnaire survey evolved into conversations and informal

[9] Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Nanjing, 2017*
[10] Source: http://www.creprice.cn/haprice/cinj-ha0001472740.html, accessed on March 5, 2018.

interviews, which, as argued by Heimer and Thøgersen (2006), is an essential method of data collection in fieldwork in China.

4.5 Data analysis

The quantitative and qualitative information collected in the sampled neighbourhoods enabled me to construct a socially cohesive 'community' from an institutional perspective. In order to understand the political construction of neighbourhood cohesion, three steps were designed in the data analysis: the first step explores the geographies of neighbourhood cohesion in Nanjing, i.e. how neighbourhood cohesion is distributed in different neighbourhoods in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing; the second step interrogates the geographies of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing, i.e. what the major types of governance arrangement are in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing; and the final step investigates the relationships between the two, i.e. where and how forms of neighbourhood governance fit into debates about neighbourhood cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing and provides some possible explanations for these relationships.

4.5.1 Step one: exploring geographies of neighbourhood cohesion in Nanjing

The first step addressed the first research question(s): *How is neighbourhood cohesion distributed in different neighbourhoods in urban China, taking the city of Nanjing as an example? Does the claim of 'crisis of cohesion' apply to the case of Nanjing?* In addressing this question, I revisited the cohesion debate in the context of Nanjing. Instead of exploring how liberated communities are, and how the local orientation of cohesion could be 'liberated' from geography (Wellman, 1996), I examined how 'localised' they are, i.e. the extent to which cohesion is territorialised in different neighbourhoods.

The spatial heterogeneity of local forms of cohesion was quantified through statistical analysis using the Stata 14.0 statistical program. Following existing research on social cohesion, neighbourhood interaction and neighbourhood attachment (e.g. Forrest and Yip, 2007; Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2019), I used regression analysis to explore the distribution of self-reported neighbourhood cohesion across the sampled neighbourhoods. Realising the networked nature of self-reported cohesion data, classical regression models in which all individual-level observations are pooled together are insufficient since the fixed parameters neglect variation between neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood variation is important: it accounts for the different ways in which neighbourhoods may be physically, socially, and

politically organised, and these could be important factors that help to explain the spatial heterogeneity of neighbourhood cohesion.

Therefore, this study used multilevel models (also known as mixed-effects models) to explore geographical variation in neighbourhood cohesion. The multilevel regression model simultaneously incorporates individual and neighbourhood-level models to test for the differences in neighbourhood outcomes both across individuals and neighbourhoods. Based on the cross-level relationships, the multilevel model has the potential to address the 'methodological inconsistency' of cohesion studies (see the discussion in Chapter 2.1) by disentangling variances between and within neighbourhoods (Subramanian, Lochner and Kawachi, 2003).

Three sets of multilevel regression models were constructed because dimensions of cohesion were operationalised in different ways in the survey. For the measurement of cognitive forms of social cohesion, the scaled responses were ordinal variables. Following existing studies on such cognitive forms of cohesion (e.g. Du and Li, 2010; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017b; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018), these responses were treated as being measured at a ratio level of measurement and were therefore modelled using linear models. Relevant tests indicated that the measurements of neighbourhood attachment, common goals, and trust satisfied all the assumptions for linear models, including normality of errors, independence, homoscedasticity, and no multicollinearity. The multilevel linear models for cognitive cohesion can thus be expressed as follows on the two levels.

On the first level, I set up a classical regression model of self-reported cohesion with varying intercept and coefficients:

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha_{j[i]} + \beta_{j[i]}X_{j[i]} + \varepsilon_{ij} \tag{1}$$

where Y_{ij} is the dependent variable of self-reported cohesion measured for the ith resident within the jth neighbourhood; $X_{j[i]}$ is a vector of individual-level predictors, such as sex, hukou status, and educational attainment; $\alpha_{j[i]}$ is the intercept for the jth neighbourhood; $\beta_{j[i]}$ is the regression coefficient associated with individual-level predictors; and ε_{ij} is a standard stochastic error term.

On the second level, models were built for estimating regression coefficients and intercepts that vary across groups (varying-intercept, varying-slope model):

$$\alpha_j = \gamma_0^\alpha + \gamma_1^\alpha W_j + \eta_j^\alpha \tag{2}$$

$$\beta_j = \gamma_0^\beta + \gamma_1^\beta W_j + \eta_j^\beta \tag{3}$$

where W_j is the vector of neighbourhood-level predictors, such as neighbourhood type; γ_0^α is the overall mean intercept adjusted for neighbourhood-level predictors; γ_1^α is the regression coefficient associated with neighbourhood-level predictors relative to neighbourhood-level intercept; γ_0^β is the overall mean intercept adjusted for neighbourhood-level predictors; γ_1^β is the regression coefficient associated with neighbourhood-level predictors relative to the neighbourhood-level slope; η_j^α is the random error of the jth neighbourhood adjusted for the neighbourhood-level predictors on the neighbourhood-level intercept; and η_j^β is the random error of the jth neighbourhood adjusted for the neighbourhood-level predictors on the neighbourhood-level slope.

For a multilevel linear regression model, both the residuals and the random effects are assumed to be normally distributed, or

$$\varepsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma^2) \tag{4}$$

and

$$\begin{bmatrix} \eta_j^\alpha \\ \eta_j^\beta \end{bmatrix} \sim N\left(\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} \tau_{00} \\ \tau_{10} \\ \tau_{11} \end{bmatrix} \right) \tag{5}$$

A combined model is created by substituting Equations 2 and 3 into Equation 1:

$$Y_{ij} = \gamma_0^\alpha + \gamma_0^\beta X_{j[i]} + \gamma_1^\alpha W_j + \gamma_1^\beta W_j X_{j[i]} + \eta_j^\beta X_{j[i]} + \eta_j^\alpha + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

For the measurement of social ties, the number of friends/acquaintances of a person, i.e. the expected degree of social ties, is a type of count data. Negative binomial regression models are widely adopted for count data, especially when the data are over-dispersed (Mccarty *et al.*, 2001). Tests with the Nanjing survey data show a tendency towards over-dispersion (over-dispersion parameters are greater than zero), indicating that negative binomial regression models are suitable for the social network data collected in this study. In this model, I specified a gamma distribution for the exponentiated level-1 random intercept ε_{ij}, and the level-1 model can be written in an additive log-linear form

$$\ln(\mu_{ij}) = \alpha_{j[i]} + \beta_{j[i]} X_{j[i]} + \varepsilon_{ij} \tag{6}$$

where μ_{ij} is the expectation of Y_{ij} (individual social ties measured for the ith resident within the jth neighbourhood). On the second level, an individual's relative propensity to know her neighbours was estimated by models similar to Equations 2 and 3.

For the measurement of participation, the outcome variable is binary; hence I used logistic regression. In these models, binary outcomes were conceived as a 'coarsely categorised measured version' of an underlying continuous variable Y_{ij}^*, which is often called the latent variable in logit regression models (Bauer and Sterba, 2011). As Y_{ij}^* is continuous, the following multilevel linear model can be adopted here:

Level 1: $$Y_{ij}^* = \alpha_{j[i]} + \beta_{j[i]} X_{j[i]} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Level 2: $$\alpha_j = \gamma_0^\alpha + \gamma_1^\alpha W_j + \eta_j^\alpha$$

$$\beta_j = \gamma_0^\beta + \gamma_1^\beta W_j + \eta_j^\beta \tag{7}$$

A threshold model was stipulated to link the unobserved continuous variable Y_{ij}^* with the observed ordinal responses Y_{ij} obtained from the resident questionnaires. For Y_{ij}, the formation of latent variables can be generalised to:

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if participated in } > 0 \text{ activities in the past year} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \tag{8}$$

The level 2 random effects are conventionally assumed to follow a normal distribution (see Equation 5).

4.5.2   Step two: exploring geographies of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing

The second step took a different view from the first one and turned to look at how the sampled neighbourhoods are governed and managed from a qualitative perspective. It interpreted and classified different institutional landscapes in the sampled neighbourhoods comparatively, and measured the effectiveness of each type of governance arrangement/organisation. This step, together with step one, serves as the foundation of step three, which seeks the relationships between neighbourhood cohesion and governance effectiveness.

The analysis of qualitative data, collected from interviews, site visits, and participant observations, was analysed with thematic approaches, which intended to establish a framework of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing and answer Research Question 2: *What are the major forms of governance arrangement in urban Nanjing?* The thematic analysis can be divided into two phases after each stage of the fieldwork. In the first phase, I transcribed open-ended interviews conducted during the pilot study. These transcripts were coded with a general inductive approach (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). Inductive coding and the bottom-up thematic analysis enabled me to identify frequent and dominant themes from the interviews without the

restraints of preconceptions and structured methodologies (Creswell, 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2006). I also identified some other themes which were important (according to the analysis of policy documents) but less frequently mentioned in the pilot interviews. These themes were broad and described major patterns of the interviews with relevance to the structures and performances of neighbourhood organisations (the research question). With these themes, I was able to classify the raw data into several categories.

The themes and categories identified in the first phase served as the framework for the semi-structured interviews carried out in the major period of fieldwork. These interviews were transcribed and coded in the second phase. During this period, I followed a top-down method, or theoretical thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), by coding segments of data which were relevant to the research question and preliminary themes. As I worked through the transcripts, some new themes emerged, showing some interesting points that had not been recognised in the pilot interviews. The observations and site visits were coded in similar ways under these themes. After several rounds of review and refinement of the themes, I finally ended up with a thematic map as presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Protocol for the interviews and site visits

Theme domains	Data sources	Sample questions
Community building policies in Nanjing	Interviews with government officials and community workers	- What are the general policies and documents concerning community building in Nanjing in the last ten years? - What are the characteristics of the Nanjing mode: how have national community building projects been localised in Nanjing, and how are the Nanjing policies localised in each district/neighbourhood?
Neighbourhood organisational structures	Interviews with community workers	- What is the general governance structure in this neighbourhood? - What are the numbers and names of social organisations and neighbourhood groups in this neighbourhood? How are they funded?
Organisational power relationships	Interviews with community workers	- Can you explain when and how this organisation works with other neighbourhood agencies in community public affairs? Can you describe the division of labour between your organisation and its partners (the neighbourhood organisations mentioned before)? - As far as you know, what is the general relationship between other neighbourhood agencies in this neighbourhood? Are there conflicts? If yes, have they been solved and how?

Theme domains	Data sources	Sample questions
Community participation	Interviews with community workers and residents	- Who is involved in the decision-making process of community public affairs? How are they involved? - Are there any neighbourhood activists? Who are they and how are they involved in neighbourhood governance? - Are there any forms of participatory body in this neighbourhood? If yes, do they work regularly? How do they determine the topics for discussion? How are collective decisions made and implemented? - (For residents) Have you heard about any forms of participatory body in this neighbourhood? If yes, how were they established? What have they done within the past year? Have you ever participated in their activities? Do you know anyone who has ever participated?
Neighbourhood social activities	Interviews with community workers and residents	- How many neighbourhood social groups are there in the neighbourhood? What are they? How many residents are involved in each group? What do they usually do? - What activities are often organised by these social groups? How are they funded? How many residents are involved? - (For residents) Have you heard about social groups in this neighbourhood? If yes, what have they done within the past year? Have you ever participated in their activities? Do you know anyone who has ever participated?
Neighbourly interactions	Interviews with community workers and residents	- What is the general relationship between residents in this neighbourhood? - (For residents) What is the general relationship between you and your neighbours? How much do you know about them? Do you have any close friend nearby? - (For residents) What do you usually do in the neighbourhood? How much do you know about your neighbours?
Neighbourhood contextual information	Interviews with community workers and residents	- Can you briefly describe the community you are serving (size, history, population, migrants, social status of residents)? - (For residents) When and why did you move to this neighbourhood? How do you like it? Would you consider moving out when possible?

The thematic analysis enabled me to establish a framework for analysing neighbourhood governance in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. Four dominant modes of governance

were identified: neighbourhood partnership, neighbourhood management, neighbourhood empowerment and neighbourhood government, which will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

4.5.3   Step three: linking neighbourhood governance and neighbourhood cohesion

The third step is the key part for addressing the geographical puzzle on the rise of neighbourhood governance and the decline of neighbourhood cohesion. Based on step one and step two, step three attempted to link both the social (e.g. dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion) and political aspects (e.g. arrangements and effectiveness of neighbourhood governance) of the neighbourhood together. It set out to explore *how neighbourhood governance arrangements and neighbourhood social cohesion are related, particularly in the case of Nanjing, China* (Research Question 3), and provide some plausible explanations to these relationships. Both quantitative methods and qualitative methods were adopted in this step, and they were incorporated with a mixed-method sequential explanatory strategy.

The exploration of the governance-cohesion relationship was divided into three phases. In the first phase, I quantified the governance effectiveness of the sampled neighbourhoods according to performances of major neighbourhood organisations. The self-reported responses on the accountability, responsiveness, and satisfaction of each neighbourhood organisation were analysed with simple statistical methods, such as t-tests and cross-tabulation, to explore how different neighbourhood organisations performed differently in different neighbourhoods.

On this basis, I carried out regression analyses using the Stata 14.0 statistical program in the second phase to explore the relationships between governance effectiveness and cohesive outcomes. With the performance scores of each neighbourhood organisation as the independent variable, I ran three sets of regression models (i.e. negative binomial models for neighbourhood interaction measures, logistic models for community participation measures, and linear models for neighbourhood sentiment measures) to confirm the existence of the relationships between governance effectiveness and neighbourhood cohesion in each type of neighbourhood. By linking perceived governance effectiveness and perceived neighbourhood cohesion, I was able to test whether hypothesised relationships exist between cohesion (both behavioural and cognitive) and governance (measured by neighbourhood governance effectiveness), and whether hypothesised approaches of cohesion building (the state-centred approach, the market-centred approach, and the society-centred approach) work in the context of Nanjing.

In the last phase, I carried out further explorations of the cohesion-building process by including the interaction effects of neighbourhood organisations in the analyses. By doing so, I was able to disentangle the directions and strengths of the interaction effects and provide more convincing

explanations for why different organisations perform differently in the cohesion-building process. This phase is an experimental study and was only conducted with data collected in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode.

It is worth noting the relationships established in the regression models cannot necessarily be interpreted as 'causal effects' as they do not provide sufficient evidence to confirm the direction of the causal arrow. The possibility of reverse causality of cohesion (Mouw, 2006)—whether better governance cultivates cohesive neighbourhoods or vice versa—is embedded in the 'virtuous' and 'vicious circle' theory of cohesion (Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993; Stanley, 2003), and cannot easily be dealt with using the random control technique (for practical and ethical considerations), the difference-in-differences methods (due to lack of longitudinal data), and instrumental variables (weak explanatory power). Given all these limitations, I provided some plausible explanations for the relationships with qualitative data. The explanations are mainly based on interviews and observations, which provided details of the cohesion-governance relationships, especially how these relationships evolved (e.g. by asking residents about their past experiences). It was not possible to get such details from the cross-sectional data collected in the survey. Notably, these explanations are more explorative, tentative, and highly context-sensitive, rather than confirmatory. It is possible that in some neighbourhoods, especially those with relatively high levels of social ties and supportive networks, there are considerable numbers of socially active residents who collaborate with, participate in, and supervise neighbourhood institutions (and even form neighbourhood organisations themselves), leading to effective neighbourhood governance. In other neighbourhoods, where social ties are lacking, and levels of cohesion are low, neighbourhood organisations provide institutional spaces and resources for the growth of social cohesion by organising community activities, encouraging participation, and cultivating neighbourhood trust.

4.6   Conditions and limitations of the fieldwork

Accessibility, positionality, and issues of the 'formal identity', are major concerns in the fieldwork. The following sections will discuss the three points separately, focusing on their causes and potential impacts on sampling, data collection, and research outcomes.

4.6.1   Access to cases

Gaining access to the study site is often a crucial issue in data collection, especially for community studies in China. As often encountered in previous research (e.g. Wang, 2005; Yip, 2012), neither RCs nor gated communities are willing to open up to outsiders for unsolicited visits. This is even

more common in heavily guarded and high-end communities, as happened in the fieldwork of this study. Even with official permission for access (obtained from local RCs in advance), my research assistants still encountered unexpected suspicion and resistance approaching residents in one heavily guarded neighbourhood. It was hard to convince the security guards that we came to conduct research, not for advertising or other purposes. In addition, the residents were more vigilant and less cooperative than those in older urban districts. The accessibility issues led to the fact that high-end neighbourhoods and upper-class residents are underrepresented in the survey.

In order to get full access to the sampled neighbourhoods, multiple strategies were employed, including formal and informal methods of access. Formal access to the sampled neighbourhoods was obtained with the help of municipal and district civil affairs bureaus. Official approval and professional referrals were necessary, as demonstrated by previous community studies (Wang, 2005; Shieh, 2011), to ease the resistance and reluctance of local officials and community workers. To gain governmental approval and recognition, I was firstly formally introduced to one official in the Nanjing Civil Affairs Bureau as a UK-based scholar conducting independent research on neighbourhood governance in Nanjing. He welcomed my research and introduced me to his colleagues from the Community Building Office who specialised in the design and implementation of community polices. They offered my instrumental help in getting in contact with local communities, by informing relevant district Civil Affairs Bureaus about my research needs. The district Civil Affairs Bureaus then provided me with contact details for community leaders in each sampled neighbourhood and informed them about my project. With these contact details and official endorsement, I was able to arrange interviews with the key informants in each sampled neighbourhood.

Informal access was acquired from friends and acquaintances in the local networks of the researcher. This is a common strategy for approaching sites that do not welcome 'outsiders' (Wang, 2005). These networks were established from previous research and from the pilot study, as well as my life experiences in Nanjing. Apart from contacting friends who had some connections with those working or living in the sampled neighbourhoods, I also asked for help from the interviewees—by asking whether they know people working in other sampled neighbourhoods, especially those under the jurisdiction of the same SO. Although informal access was only made possible in around a fifth of the sampled neighbourhoods, it avoided the validity problems associated with 'formal identity' and shortened the time-consuming process of trust-building.

4.6.2   Positionality and the construction of sameness: experience, language, and gender

When approaching research objects in the field, whether through formal or informal accesses, the relative positioning of the researcher to the researched should always be taken into consideration (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). Whether they are an insider, an outsider, an insider-outsider, or none of those, the ultimate goals for any positional spaces are familiarity, trust-building, and cooperation between the researcher and researched (Beverley, 1999; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). According to Sæther (2006), a sense of 'sameness' is an essential component of making connections and building trust in the Chinese context. In this project, 'sameness', trust, and cooperation are achieved through two approaches during interviews and surveys, in which identities, positionalities, and power relations are being constructed and reconstructed in the dynamic processes of data collection.

The social commonality is one of the best ways to build a sense of 'sameness' and gain an 'insider' understanding (Kjellgren, 2006). In this project, knowledge-based factors, such as experiences and language, were the major sources of commonalities between the interviewer and the interviewee My experiences of living in Nanjing for more than 20 years, and knowledge about neighbourhood governance in local settings signified my identity as 'locally native' in the interview situations. This localised knowledge helped me to develop an empathetic understanding of the 'situatedness' of interviewees (Beverley, 1999, p.343). By starting the conversation with a statement of my awareness of a specific issue in that neighbourhood, such as financial problems encountered by the RCs or inconveniences caused by poorly performing PMCs, I was able to win a level of credibility among local people and shorten the psychological distance between the researcher and the researched. Under some circumstances, I was even treated as a 'temporary insider' with equal intellectual and emotional positions to the genuine insiders, especially when the conversation indicated my empathy for the common grievance in the neighbourhood.

This 'internalisation' was further strengthened by the use of local dialects in interviews, especially with local residents. While interviews normally started in Mandarin, the dialogue would proceed in Nanjing dialect when the resident responded in that language. My identity as 'locally native' was significantly reinforced by the language link (albeit none of the research assistants could speak the Nanjing dialect). The use of local dialect in the interview has at least two advantages. Apart from its role as a social commonality to create trust and shared positional spaces, it is the daily language in use that conveys nuanced emotions and language codes that characterises the 'private transcript' of ordinary people's everyday life (Thøgersen, 2006).

Apart from localised knowledge, gender, as the most visible aspect of identity in the Chinese context, was also adopted as an effective approach to connect with the interviewees. The

multiple influences of gender on the research process were observed during interviews, not only with RC members and community worker in a formal and (semi-)structured manner but also with residents in more informal and casual ways. Formal interviews with RC members often took place in the formal settings of RC offices. The RC, as noted by Read (2003b), Wang (2005), and Shieh (2011), is a 'gendered space' dominated by female workers. My identity as a female researcher and the feminist discourses used in interviews created comfortable atmospheres for female interviewees. In most cases, they were relaxed and willing to talk about personal issues, such as family and children, which enriched details of their professional life as community workers. It is easy to imagine that a male researcher would have been treated differently in such a situation. The 'sameness' from gender matching created shared positional spaces for the interviewer and the interviewee, where boundaries between outsiders and insiders were blurred (Phoenix, 1994; Pratt and Hanson, 1995). It enabled me to develop intimate insights into their personal experiences, which sometimes lay in contrast with the 'public discourses' obtained from policy documents. The effect of gender on the research progress was also demonstrated in the informal interviews with residents. When both male interviewers and interviewees were included, gender matching happened automatically—more in-depth information was collected when an older man was interviewed by a male research assistant, while the female assistant was less likely to be turned down approaching young ladies.

In short, localised knowledge and gender are two efficient ways to construct a sense of 'sameness' in this project, which supplemented and compensated for my position as an outsider to the study site. Either through common knowledge or gender matching, boundaries between outsiders and insiders were blurred in the field. However, one has to keep in mind that there is always a distance between the researcher and the researched. Such distance, no matter how small it is, reshapes the dynamic processes of data collection and remains as the 'residual' in further data analysis and interpretation (Beverley, 1999).

4.6.3   The Janus faces of the 'formal identity'

Apart from the social construction of 'sameness' through localised knowledge and gender matching, familiarity, trust and cooperation can also be achieved through my 'formal identity' obtained from the Nanjing Civil Affairs Bureau in the formal access to the sampled neighbourhoods. For local community workers in these neighbourhoods, it was from officials in higher levels of government (i.e. relevant district Civil Affairs Bureaus) that the names of my projects and myself were heard for the first time. The formal introduction automatically bestowed on me a formal identity that linked me, loosely or firmly, to local authorities. My identity in the field was thus a joint production of both my academic identity—a UK-based Chinese scholar doing

research on local neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance, and my formal identity—a researcher introduced by higher levels of government to conduct a social survey, which is similar to the role of 'social investigator' appointed by the government which has a long-established tradition in China (Hansen, 2006, p.82).

The eight-month fieldwork in Nanjing indicated that in some cases, even in most organisational interviews, my formal identity was more influential and effective than my academic identity in approaching informants in the field. This turned out to be both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, the formal identity and the top-down method of approaching informants were effective in getting local approval to conduct interviews and surveys. Compared with the academic identity which I used several times for cold visits in the pilot study, my affiliation to the municipal government, although very weak, significantly reduced the respondents' suspicion and accelerated the pace of the fieldwork. For example, it was common for the research assistants to be turned down when approaching survey respondents with an academic identity, such as being college students doing a research project. The situation, however, was partly changed when they indicated that the investigator knew local community leaders. This was contrary to previous experiences of fieldwork in urban villages and urban redevelopment projects (e.g. Jiang, 2014), where any assumed associations with local government would harm the trust of respondents on the research team and prevent them from taking part in the survey. The positive role of the formal identity in this project was pragmatic, and partly due to urban residents' relatively high levels of institutional trust, as revealed by the following interview:

> Research projects? We do not take these seriously as they are mere 'children's plays'. They cannot solve our problems and will make no change to the current situation. I will not waste time in these research projects […], but governmental projects are different. You [researchers as the social investigator of the government] can report our issues [often associated with property management] to the government. Although we do not expect the RC to deal with the problem directly, it is better to inform local authorities of our situation, which might be solved sooner or later. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood F, November 15, 2017.)*

On the other hand, the 'official' identity guaranteed access to the cases and interviewees but did not guarantee the quality of the information collected. Rather than internalising the researcher as an outsider, the formal identity acquired from higher levels of government strengthened the boundaries and made the researcher seem even more like an outsider, independent to and distant from the neighbourhood. This partly explains why the interviews in some neighbourhoods failed to contribute to my knowledge of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing.

In some neighbourhoods, the formal identity was read by local community workers as a link to, or even representation of, local authorities. Even under the name of academic research, my role in the project was understood as being similar to the 'social investigators' appointed by the government. The formal identity thus led to an unbalanced power relationship between the researcher and the researched. The unbalanced power relationship prevented me from establishing trust and rapport with community workers, who often treated me as someone 'from higher levels [of government]', and (un)consciously acted in a self-censoring manner. They often felt like they were responsible for the outcomes of the interviews, and acted in ways that they assumed could provide the best answers to the researchers' questions. This was particularly the case in Community WT, where the RC director asked me three times during the interview, whether her answers satisfied me. Furthermore, questions, especially open-ended ones, were answered in a guarded and bland manner because they were worried about being criticised or 'losing face' (*diu mianzi*) if they revealed problems. They would rather talk about what they thought was appropriate, such as what they had accomplished, regardless of the attempts I made to encourage them to talk about problems and obstacles in the beginning and at the end of the interview.

However, this occupation-oriented distance can sometimes be shortened through continuous negotiations in the dynamic process of data collection. As discussed in the previous section, localised knowledge and gender matching are useful in cultivating a sense of 'sameness' and generating trust between the researcher and the researched, indicating the potential to overcome the negative influences of 'formal identity' in some cases. Moreover, if community workers were not personally involved in a situation, they could become quite honest and forthcoming—they sometimes commented on the performances of RCs in other communities from a comparative perspective. From their comments, I acquired information which was not available through direct contact with the RC in the other community.

In some other neighbourhoods, my role as a researcher was interpreted differently in the interview. Most of these neighbourhoods were typical in terms of community-building policy innovations or demonstrated specific achievements in some aspects of neighbourhood governance. Community workers in these neighbourhoods were familiar with visitors, journalists, and social investigators. They were well prepared to showcase all the achievements of their communities in a self-promoting manner (Gui, 2008). The 'public transcripts' constructed in these interviews were official discourses (Hansen, 2006, p.82), which departed from the 'private transcripts' acquired from local residents that depicted community life from a different perspective.

To summarise, the formal access to study sites bestowed me with a recognisable 'formal identity', which was perceived by many informants as a reflection of the authority. Conducting fieldwork with the formal identity is described by Hansen (2006) as 'walking down a track already beaten by investigators or researchers whose goals were more clearly of a political nature, but whose methods in the eyes of those "investigated" resembled our own' (p.94). While being cautious about the potential bias caused by the formal identity, I have to admit that a large proportion of data collection would not have been made possible without the help of the formal identity. Its Janus-faced nature should not only be regarded as an ethical dilemma or methodological issue, in the sense of issues with data validation and triangulation, but also as part of the research subject. As part of this study, I set out to explore the nature of the formal identity, and how it is presented from a pragmatic perspective.

4.7   Summary

In this chapter, I established and explained the operational framework of the study. In order to explore the relationships between neighbourhood institutions and neighbourhood social cohesion, two sets of data were collected: one focused on the political aspect of the community through depicting how the sampled neighbourhoods are governed, and measuring the capacity and effectiveness of each governance arrangement/neighbourhood organisation. The other dataset targeted the social aspect of the community through measuring individual behavioural and mental bonds with the community, including socialising and participatory behaviours, and neighbourhood-oriented sentiment.

The two sets of data were collected with different strategies and analysed in different ways, leading to 'complementary strengths' of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2004, p.18). A large-scale resident survey as well as 61 interviews were organised in 32 communities. With the *xiaoqu* as the sampling unit, these sampled neighbourhoods were systematically selected from the central urban area of Nanjing, using a multistage stratified random sampling method.

In data analysis, I adopted a sequential explanatory design which can be separated into three steps. Multilevel regression models were carried out in the first step to explore the spatial heterogeneity of neighbourhood cohesion. Thematic analysis was conducted in the second step, sketching out the different institutional landscapes in the sampled neighbourhoods. The effectiveness of each type of governance arrangement/organisation was also measured and compared in this stage. After that, I explored the relationships between the varying levels of

neighbourhood cohesion and the arrangements of neighbourhood governance in different neighbourhood contexts, and provided some possible explanations for these relationships.

The results of each step will be further explained in the following chapters. In the next chapter, I will present the statistics of the survey and examine the social construction of cohesion by disentangling the individual and neighbourhood effects of cohesion with multilevel regression models.

Chapter 5   Beyond crisis: the development of neighbourhood cohesion across different types of neighbourhood in Nanjing

Existing research on the changing micro-sociology in post-reform China shows both similarities with and differences from Western studies. While some trends observed in urban China—such as a reduction of neighbourly ties (e.g. Wu and He, 2005; Gui and Huang, 2006; Forrest and Yip, 2007) and an attenuation of neighbourhood attachment (e.g. Wu, 2005, 2012a; Liu, Zhang et al., 2017)—correspond to general trends widely observed across the capitalist world, the strong local state, the collectivist culture, the historical memories found in work units, and the less ethnically diverse social composition may set the Nanjing story apart from Western experiences of 'community liberation' (Wellman, 1979, 1996) and 'crisis of social cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). As most existing studies have only targeted one dimension of neighbourhood life at a time and ignored others, they fail to capture the micro-sociology of transitional China holistically, and therefore are unable to adequately address the similarities and differences between the Chinese case and Western experiences.

To address this gap, I follow a pluralistic analytical approach in this chapter and systematically examines the co-evolution of different aspects of neighbourhood life with a city-wide survey in Nanjing, China. By presenting the geography of multiple dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, this chapter responds to the general inquiry: *does the claim of 'crisis of cohesion' apply to the case of Nanjing?* As longitudinal studies are extremely difficult to achieve due to limited historical data, this chapter intends to spatialise the development of neighbourhood cohesion, and explore whether there are significant variations in cohesion across different types of neighbourhood built in different historical periods, particularly focusing on whether there is a decrease in cohesion between more established neighbourhoods (e.g. traditional neighbourhoods and privatised work units) and newly established neighbourhoods (e.g. commodity housing estates).

To spatialise the geography of neighbourhood cohesion in Nanjing, I will structure this chapter as follows: it will start with an overview of the spatial distribution of cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. Sections 2 to 4 will be further explorations of each dimension of cohesion on the neighbourhood level. In each section, a descriptive analysis will be carried out to describe and compare the spatial distribution of neighbourhood interactions, community participation, or affective neighbourly relationships across different types of neighbourhood. This

is supported both by evidence from survey data, interviews, and observations. Multilevel regression analysis will also be carried out to test whether there are significant variations in neighbourhood cohesion across neighbourhood types, controlling for socioeconomic factors on the individual and neighbourhood level. The findings from each dimension of cohesion will be compared and discussed in the last section.

5.1   The spatial heterogeneity of neighbourhood cohesion: an overview

The resident survey in Nanjing indicates that neighbourhood social cohesion, measured by patterns of neighbourly interactions and participation, and levels of neighbourhood trust and affective neighbourly relationships, is dispersed unevenly across the sampled neighbourhoods. The spatial heterogeneity of neighbourhood cohesion is presented in Table 5.1. In this table, average levels of each measure of self-reported cohesion are compared across the four major types of urban neighbourhood, including traditional neighbourhoods, privatised work units, commodity housing estates, and affordable neighbourhoods. The results of F-tests for each measure of cohesion are also presented in the table, showing that the variations of cohesion across neighbourhood types are statistically significant.

Table 5.1 Comparison of average levels of self-reported neighbourhood cohesion by neighbourhood type

Mean or %	Traditional neighbourhood (N=8, n=200)	Privatised work unit (N=6, n=172)	Commodity housing estate (N=11, n=340)	Affordable neighbourhood (N=7, n=206)	F-test
Behavioural cohesion					
Weak ties	81.68	68.82	38.83	218.75	34.00***
Strong ties	20.08	18.68	11.32	56.42	12.38***
Social participation	35.08%	42.59%	49.42%	31.72%	5.81**
Political participation	71.65%	63.64%	77.99%	54.55%	10.53***
Cognitive cohesion (0-5)					
Community attachment	3.54	3.74	3.90	3.60	11.86***
Orientation towards common goals	3.12	3.54	3.48	3.20	12.30***
Trust and reciprocity	3.58	3.75	3.72	3.63	2.68*

Notes: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. N: the number of the sampled neighbourhoods. n: the number of survey respondents.

Rather than supporting the general assertion of 'community liberated' (Wellman, 1979, 1996) and a 'crisis of social cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001), the comparison of average levels of self-reported neighbourhood cohesion by neighbourhood type in Nanjing shows the development of cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods.[11] Whereas residents in the sampled commodity housing estates tend to have fewer friends and acquaintances than residents of other types of neighbourhood (less behaviourally cohesive), they are generally more engaged in community social and political activities (more participatorily cohesive), and more attached to their neighbourhoods (more cognitively cohesive). Residents in the sampled affordable neighbourhoods are deeply embedded in territory-based social network since they have the strongest neighbourly ties, both strong and weak, compared with other neighbourhoods (more behaviourally cohesive). Residents in privatised work units are more willing to trust others and devote time and money to a common good future, since they score the highest in neighbourly trust and orientation towards collective goals (more cognitively cohesive). The differences in the behavioural and cognitive dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion across neighbourhood types will be discussed in detail in the following sections respectively.

5.2 The diversification of neighbourly interactions

The neighbourhood provides vibrant social infrastructure for generating and sustaining social connections among friends (strong ties) and acquaintances (weak ties) (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Dekker, 2007). The strengths of different types of neighbourly connections are critical indicators of cohesive local communities in urban societies (Guest and Wierzbicki, 1999). Although community theories have long argued that the neighbourhood has lost importance in social life (the 'community lost' and 'community liberated' argument), my survey provides some evidence for the counterargument 'community saved'—neighbourhoods remain meaningful containers for social interactions. This finding partly corresponds with previous research from Forrest and Yip

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[11] Interrelationships between dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion are not taken into consideration in this research (c.f. Xu, Perkins and Chow, 2010; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2019). This is because, as presented in Appendix D, no correlation coefficients of relationships between measures of cohesion (i.e. weak ties, strong ties, social participation, political participation, neighbourhood attachment, orientation towards collective goods, and neighbourly trust) of different dimensions (i.e. neighbourly ties, neighbourhood participation, and neighbourhood sentiment) exceed the threshold of 0.2 (shaded in grey in Table D.1) and are statistically significant. These correlations can thus be considered as 'negligible correlation' (Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs, 2003), and are not taken into account in the analysis in this chapter.

(2007) and Hazelzet and Wissink (2012) in the city of Guangzhou, where close interpersonal links can still be found among neighbours, especially when the frequency of contact is taken into consideration (Wellman, 1996).
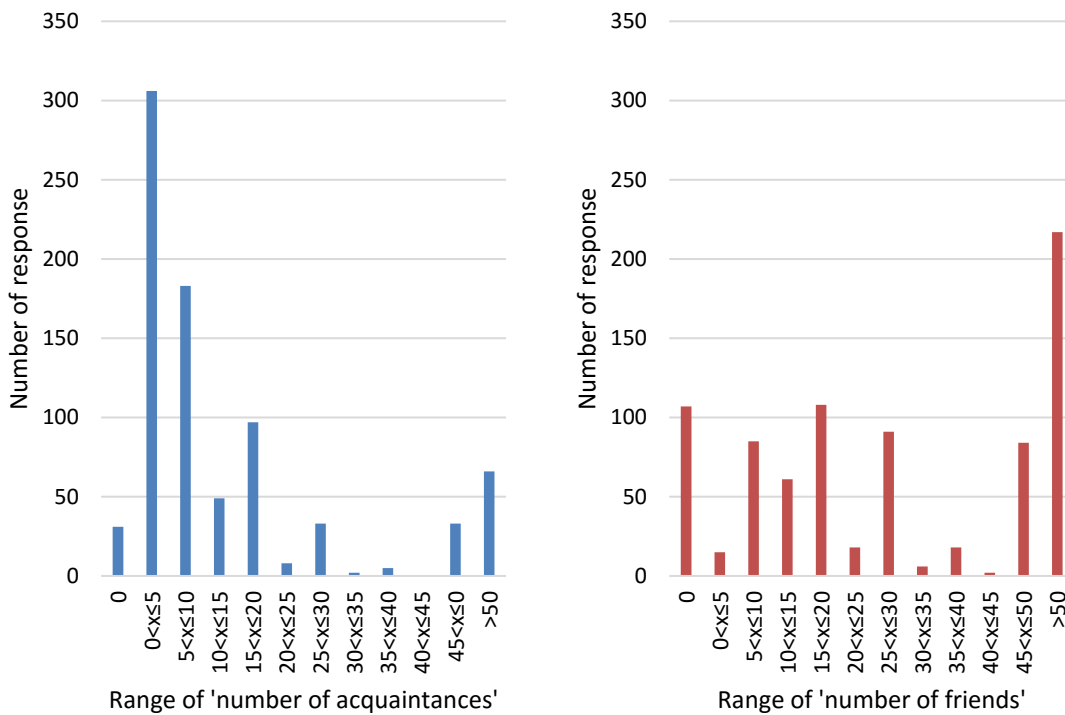
Figure 5.1 Distribution of weak ties (among acquaintances, left) and strong ties (among friends, right) in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing

Figure 5.1 depicts the overall distribution of weak ties (left) and strong ties (right) in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. Overall, more acquaintances are reported in the sampled neighbourhoods than friends, since the average number of acquaintances (94.16) is almost four times the number of friends (24.73). These acquaintances (weak ties), however, are less widely distributed among the sampled neighbourhoods than friends (strong ties). Regarding weak ties, the figure indicates that a considerable proportion of daily contact remains within the neighbourhood, since only 3.81% of residents reported that they had no acquaintances in the neighbourhood, and more than 36% of survey respondents knew more than ten neighbours by their names—suggesting that the 'community' as a gathering of social relations is saved, at least to a moderate extent, in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. When it comes to more extensive contact, however, the 'community saved' effect is less obvious. The number of socially inactive resident (defined as those have no acquaintances or friends within the neighbourhood)

rises dramatically when asking about friendships within the neighbourhood—13.18 % of survey respondents had hardly any friends in the neighbourhood to pay home visits or socialise with.

The 'community saved' effect is manifested differently in different types of neighbourhoods, echoing the findings of Forrest and Yip (2007). The comparison across neighbourhood types indicates that neighbourhood social ties are heterogeneously distributed across different types of the sampled neighbourhood in Nanjing, as presented in Figure 5.2. As presented in this figure, I measured strengths of neighbourly ties according to the numbers of friends (strong ties) and acquaintances (weak ties) reported in the survey, and classified such strengths into twelve categories/ranges (e.g. 0, 1–5, 6–10). The number of responses in each range was counted for each type of neighbourhood, and transformed into a percentage form by dividing it by the total number of responses in that type of neighbourhood. These percentages of responses are presented in stacked columns in Figure 5.2 (the ranges were simplified into 7 for better visual effects). Each column is shaded with a different colour, allowing for part-to-whole comparisons across types of neighbourhood. Apart from the percentages of responses falling in each range, I also calculated the average number of friends and acquaintances in each type of neighbourhood and presented that with stacked lines in Figure 5.2.
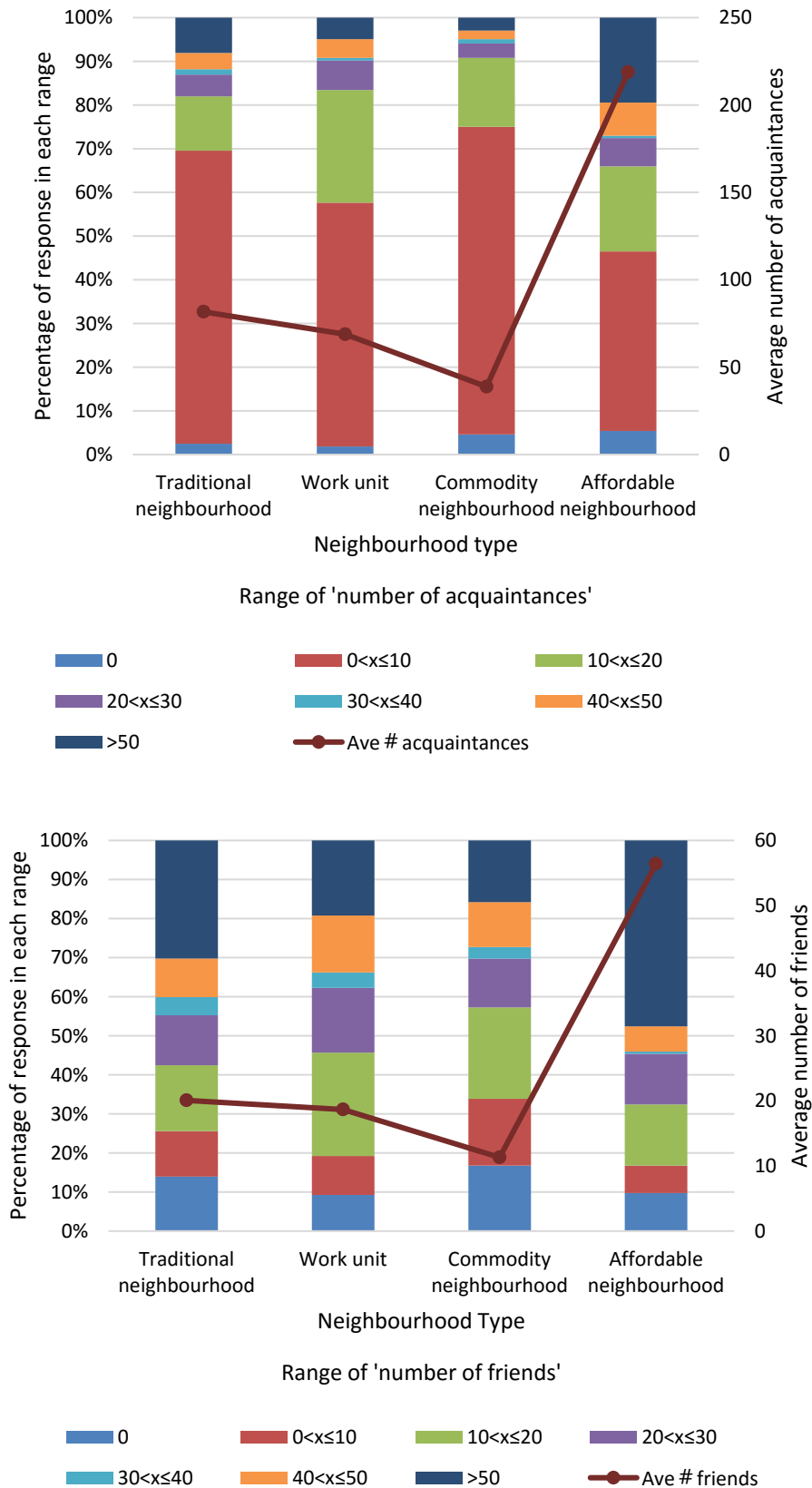
Figure 5.2 Percentages of different strengths of weak ties (above) and strong ties (below) in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

Taken both stacked columns and lines together, Figure 5.2 reveals the heterogeneous distribution of neighbourhood interactions in different types of neighbourhood. Whereas in traditional and

some other neighbourhoods, some local social networks are preserved, most social networks are found to be disembedded from commodity housing estates, leaving limited neighbourly ties. The distinctions between different types of neighbourhood can be summarised into the following points.

5.2.1   Affordable neighbourhoods and networks of kinship

The most distinct variations in terms of neighbourhood interactions are found between affordable neighbourhoods and other types of neighbourhoods. As presented in Table 5.1, affordable neighbourhoods are home to much more socially active residents than other neighbourhoods. The average numbers of acquaintances and friends in affordable neighbourhoods are 218.75 and 56.42, compared with 57.98 and 15.56 in other types of neighbourhood. The ANOVA tests with Bonferroni correction demonstrate the statistical significance of the differences in strong and weak ties between affordable neighbourhoods and other neighbourhoods, with $F=12.70$, $p<0.001$ for weak ties, and $F=8.95$, $p<0.001$ for strong ties. The high percentage of socially active inhabitants in affordable neighbourhoods is also shown by the large areas coloured in dark blue (e.g. those having at least 40 friends/acquaintances in the neighbourhood) in Figure 5.2. This is especially the case for strong ties, given that columns coloured in dark blue add up to more than half of the total area. The large numbers of territorial ties found in the sampled affordable neighbourhoods give strong support for the 'community saved' argument, suggesting that some affordable neighbourhoods (e.g. those sampled in the Nanjing survey) remain meaningful platforms for social interaction in contemporary China, particularly when the strengths of social interactions are taken into account (Wellman, 1996).

The high percentage of neighbourly ties and neighbourhood interactions in the sampled affordable neighbourhoods can be partly explained by the demographic characteristics of these neighbourhoods, some of which are on-site relocated neighbourhoods. Residents in these neighbourhoods are relatives or used to be neighbours from the same village, who have spent a long time together. Consequently, considerable proportions of their social networks are composed of kins and *laoxiang*s (literally translated as 'hometown-based bonds') and are circumscribed within the spatial boundaries of the neighbourhood (Liu, Li and Breitung, 2012). Compared with those in other resettlements and affordable neighbourhoods (e.g. Liu et al., 2017), most of the neighbourly ties originating from kinship and *laoxiang* have not been entirely disrupted by on-site relocation projects, and have been preserved in the resettlement neighbourhoods in Nanjing. The presence of such ties is demonstrated by my interviews in several affordable neighbourhoods. When asked about their numbers of friends and acquaintances in the neighbourhood, some survey respondents reported: 'I know almost everyone in the

neighbourhood, at least 500 or 1000 people. We used to be in the same village or the same production team (*shengchan dui*), how could we not know each other?' (Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood N, March 22, 2017.) Further interviews with local community workers reveal the unique forms and structures of social networks in these affordable neighbourhoods:

> Some *xiaoqu*s in this neighbourhood, such as *xiaoqu* C and *xiaoqu* L, have a strong clan
> culture. Most residents in these *xiaoqu*s come from local clans as their family names
> are the same (*daxing*)... They have secure and complex connections among each other,
> and their connections are often strengthened through marriage. So it is common that
> the daughter-in-law of this family is also the niece of the head of the household living
> next door. These networks are also quite exclusive, as tenants and other outsiders find
> it hard to get involved in the community issues in these *xiaoqu*s. *(Interview with the*
> *vice RC director of Neighbourhood BS, March 22, 2017.)*

The interview indicates that patrilineal kinship networks inherited from villages have been partly preserved within these affordable neighbourhoods. Compared with other types of network, kinship networks are often high in density, and each member is tightly knitted to the others with strong ties and the close connections of family relationships. While they are equipped with high internal connectivity, these networks are usually highly exclusive of those not belonging to these families/clans, indicating the parochial nature of internally cohesive neighbourhoods (Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005).

5.2.2   Established neighbourhoods and networks of colleagueship

Apart from in affordable neighbourhoods, substantial differences in both strong ties and weak ties are found between more established neighbourhoods (e.g. traditional neighbourhoods) and newly developed neighbourhoods (e.g. commodity housing estates). In more established neighbourhoods, survey respondents reported a considerable number of friends and acquaintances within the geographical boundaries of the neighbourhood—with an average of 81.68 acquaintances and 20.08 friends in traditional neighbourhoods, and 69.82 acquaintances and 18.68 friends in privatised work units (Table 5.1). Older neighbourhoods provide some support for the 'community saved' argument as they conform more to the classical image of the community, in which residents appear to know most or many of the people living close by, and sharing a lot in common with them. A major source of familiarity and commonality is shared

working and living experiences, as demonstrated by the following interview with a resident in Neighbourhood X:

> I used to work for the district government, and so did my neighbours. We have been
> living in this work unit compound for more than 30 years. I know most of the people in
> the building I live in. [How many?] At least those in my unit, 30 families and 100
> people. We get along very well with each other. We never had quarrels or fights in this
> neighbourhood. *(October 21, 2017.)*

The interview demonstrates that, although most work units were privatised during the state-owned enterprise reform in the 1990s, their influence has not ceased entirely. Intensive neighbouring and deep mutual understanding developed from shared working experiences (Whyte and Parish, 1984) can still be observed among survey respondents, leading to relatively high levels of colleague networks.

It is worth noting that colleague networks are not necessarily horizontal—this is the primary distinction between networks of colleagueship and networks of long-term friends. Workshop leaders, labour union chairpersons, and other officials who were once in charge of the distribution of goods and services remain influential in colleague networks even after the demise of the work units (Ruan *et al.*, 1997). Whether voluntarily or appointed by the RC, a majority of them become neighbourhood activists and act as 'brokers' in neighbourhood networks due to 'long-time prestige and reputation' (*mianzi*). (Interview with a community worker in Neighbourhood D, April 6, 2017.)

5.2.3   Commodity neighbourhoods and networks of membership

On the contrary, commodity neighbourhoods are more characteristic of the 'community liberated' argument. Survey respondents in commodity neighbourhoods reported fewer friends and acquaintances than those in other types of neighbourhood. The numbers of weak ties reported in sampled commodity neighbourhoods account only for 47.54% and 56.42% in sampled traditional neighbourhoods and privatised work units respectively, and this proportion rises to 56.37% and 60.60% for strong ties (Table 5.1). The sparsely knitted neighbourly networks among survey respondents in sampled commodity neighbourhoods are also manifested by the large areas coloured in orange and light blue in Figure 5.2. This is particularly the case for weak ties, given that columns coloured in orange and light blue colours add up to nearly 90% of the total area, which indicates that a large majority of survey respondents in commodity neighbourhoods

know fewer than 35 neighbours—a number smaller than the average number of acquaintances reported (38.83 acquaintances).

The interviews and observations in the sampled commodity neighbourhoods reveal the emergence of a new form of social network—the membership network. These networks are established among residents who take part in neighbourhood interest groups, ranging from small interest groups, such as basketball clubs, reading groups, and volunteer teams, to large political groups, such as the HOA—the commodity housing estate itself is regarded as a consumers' club in this instance (Webster, 2002). Membership networks can also be found among emerging numbers of tenants and second-hand house buyers in traditional neighbourhoods, work units, and affordable neighbourhoods, who are less likely to fit into existing networks of kinship and colleagueship. While these neighbourhood groups are not exclusive to residents within the neighbourhood, they are no longer tightly knitted groups. Intensive neighbouring in kinship and colleagueship networks have given way to weak ties, fluid interactions, and loose connections of interest. These characteristics represent a 'networked forms of community' (Wellman, 2001), and can be demonstrated by the following interview:

> Of course, these [neighbourhood] groups and activities are not compulsory. Most members come regularly, but some of them come whenever they like. [Do the members treat each other as friends?] Well, it is hard to say. They communicate with each other quite often, but mostly on small household affairs. [Any home visits?] I am not sure. I assume some of them will, but others would prefer privacy and avoid any further contact. *(Interview with the RC director of Neighbourhood B, March 28, 2017.)*

To better understand the spatial variations of neighbourly ties across different types of neighbourhoods, I carried out two sets of regression analyses to test the relationships between weak/strong ties and neighbourhood types, controlling for individual and neighbourhood socioeconomic factors. Negative binomial regression models are used in this section since the strengths of neighbourly ties are measured by counting the numbers of people's friends and acquaintances in the neighbourhoods and the numbers show a tendency of over-dispersion. Intraclass correlation tests (ICC tests) and likelihood ratio tests (LR tests) are carried out to see whether neighbourhood effects exist in the prediction of neighbourly ties. Table 5.2 presents the ICC estimates and their 95% confidence intervals for measures of neighbourly ties. According to the threshold proposed by Cohen (1988), both measures of weak and strong ties have high levels of intra-neighbourhood correlations (ICC>0.138), suggesting that survey respondents are nested within neighbourhoods, and the nesting (i.e. neighbourhood effects) accounts for approximately

one-fifth of variations in neighbourly interactions. The high ICCs indicate that multilevel models are the preferable approach to the prediction of neighbourly ties.

Table 5.2 Intra-neighbourhood correlations for measures of neighbourly ties (with clustered standard errors)

Dependent variable	ICC	F	Prob > F	Clustered Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Weak ties	0.2343	8.54	0.000	0.1337	26.1984	44.2431
Strong ties	0.1961	6.45	0.000	0.1074	9.4389	14.3836

Furthermore, I ran two sets of LR tests to compare the multilevel models with baseline models (single-level negative binomial models in this section) (Gelman and Hill, 2006). The tests show that multilevel models have better model fit: for the weak tie model, chibar(01) = 5.18 (p<0.05), for the strong tie model, chibar(01) = 19.73 (p<0.001). The results suggest that group means of both weak and strong ties vary significantly across neighbourhoods, and justify the use of multilevel models for predicting neighbourly ties.

The results of the multilevel negative binomial models predicting neighbourly ties are presented in Table 5.3. The analyses provide strong statistical evidence showing that neighbourly ties, measured by both numbers of friends and acquaintances, vary significantly across the different types of urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing when controlling for socioeconomic factors on the individual and neighbourhood levels (see Appendix D for the correlation test of control variables). To be more specific, the regression analyses point out that residents in privatised work units (p<0.01), as well as in affordable neighbourhoods (p<0.001), have significantly higher levels of strong ties and weak ties than those in commodity neighbourhoods, after controlling for socioeconomic attributes. When a person's chances of living in privatised work unit increases by one unit, she tends to have 3.349 times more acquaintances and 3.298 times more friends in the neighbourhood (compared with living in commodity neighbourhoods), demonstrating that the proximity of workplace and residence enhances neighbourly interactions in everyday life (Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012). Similarly, a one-unit increase in a person's chances of living in affordable neighbourhoods is associated with a 5.663 times increase in neighbourly acquaintances and a 7.538 times increase in neighbourly friends respectively,, indicating that neighbourly ties inherited from kinship and *laoxiang* relationships have survived urban (re)developments. The relatively low levels of neighbouring and neighbourhood connections found in the sampled commodity housing estates in urban Nanjing correspond to previous studies in other cities across China, such as Tian's (1997) survey in Wuhan, Farrer's (2002) study in Shanghai, and Forrest and Yip's (2007) research in Guangzhou, shedding light on the inevitable dissolution of local ties in commodified urban neighbourhoods.

Table 5.3 Multilevel negative binomial models predicting neighbourly ties

Variables	Model 1: Weak ties	Model 2: Strong ties
	Coefficients	Coefficients
Neighbourhood type (ref=commodity neighbourhoods)		
Traditional neighbourhoods	0.582	0.555
	(0.413)	(0.454)
Privatised work units	1.209**	1.193**
	(0.421)	(0.396)
Affordable neighbourhoods	1.734***	2.020***
	(0.512)	(0.549)
Control variables		
Sex (ref=female)	−0.012	0.043
	(0.158)	(0.175)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)		
Urban, non-local	0.351	0.824
	(0.737)	(0.816)
Rural local	0.196	0.996
	(0.558)	(0.639)
Urban local	0.459	1.443*
	(0.573)	(0.635)
Homeownership	−0.187	0.043
	(0.241)	(0.254)
Length of residence	0.013	0.018
	(0.013)	(0.016)
No. of children	0.390*	0.593**
	(0.176)	(0.196)
Years of schooling	−0.078*	−0.053
	(0.033)	(0.034)
Household income (ln)	0.027	−0.211
	(0.148)	(0.151)
Residential satisfaction	0.235*	0.068
	(0.107)	(0.115)
Constant	3.550***	0.371
	(0.868)	(0.942)
Model fit		
No. of observations	761	761
No. of neighbourhoods	32	32
Within-neighbourhood variance	0.415	0.163
Between-neighbourhoods variance	0.820	0.989

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Apart from variations based on neighbourhood types, statistically significant relationships at the 0.05 level or higher are found between weak ties and residential satisfaction (coefficient=0.235, p<0.05), and whether the respondent has a dependent child (coefficient=0.390, p<0.05), and one's years of schooling (coefficient=-0.078, p<0.05). These results are as expected, indicating that residents with more family obligations (Buonfino and Hilder, 2006; Xu, 2007; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017b) and who are more satisfied with their neighbourhood environment and services, are less mobile and more ingrained in neighbourhood life (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny, 2004;

Moobela *et al.*, 2007). On the contrary, more educated residents tend to be more cosmopolitan and less engaged in neighbourhood social networks, which contrasts to Western observations (Glaeser, 2001) but echoes research conducted in China (e.g. Gui and Huang, 2006; Liu et al., 2017). In addition, local residents with non-agricultural hukou status are more likely to find friends within their neighbourhoods compared with rural migrants without local hukou (coefficient=1.443, p<0.05). This finding echoes previous research from Sun and Lei (2007) and Wu (2012), suggesting that native residents generally have stronger behavioural cohesion than rural migrants. Other socioeconomic and demographic factors, such as household income and length of residence, do not show substantial effects on social relationships in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, which contrasts with the findings of Hazelzet and Wissink (2012) but confirms the findings of Yip (2012).

To sum up, this section addresses the behavioural dimension of neighbourhood cohesion, particularly neighbourly ties, and explores whether there is a crisis of behavioural cohesion in the Nanjing context. Drawing on a city-wide survey in Nanjing, I found significant variations in the distribution of neighbourhood interactions across the sampled neighbourhoods. Whereas some local networks are preserved in affordable neighbourhoods (in terms of kinship networks) and privatised work units (in terms of colleagueship networks), most social ties are found to be disembedded from commodity housing estates, where levels of neighbourly interactions significantly lower than other types of neighbourhoods. While the commodity housing estate has become a major type of neighbourhood in urban China, and has gradually replaced other types of neighbourhoods such as traditional neighbourhoods and privatised work units, in urban regeneration projects (Gui and Huang, 2006), the loose ties and locally isolated life pattern found in these commodified neighbourhoods lend support for the 'community liberated' argument and shed light on the future decrease of behavioural cohesion in urban China.

5.3   The development of neighbourhood participation

Community participation is another component of the behavioural dimension of neighbourhood cohesion. It is measured by people's rate of participation in a variety of neighbourhood social and political activities. The discussion on community participation provides new perspectives for the discussion of 'community liberation' and 'crisis of social cohesion'.

Table 5.4 A general description of community participation

Items	Positive responses	Percentage
Social participation[12]	**323**	**35.53%**
Interest groups	127	13.97%
Cultural and sports activities	79	8.69%
Volunteer post	42	4.62%
Charity drives	79	8.69%
Educational activities	0	0.00%
Other activities	0	0.00%
Political participation	**503**	**55.34%**
RC-led activities	**459**	**50.50%**
Voting for RC members	115	12.65%
Being a member of Residents' Representatives	66	7.26%
Attending RC-led discussions on community issues	81	8.91%
Getting involved in RC work	112	12.32%
Giving opinions to the RC	204	22.44%
HOA-led activities (n=344)[13]	**129**	**37.50%**
Voting for HOA members	66	19.19%
Attending homeowners' assembly	22	6.40%
Getting involved in the HOA work	51	14.83%
Giving opinions to the HOA	42	12.21%
Giving opinions via online tools and other contentious	34	9.88%
Ever participated	**576**	**63.37%**
No. of observations	**909**	**100%**

Overall, the general description of community participation (Table 5.4) indicates that 63.37% of survey respondents (n=909) reported that they had taken part in any form of community activities in the past year. This number is similar to the 64% participation rate found in Zhu's (2014) survey in Guangzhou, but higher than that found in other research, such as 55.3% in Xu's (2007) survey in Beijing, and 53.6% in the survey conducted by Gui, Ma and Muhlhahn (2009) in Shanghai. The relatively high participation rate in Nanjing can be understood from two perspectives: first, following Chen and Lu (2009) and Mei's (2015) designs, neighbourhood interest groups, and

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[12] Each type of activity is designed into a sub-question asking resident's participation behaviours in the past year (see the survey questionnaire in Appendix B). As one is likely to participate in more than one activity in the past year, her answers to the sub questions are not mutually exclusive. The total participation rate is thus likely to be smaller than the aggregation of the participation rate of each activity.

[13] Among the 32 sampled neighbourhoods, twelve neighbourhoods had established HOAs by the time of the survey. A total of 344 responses concerning HOA-related questions were collected in these neighbourhoods.

cultural and sports activities are included in this study, to measure people's voluntary engagement in community social affairs (Zhu, 2015, p.44). Thus more actions are identified as 'community participation' in this study than in the studies of Xu (2007) and Gui, Ma and Muhlhahn (2009), which focused exclusively on political participation. When ruling out social activities, I found that the political participation rate in Nanjing (55.34%) is similar to that found in those studies. Second, not only have regular participants been counted, but those who joined in occasionally have also been included as 'ever [having] participated' (c.f. Forrest and Yip, 2007). This inclusion corresponds to the observation that participatory behaviours in neighbourhoods in China are mostly 'atomistic and informal' (Xu, 2007).

A general comparison between social and political participation indicates that survey respondents are generally more politically engaged than socially engaged in the community—55.34% of survey respondents have ever been part of the neighbourhood political process in the past year, nearly 20% higher than those who have ever taken part in social events (Figure 5.3).

■ Social non-participant ■ Social participant   ■ Political non-participant ■ Political participant
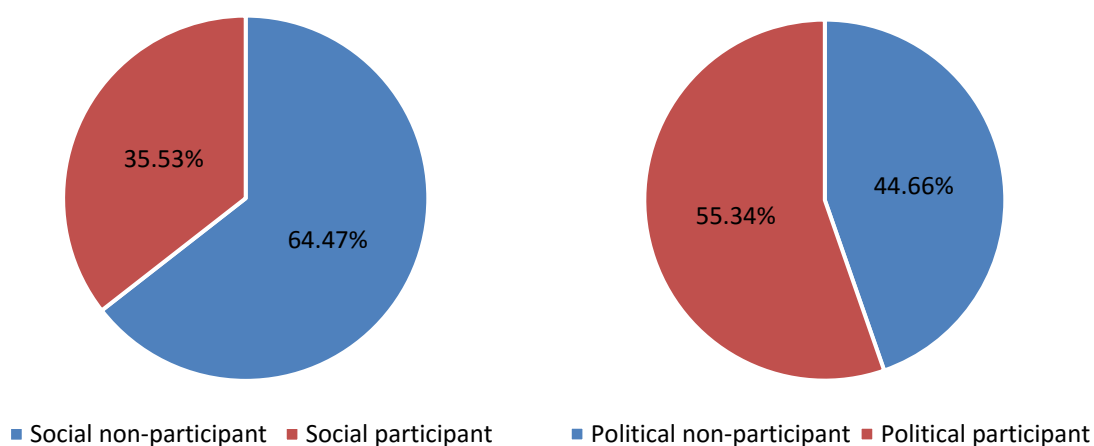
Figure 5.3 Percentages of participants vs non-participants in neighbourhood social activities (left) and political activities (right)

To be more specific, the survey shows that 'neighbourhood interest group' is the most popular type of social participation (Figure 5.4). It accounts for 38.84% of the total participation, followed by cultural and sports activities (24.16%), and charity drives (24.16%). The survey also indicates

that voluntary posts are less prevalent among residents in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, only making up for 12.85% of total participation.
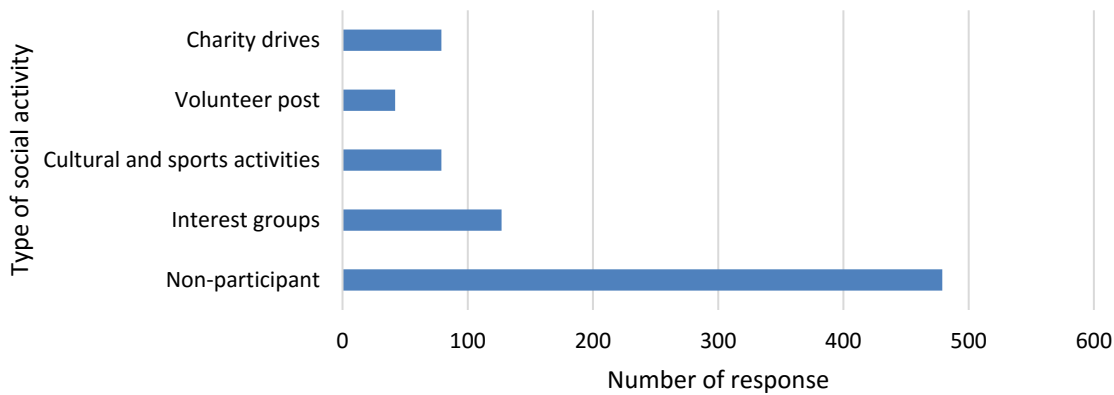
Figure 5.4 Types of social participation in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

Regarding political participation, I divide the ten activities outlined in Table 5.4 into two groups: the first five activates led by the RC and reflect the top-down types of participation, and the last five organised by the HOA as bottom-up initiatives. The comparison of the two types of political participation shows that RC-led activities are more popular than HOA-led activities among survey respondents (Table 5.5), with a participation rate of 50.50% for the former compared with 37.50% for the latter. It is the same for active participants: 9.96% of survey respondents interacted with the RC at least once a month, while only 3.20% did so with the HOA.

Table 5.5 Percentages of political participation by participation type and frequency

Frequency	Type of political participation	RC-led participation	HOA-led participation
Once a year or less		32.21%	25.58%
Several times a year		8.95%	8.72%
Once a month		2.80%	1.45%
Several times a month		7.16%	1.74%
Participation rate		50.50%	37.50%
Frequent participation rate (at least once a month)		9.96%	3.20%

The comparison indicates that residents are more engaged in RC-led activities sponsored by the state than those organised by civil society organisations since the average participation rate of RC-led activities is 13.84% higher than for HOA-led activities. This observation affirms the positive aspect of state-meditated participation: top-down participation venues have a broader social basis than bottom-up venues, which are often concentrated among a small group of neighbourhood elites (Read, 2008; Chen, 2010; Fu, and Lin, 2014). The low participation rate of HOA-led activities can be explained from two angles: firstly, HOAs might be less effective at providing multiple participation opportunities. Therefore, HOA-led participatory platforms may not be sufficiently provided, compared with state-sponsored venues which have relatively stable funding sources and human resources. Secondly, residents might be less motivated and less willing to participate in HOA-led activities which are rights-oriented, compared with RC-led activities that are welfare- and commitment-oriented. This observation lies in sharp contrast with the expectation of liberal intellectuals who argue that RCs are being marginalised and replaced by the emerging civil society organisation which represents the 'true voice' of residents (Read, 2002; Min, 2009). Instead, this study echoes Heberer's (2009) argument that state-sponsored platforms are necessary for Chinese society, where civil society and participatory culture are still in their infancy.
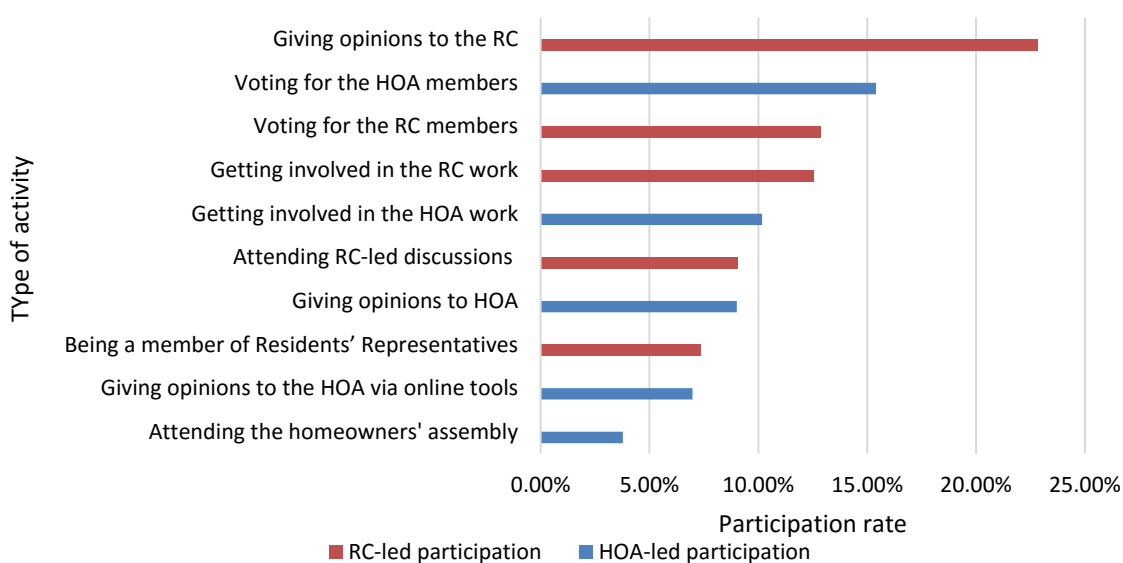
Figure 5.5 Percentages of types of political participation (sorted by participation rate from largest to smallest)

Figure 5.5 presents participation rates of political activities and sorts them from the largest to the smallest. Three points can be made from a comparison of the four most popular political activities, engaged in by more than 10% of participants. First, three out of the four most popular participation platforms are provided by the RC, including giving opinions to the RC (22.44%),

voting for RC members (12.65%), and getting involved in RC work (12.32%). The relatively high involvement in RC work is partly due to its role as a grassroots service station of the state. It serves local residents by providing administrative and social services, such as allocating unemployment pensions and issuing various certificates and statements. It is through these services that the RC establishes multiple channels to communicate with citizens in everyday life. (Interview with the party secretary of Neighbourhood G, March 23, 2017.) Second, elections are one of the most important channels for community political participation, both for the HOA (15.41%) and the RC (12.65%). Although both types of election have lower participation rates according to this study compared with previous research (e.g. Gui, Ma and Muhlhahn, 2009), they are the second and third most popular participation approaches reported by residents in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. One plausible reason for the low participation rates is that the sampled neighbourhoods did not organise HOA elections in the year before the study. According to the relevant laws and regulations, RC and HOA elections should be organised every five years. For RCs in Nanjing, the latest round of election was organised in 2017, which is covered in the time range of the survey. However, for HOAs, elections were organised at different times in different neighbourhoods. It is therefore likely that no HOA election was held from 2016 to 2018 in some sampled neighbourhoods. Among the low participation rates, it is worth noting that self-reported turnout rates in RC elections (12.65%) are much lower than the official data (at least 80%, see Xiong, 2008). Residents are likely to report non-participation if they are represented by others (e.g. neighbourhood activists) to cast a vote, sometimes described as a 'plural vote' or 'proxy vote' (Xiong, 2008), or else they are so apathetic about the election that they may 'hardly remember the vote' (Wang and Fang, 2010). Third, the survey implies that most participatory behaviours are less institutionalised and more individualised, described by Xu (2007) as 'atomistic and informal'. Institutional approaches of participation are not widely accepted in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing: only 9.06% of survey respondents had ever joined RC-led community boards, such as the Deliberative Council (DC) and the Assembly of Residents' Representatives (ARR), and this rate drops to 3.78% for HOA-led Homeowners' Assemblies.

Considering neighbourhood types, I found notable differences in participation among different types of neighbourhoods, in terms of participation rates and activity types. Unlike neighbourhood social ties, differences in levels of community involvement do not lie between old and new neighbourhoods, but between disadvantaged and middle-class neighbourhoods—which is different from assertions made in previous studies (Forrest and Yip, 2007). Regarding participation rates, Figure 5.6 depicts different participation rates among the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing by neighbourhood type. A comparison across neighbourhood types shows that residents in commodity housing estates and privatised work units are the most

enthusiastic groups in neighbourhood social activities, with average participation rates of 47.94% and 47.67% respectively. They are also the most politically engaged groups, with an average participation rate of 66.28% in sampled privatised work units, and 59.06% in sampled commodity housing estates. Compared with these self-sufficient neighbourhoods, residents in traditional neighbourhoods are the least socially engaged (27.78%), and residents in affordable neighbourhoods are the least politically involved group in community issues (45.26%).
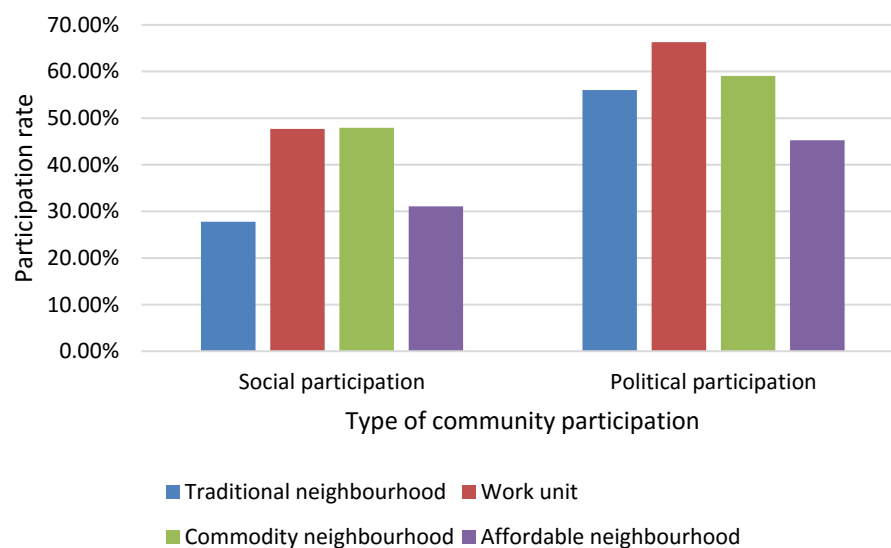
Figure 5.6 Comparisons of social and political participation rates in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

Regarding types of participation, Figure 5.7, Figure 5.8, and Figure 5.9 show the percentage-based distributions of social and political participatory activities in the sampled neighbourhoods. According to Figure 5.4, the composition of social participation in commodity housing estates is slightly different from that in other neighbourhoods. With a larger share of participation given over to interest groups and cultural and sports activities, commodity housing estates do not hold as many volunteer posts or charity drives as other neighbourhoods. Differences were also found in the observations and interviews between the major types of interest groups and cultural activities in each type of neighbourhood. As commented by an RC officer in a high-end commodity neighbourhood:

> Our *xiaoqu* is high-end, and residents here are all middle- to high-class people. Many are young parents. So experiential activities and parent-child campaigns are quite popular in our *xiaoqu*, such as parent-child schools, sports games, and flea markets.

> They are quite different from activities in traditional neighbourhoods, such as dancing
>
> clubs and choirs for retirees. *(Interview with the director of Neighbourhood SD,*
>
> *November 7, 2017.)*

As indicated by the interview, differences in social participation may be explained by the different

socioeconomic composition of the neighbourhood: a large share of residents in commodity

neighbourhoods are middle-class and have more free time and money to organise cultural

activities and interest groups (recreational-oriented participation). On the contrary, other

neighbourhoods have more diverse social compositions. Those in the lower class, especially

disadvantaged groups, often participate in RC patrols and charity drives in return for state welfare

(e.g. unemployment pensions)—as often observed in traditional and affordable neighbourhoods

(see a detailed discussion on welfare-oriented participation in Chapter 6.5.2).
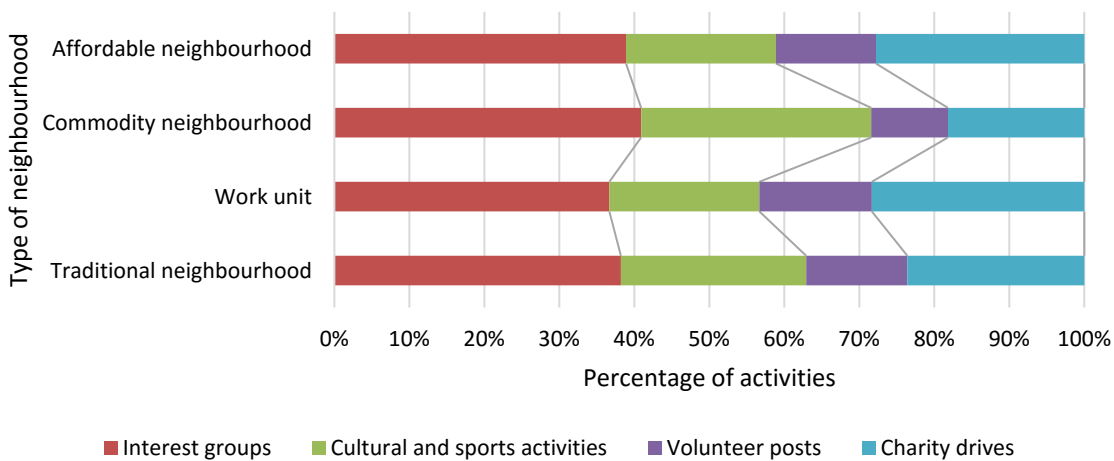
**Figure 5.7 Percentages of types of social participation in the sampled neighbourhoods in
Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)**

Political participation is more heterogeneously distributed across the sampled neighbourhoods in

Nanjing. As presented in Figure 5.8, RC-led political participation in affordable neighbourhoods is

significantly different from that in other neighbourhoods. The sampled affordable

neighbourhoods have the highest percentage of participation in 'giving opinions to the RC' and

'getting involved in RC work', and the lowest percentage of 'being a member of Residents'

Representatives' and 'voting for RC members'. This observation demonstrates the nature of

participation in affordable neighbourhoods. As most residents are relocated residents and

migrants in relatively lower classes, participatory activities in affordable neighbourhoods are often

welfare-oriented. Such activities are more linked to the RC's function in administration and service provision, but less involved in the community decision-making process.
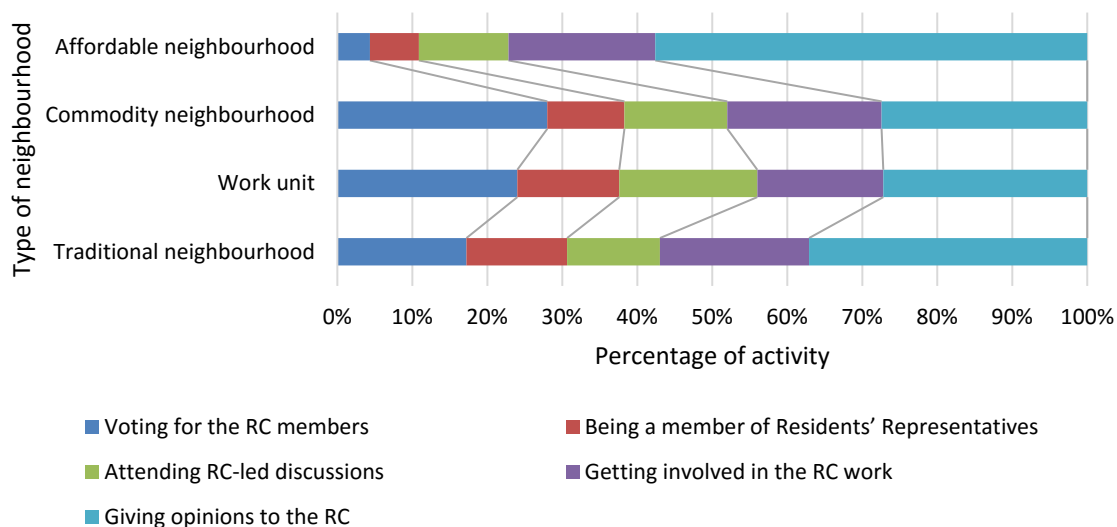
Figure 5.8 Percentages of types of RC-led political participation in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

For HOA-led activities, the comparison is conducted among commodity neighbourhoods, privatised work units, and affordable neighbourhoods, since none of the sampled traditional neighbourhoods has an HOA. The comparison shows the different components of HOA-led activities across neighbourhoods. As presented in Figure 5.9, privatised work units have the highest turnout rate for HOA elections, affordable neighbourhoods have the highest participation rate in HOA works, and commodity housing estates have the largest group of online participants. These findings also correspond to the differences in the socioeconomic status of residents in, and histories of, each type of neighbourhood. For privatised work units, some legacies of collectivism are preserved, such as a sense of colleagueship and the hierarchical power structure, which equip the neighbourhood with a strong capacity for mobilisation in HOA elections (Xu, Perkins and Chow, 2010). For affordable neighbourhoods, the explanation of HOA participation is similar to that of RC participation, since most HOAs in the sampled affordable neighbourhoods are sponsored by local RCs. For commodity neighbourhoods, the frequent use of online tools can be explained by their large percentages of internet users (Damm, 2007).
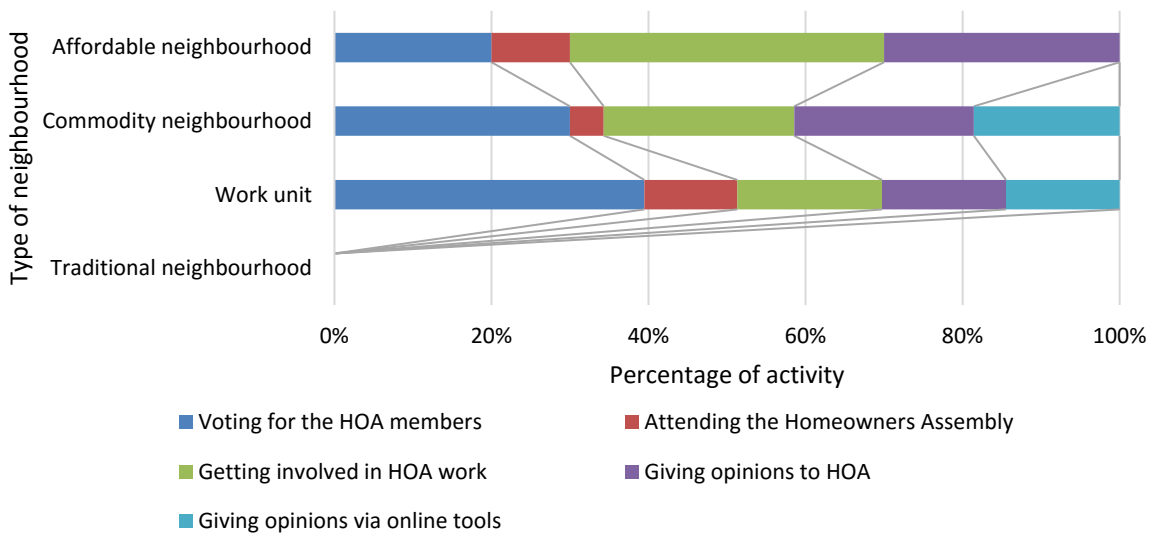
Figure 5.9 Percentages of types of HOA-led political participation in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

Based on descriptive analysis, multilevel analyses are conducted to explore the spatial distribution of participatory cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, controlling for socioeconomic factors. Since community participation is operationalised as a binary variable, I adopt multilevel logistic models in this section (see detailed discussion in Chapter 4.5.1). The usage of multilevel models is justified as all participatory measures have high levels of ICCs (Table 5.6), and all multilevel logistic models pass the likelihood ratio test: for social participation: $chi^2=25.21$ (p<0.001); for political participation: $chi^2=19.73$ (p<0.001)).

Table 5.6 Intra-neighbourhood correlations for measures of community participation (with clustered standard errors)

Dependent variable	ICC	F	Prob > F	Clustered Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Social participation	0.1600	6.28	0.000	0.1870	−0.9769	−0.2439
Political participation	0.1524	6.02	0.000	0.1812	−0.0526	0.6576

The results of multilevel logistic models are presented in Table 5.7. To better illustrate the relationships across different types of neighbourhood, I conducted two sets of logistic regressions, so that the commodity neighbourhood is the reference group for the first set of models (Models 3 and 4), and the affordable neighbourhood is the reference group for the second set (Models 3-1 and 4-1). Compared with residents of commodity neighbourhoods, residents of affordable

neighbourhoods are less socially engaged in community activities, and residents in privatised work units are less politically involved in neighbourhood life—albeit that such relationships are quasi-significant at the 0.1 level. According to Model 3, for a one-unit increase in the chances of living in affordable neighbourhoods, we can expect to see about a 55% decrease in the odds of social participation. This decrease in odds rises to 60% for a one-unit increase in a person's chances of living in privatised work units (Model 4), controlling for sociodemographic factors. Such a conclusion seems at odds with the direct comparison of participation rates presented in Figure 5.6, which suggests that privatised work units enjoy the highest participation rate in community political activities. Further analysis indicates that the high participation rate in privatised work units can be attributed to the socioeconomic profile of the residents in the sampled neighbourhoods, rather than the neighbourhood type itself.

At the same time, compared with people living in affordable neighbourhoods, those in traditional neighbourhoods tend to be more actively engaged in community political activities, and those in commodity neighbourhoods are more involved in both social and political activities. These increases in probabilities of participation are significant: a one-unit increase in a person's chances of living in traditional neighbourhoods is related to a 294% increase in their odds of social participation (Model 3-1), and the corresponding increase in odds is 125% for social participation and 228% for political participation in commodity neighbourhoods (Models 3-1 and 4-1). The two sets of comparisons indicate that more socially and politically active participants are more likely to be found in commodity neighbourhoods than affordable neighbourhoods. The comparison further demonstrates that differences in community engagement do not lie between more and less established neighbourhoods (e.g. privatised work units vs commodity neighbourhoods), but between middle-class and low-income neighbourhoods (e.g. commodity neighbourhoods vs affordable neighbourhoods).

Table 5.7 Multilevel logistic models predicting community participation

Variables	Model 3 Social participation	Model 4 Political participation	Model 3-1 Social participation	Model 4-1 Political participation
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
Neighbourhood type				
(ref=commodity neighbourhoods)			*(ref=affordable neighbourhoods)*	
Traditional	0.779	1.202	1.752	3.940
neighbourhoods	(0.339)	(0.920)	(0.945)	(3.365)
Privatised work units	1.019	0.400	2.291	1.311
	(0.446)	(0.211)	(1.279)	(1.006)
Affordable	0.445	0.305	-	-
neighbourhoods	(0.225)	(0.225)	-	-
Commodity	-	-	2.249	3.278
neighbourhoods	-	-	(1.136)	(2.418)

Variables	Model 3 Social participation Odds ratio	Model 4 Political participation Odds ratio	Model 3-1 Social participation Odds ratio	Model 4-1 Political participation Odds ratio
Control variables				
Sex (ref=female)	0.933	1.587	0.933	1.587
	(0.184)	(0.624)	(0.184)	(0.624)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)				
Urban, non-local	0.910	0.316	0.910	0.316
	(0.591)	(0.517)	(0.591)	(0.517)
Rural local	1.257	0.140	1.257	0.140
	(0.823)	(0.193)	(0.823)	(0.193)
Urban local	2.409	0.328	2.409	0.328
	(1.303)	(0.428)	(1.303)	(0.428)
Homeownership	2.064**	1.248	2.064**	1.248
	(0.635)	(0.555)	(0.635)	(0.555)
Length of residence	1.002	1.092*	1.002	1.092*
	(0.0126)	(0.0390)	(0.0126)	(0.0390)
No. of children	0.994	2.655	0.994	2.655
	(0.220)	(1.153)	(0.220)	(1.153)
Years of schooling	0.982	1.048	0.982	1.048
	(0.0335)	(0.0750)	(0.0335)	(0.0750)
Household income (ln)	0.651***	0.747	0.651***	0.747
	(0.108)	(0.270)	(0.108)	(0.270)
Residential satisfaction	1.728***	1.348	1.728***	1.348
	(0.205)	(0.336)	(0.205)	(0.336)
Constant	0.132**	0.472	0.0588***	0.144
	(0.108)	(1.018)	(0.0465)	(0.281)
Model fit				
No. of observations	813	761	813	761
No. of neighbourhoods	32	32	32	32
Within neighbourhood variance	3.290	3.290	3.290	3.290
Between neighbourhood variance	0.716	0.691	0.716	0.691

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.

The low participation rate found in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Nanjing should be interpreted as a combined result of individual and neighbourhood factors. On the individual level, negative associations are found between annual household income and social participation (odds ratio = 0.651, p<0.001). This observation in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing contrasts with studies in the UK and the US (e.g. Twigg, Taylor and Mohan, 2010; Mennis, Dayanim and Grunwald, 2013), but confirms studies in urban China which that low-income groups are more locally embedded (Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017b). Aggregating to the neighbourhood level, however, lower levels of participation are more likely to be associated with disadvantaged neighbourhoods (e.g. affordable neighbourhoods) albeit such associations are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level or greater. This can be partly explained by the relative deprivation theory hypothesising that residents who have achieved some socioeconomic success

in a disadvantaged neighbourhood will become dissatisfied with their less well-off neighbours, leading to less local engagement and more uncooperative behaviours (Galster, 2010). More importantly, according to my interviews and observations in Nanjing, disadvantaged neighbourhoods are often associated with dormant HOAs and dysfunctional neighbourhood groups, which provide inadequate institutional platforms for community participation.

Apart from neighbourhood types and economic conditions, the regression analyses also show that homeownership and residential satisfaction are positively associated with social participation, indicating that satisfied homeowners are more likely to participate in social activities than tenants (Glaeser, 2001). Length of residence also plays a facilitative role in the promotion of community political engagement, suggesting that long-term residents are more likely to become active participants in neighbourhood life. The time a person invests into their neighbourhood (Guest and Wierzbicki, 1999; Wu, 2012) transforms their life trajectory and helps them to better integrate into the local community.

To summarise, this section addresses another dimension of behavioural cohesion, participatory cohesion, which is distributed heterogeneously across the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. This distribution of community participation is significantly different from the distribution of neighbourly ties, as discussed in the previous section. While commodity neighbourhoods are characterised by loose neighbourly ties and weak neighbourhood interactions, they are home to the most active participants in community social and political activities, controlling for individual and neighbourhood characteristics. Meanwhile, the presence of neighbourly ties does not necessarily transform into participatory cohesion, since the lowest rates of participation are found in affordable neighbourhoods where relatively high levels of neighbourly interaction are preserved. Apart from participation rates, notably differences in activity types are also found across different types of neighbourhood. Compared with other types of neighbourhoods, the sampled commodity neighbourhoods host more recreational activities and are more involved in the community decision-making process (led either by the RC or the HOA). Privatised work units see the most volunteer posts and charity drives, and affordable neighbourhoods are home to most welfare-oriented participation (often associated with the RC). Taking both participatory frequencies and activities types together, this section reveals that a considerable level of territorial cohesion can be found in some urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing, particularly in the sampled commodity neighbourhoods, which challenges Forrest and Yip's (2007) argument that only a low level of engagement persists in urban neighbourhoods in contemporary China. More importantly, community participation in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing is witnessing a process of diversification, rather than the 'crisis' that is generally asserted (Forrest and Kearns,

2001). Different types of neighbourhoods specialise in different types of community activities, which cannot be captured by merely counting participation rates or frequencies.

5.4 The transformation of neighbourhood sentiment

The cognitive dimension of neighbourhood cohesion captures 'latent neighbouring' (Mann, 1954) through the quantification of individual subjective properties concerning neighbourliness. It is disaggregated into three key measures in this research: neighbourhood attachment, orientation towards collective goals, and trust and reciprocity. For each measure, the survey asked residents their attitudes towards several statements on a 5-point Likert scale, whereby 1 is 'strongly disagree', and 5 is 'strongly agree' (see Table 4.2 for detailed descriptions). All statements are phrased with positive attitudes, so that answers of 'strongly agree' (score 5) and 'agree' (score 4) indicate positive attitudes towards neighbourhood cohesion, whereas answers of 'strongly disagree' (score 1) and 'disagree' (score 2) show negative attitudes.

General descriptions of cognitive cohesion measures are presented in Table 5.8. Overall, survey respondents reported relatively high levels of cognitive cohesion. The average scores for each measure of cognitive cohesion are larger than 3 (a neutral attitude): 3.72 for 'neighbourhood attachment', 3.67 for 'trust and reciprocity', and 3.35 for 'orientation towards collective goals'. Only 7.47% of survey respondents reported distrust of their neighbours, 8.70% felt less attached to or disliked their neighbourhood, and 16.70% refused to engage in neighbourhood collective actions. The high average scores indicate positive community attitudes and a strong sense of community in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. This echoes previous studies in other cities in China, such as Guangzhou (Wang, Liu and He, 2015), Shanghai (Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017b), and Wenzhou (Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018), and supports the argument that part of the traditional community is saved in modern life, at least in people's feelings, attitudes, values, and norms.

Table 5.8 A general description of cognitive cohesion (n=896)

Measures Attitudes	Neighbourhood attachment	Orientation towards collective goals	Trust and reciprocity	Average
Negative (score = 1 or 2)	8.70%	16.07%	7.49%	10.76%
Neutral (score = 3)	22.07%	37.39%	21.34%	26.96%
Positive (score = 4 or 5)	69.23%	52.12%	71.17%	64.25%
Average score	3.72	3.35	3.67	-

Further analysis indicates that these feelings, attitudes, and values are dispersed unevenly across neighbourhoods. According to Figure 5.10, privatised work units are home to the most civic-minded and trustworthy residents. Most positive responses to attachment-related questions were found in the sampled commodity neighbourhoods.
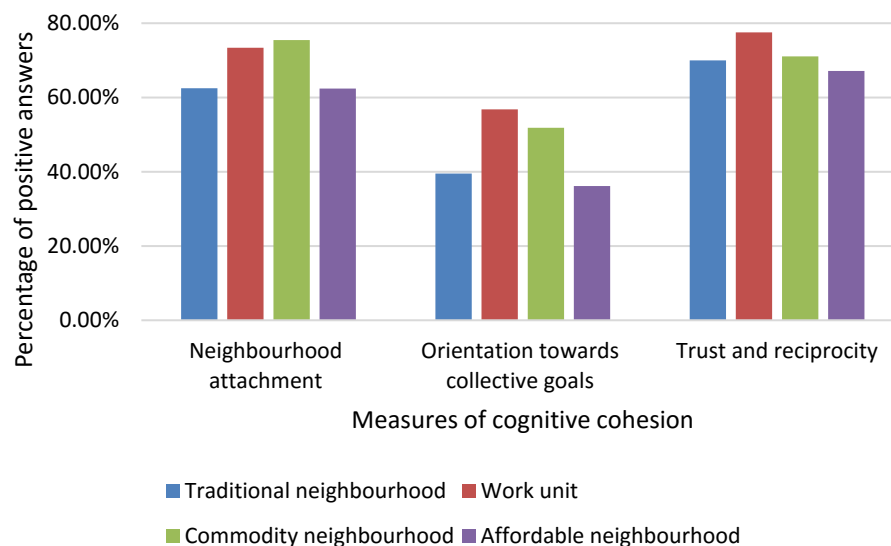
Figure 5.10 Comparisons of rates of positive responses of cognitive cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

Figure 5.11 compares levels of neighbourhood attachment more specifically across four types of neighbourhoods. The comparison shows that survey respondents in the sampled commodity housing estates tend to have the strongest bonds to their neighbourhood, with more than 75% of answers showing a positive attitude, and an average score of 3.90. The figure decreases slightly to 73.38% (with an average score of 3.74) in privatised work units and is only about 62% in affordable neighbourhoods (with an average score of 3.58) and traditional neighbourhoods (with an average score of 3.54). This finding echoes existing studies on commodity housing estates and gated communities in China, where strong place attachment and common identity were found (e.g. Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012), and on low-income groups with weak

emotional links with the places where they reside (Liu, Zhang, *et al.*, 2017)—usually affordable and traditional neighbourhoods in this case.
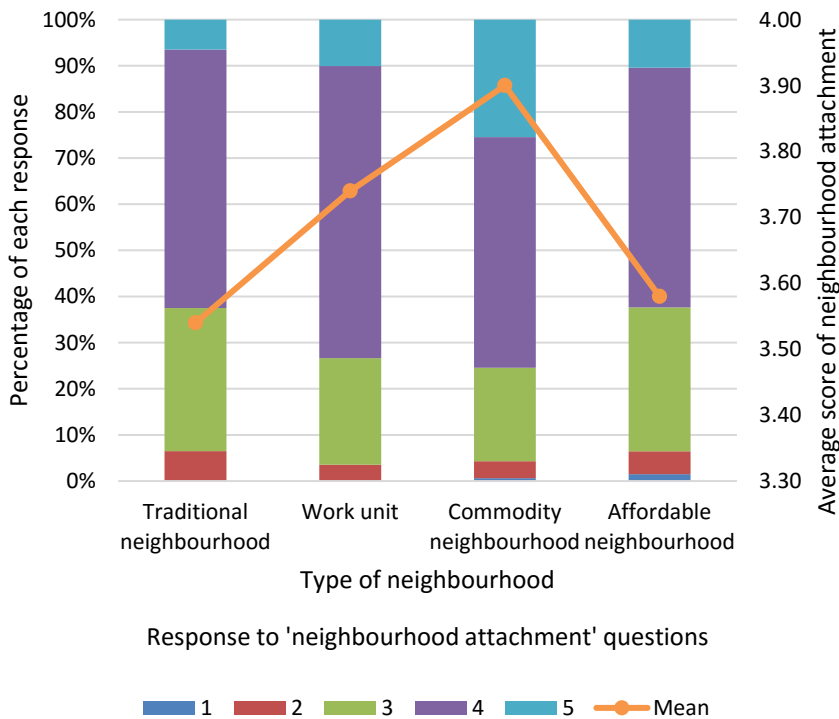
Figure 5.11 Percentages of scores of neighbourhood attachment in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

Figure 5.12 compares orientations towards collective goals across four types of neighbourhood. Privatised work units demonstrate the strongest willingness for participation in community issues: 56.80% of survey respondents stated that they were willing to devote time and/or money to neighbourhood public projects even without direct benefits. The share of active devotees drops to 51.84% in commodity neighbourhoods, and further to 39.50% in traditional neighbourhoods and 36.14% in affordable neighbourhoods. Although traditional neighbourhoods have relatively more committed residents than affordable neighbourhoods, the average score for participation willingness is lower in the former type of neighbourhood (3.12) than in the latter (3.20). This is because many survey respondents held negative attitudes towards community public issues in traditional neighbourhoods. The proportions who chose 1 ('strongly disagree') and 2 ('disagree') were nearly 3% and 10% higher respectively than the proportions in affordable neighbourhoods, reflecting the relatively low civic capacity in traditional neighbourhoods.

Furthermore, comparing participation behaviours (as discussed in Section 5.3), a good match is found between perceived and actual community engagement. Willingness to participate shows

similar patterns to participation behaviours across neighbourhood types: privatised work units are the most active communities, with strong capacities for mobilisation and engaging residents, and affordable neighbourhoods are the least active neighbourhoods, with a small share of participants who are willing to devote time and money to public issues. The variations in participatory willingness and behaviours may be caused by variations in neighbourhood civic capacities and individual sociodemographic factors (which will be discussed in Table 5.10).
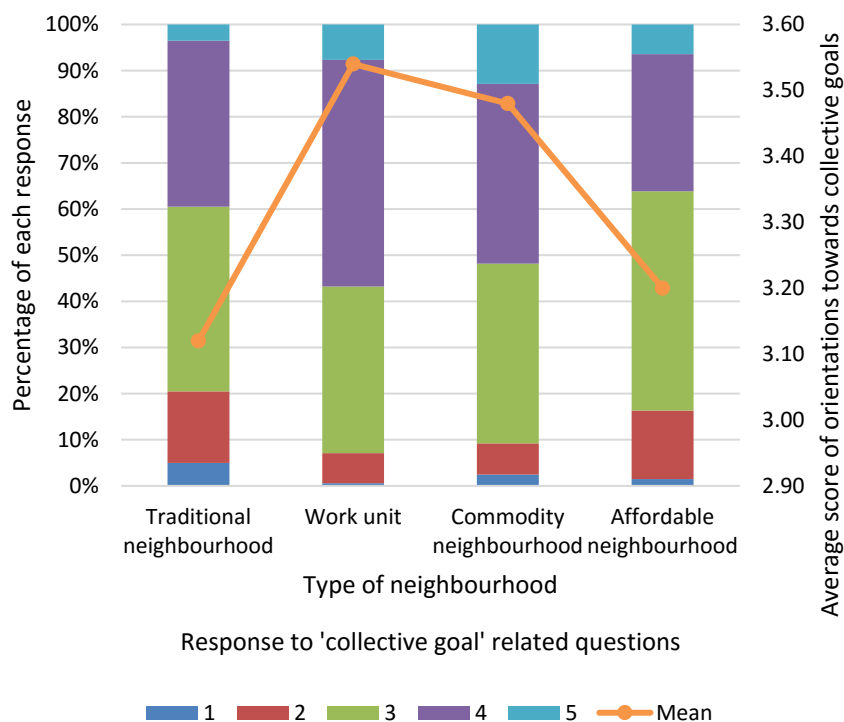
Figure 5.12 Percentages of scores of orientations towards collective goals in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

Figure 5.13 compares levels of trust and reciprocity across neighbourhood types. This comparison shows similar patterns to the previous comparison of orientations towards collective goals, presented in Figure 5.12. For both measures, privatised work units are the most cognitively cohesive neighbourhoods with the largest share of trusting residents (77.51%), followed by

commodity neighbourhoods (71.08%), traditional neighbourhoods (70.00%), and affordable neighbourhoods (67.16%).
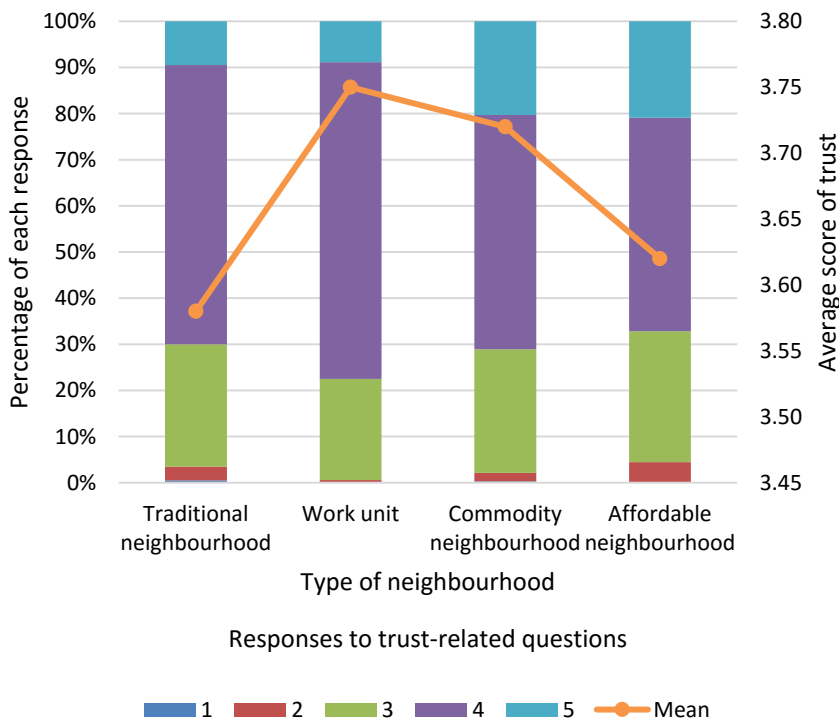
Figure 5.13 Percentages of scores of trust and reciprocity in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (by neighbourhood type)

Similar to the analysis of behavioural cohesion, regression analyses are conducted for detailed analysis of cognitive cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. Following existing studies on cognitive cohesion (Du and Li, 2010; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2016b; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018), the Likert-scaled responses of cognitive cohesion–related questions were treated as being measured at a ratio level, and were therefore modelled using linear models. Meanwhile, the multilevel nature of the data is demonstrated by the ICC test in Table 5.9. High levels of effect are found for all measures of neighbourhood-based sentiment, suggesting that group means of cognitive cohesion measures vary significantly across neighbourhoods and that multilevel models are necessary. The usage of multilevel models is also justified by the LR tests, which show that multilevel linear models have better model fit than ordinary least squares regression models.

Table 5.9 Intra-neighbourhood correlations for measures of neighbourhood sentiment (with clustered standard errors)

Dependent variable	ICC	F	Prob > F	Clustered Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Neighbourhood attachment	0.1963	7.83	0.000	0.0653	3.6061	3.8623
Orientations towards collective goals	0.1977	7.88	0.000	0.0715	3.2282	3.5087
Trust	0.1643	6.48	0.000	0.0547	3.5699	3.7842

The results of the multilevel linear regression models are presented in Table 5.10. The cross-neighbourhood comparison indicates that, compared with residents living in commodity neighbourhoods, those in traditional (p<0.01) and affordable neighbourhoods (p<0.05) are significantly less attached to their neighbourhoods (Model 5). The regression coefficients indicate that a one-unit increase in a person's chances of living in an affordable neighbourhood leads to a 0.368-unit decrease in neighbourhood attachment, and this decrease rises to 0.448 units in traditional neighbourhoods. These effects are statistically significant when controlling for individual sociodemographic factors and residential satisfaction. This finding is consistent with existing studies on 'the changing meaning of neighbourhood attachment in Chinese commodity housing estates' (Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012, p.2439), where strong neighbourhood attachment is widely observed among residents in commodity housing estates in cities across China (e.g. Breitung, 2012; Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018). This type of attachment, found in the sampled commodity neighbourhoods, is less influenced by their local social networks since commodity neighbourhoods have fewer neighbourly interactions than traditional neighbourhoods. Instead, their neighbourhood attachment is more influenced by satisfaction with the physical environment, as demonstrated by the positive relationship between residential satisfaction and neighbourhood attachment.

Table 5.10 Multilevel linear models predicting neighbourhood sentiment

Variables	Model 5 Neighbourhood attachment	Model 6 Orientation towards collective goals	Model 7 Trust
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Neighbourhood type (ref=commodity neighbourhoods)			
Traditional neighbourhoods	−0.448**	−0.245	−0.090
	(0.155)	(0.247)	(0.152)
Privatised work units	0.025	0.159	0.311*
	(0.122)	(0.209)	(0.126)
Affordable neighbourhoods	−0.368*	−0.250	−0.078
	(0.173)	(0.282)	(0.169)

Variables	Model 5 Neighbourhood attachment	Model 6 Orientation towards collective goals	Model 7 Trust
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Control variables			
Sex (ref=female)	−0.060	0.031	−0.011
	(0.087)	(0.105)	(0.076)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)			
Urban, non-local	0.379	−0.140	0.202
	(0.360)	(0.440)	(0.316)
Rural local	0.384	0.573	0.278
	(0.299)	(0.369)	(0.264)
Urban local	0.265	−0.130	0.108
	(0.280)	(0.351)	(0.249)
Homeownership	−0.257*	−0.081	−0.117
	(0.112)	(0.147)	(0.102)
Length of residence	−0.015*	−0.001	−0.007
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.006)
No. of children	−0.114	−0.240*	−0.061
	(0.095)	(0.118)	(0.084)
Years of schooling	−0.042*	0.030	−0.014
	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.014)
Household income (ln)	−0.007	0.091	−0.045
	(0.074)	(0.091)	(0.065)
Residential satisfaction	0.254***	0.162*	0.114*
	(0.057)	(0.070)	(0.050)
Constant	3.693***	2.298***	3.399***
	(0.467)	(0.567)	(0.408)
Model fit			
No. of observations	822	822	822
No. of neighbourhoods	32	32	32
Within neighbourhood variance	0.427	0.614	0.349
Between neighbourhood variance	0.074	0.080	0.074

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05.

Meanwhile, the regression (Model 7) also shows that privatised work units are home to more trusting citizens compared with commodity neighbourhoods (coefficient=0.311, p<0.05). That is to say, when a person's chances of living in a privatised work unit increase by one unit, their chances of finding trusting and cooperative relationships in such neighbourhoods are likely to increase by 31.10% when other variables are held constant. The high levels of trust and reciprocity found in the sampled work units correspond with the observations of Whyte and Parish (1984) in the pre-reform era, where collegial affiliations played crucial roles in generating senses of familiarity and trust. Such colleague networks no longer exist in newly established commodity neighbourhoods, and traditional practices to cultivate trusting relations among neighbours no longer apply to the new urban setting. These reasons partly explain why residents

in commodity neighbourhoods built in the post-reform era have low levels of trust in their neighbours (Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012). However, colleague networks, as discussed in Chapter 5.2.2, are partly preserved in the sampled privatised work units, leading to relatively higher levels of neighbourly trust and reciprocity. This observation consolidates the findings of the comparative study of gated communities (to which category commodity neighbourhoods belong) conducted by Huang and Low (2008).

In addition to the neighbourhood-level determinants, statistically significant relationships are also found between neighbourhood attachments and length of residence (coefficient = –0.015, p<0.05), years of schooling (coefficient = –0.042, p<0.05), and homeownership (coefficient = –0.257, p<0.05), and all of these relationships are negative. While the negative association between educational attainment and neighbourhood attachment echoes previous studies (Wang, Liu and He, 2015), the reductive effects of homeownership and length of residence on attachment are contrary to some existing research in China (e.g. Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2016). One possible explanation for the negative association between homeownership and neighbourhood attachment is that the 'homeownership effects' (Glaeser, 2001, p.14)—the effects of homeowners internalising their financial investment in their property as an investment in the community—may require time to take effect (Wang, Liu and He, 2015).

These effects, according to the longitudinal studies of Glaeser (2001), are weakened when observing the same person over time. Yang (2010) suggests that '10 years' might be a tipping point for the changing relationship between the length of residence and neighbourhood attachment. According to his survey in Nanjing, this relationship is positive for short-to-mid-term residents (e.g. those spending three to ten years in the neighbourhood), but becomes negative for those living in the same neighbourhood for more than ten years. This is why, when treating 'length of residence' as a continuous variable, an overall negative effect is found for the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, the average length of residence of which is 11.52 years (Table 4.4).

Apart from neighbourhood attachment, the individual-level indicators of socioeconomic status (e.g. income, education and hukou status) manifest no statistically significant effect on neighbourly trust, and only a weak effect on orientation towards collective goals. According to Model 6, the presence of dependent children is negatively related to orientations towards collective goals (coefficient = –0.240, p<0.05). This observation within the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing echoes social-structural changes on the macro levels, where caring responsibilities transform families into atoms of inward-looking and self-restraint that minimalise their moral responsibilities to the community (Kearns and Forrest, 2000; Putnam, 2000). The

disengaging effect of family obligation is found not only among young parents but among grandparents as well, as commented on by serval survey respondents: 'I do not have time for community issues. I am even busier after retirement as I have to take care of my son/daughter's family, especially his/her children' *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood S, November 5, 2017.)* Notably, the reductive effect of the 'presence of dependent children' on orientation towards collective goals lies in contrast with its facilitative effects on neighbourly ties (Models 1 and 2 in Table 5.3), which implies that dense neighbourly ties (as cultivated among parents within the same neighbourhood) do not necessarily translate into community engagement.

To conclude, the resident survey in Nanjing shows strong neighbourhood effects in terms of the cognitive dimension of cohesion. The characteristics of the sampled neighbourhoods, particularly the type of neighbourhood, play a significant role in explaining the variations in individuals' subjective evaluation of neighbourliness. To be more specific, controlling for individual socioeconomic characteristics, the sampled commodity housing estates with the most satisfactory neighbourhood environment score the highest in attachment-related questions, much higher than traditional neighbourhoods and affordable neighbourhoods. This observation confirms existing studies arguing for a change in sources of neighbourhood attachment, from neighbourly contacts to satisfaction with the living environment (Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012; Liu, Zhang et al., 2017b). The survey also reveals that residents in the sampled commodity neighbourhoods are less trusting and less willing to help neighbours in need than those in privatised work units. The high levels of trust and reciprocity discovered in the sampled privatised work units indicate that the traditional practices to organise neighbourhood life inherited from the work-unit era still apply, at least partly, to privatised work units. The observations in the sampled privatised work units offer a counter-argument to the assertion that urbanisation and modernisation will inevitably bring a 'loss of community' and a 'crisis of cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001).

5.5   Conclusion

Based on the resident survey conducted in 2017–2018, this chapter provides a comprehensive description of the geography of neighbourhood cohesion (in terms of neighbourly ties, community participation, and neighbourhood sentiment) in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. By examining the extent to which cohesion is territorialised in the different sampled neighbourhoods, I revisited the cohesion debate in the context of Nanjing, and answered the first research question: *How is neighbourhood cohesion distributed in different neighbourhoods in urban China, taking the city of Nanjing as an example?*

Descriptive and regression analyses present a complicated picture of neighbourhood cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. The varying degrees of territorialised cohesion are reflections of the varying extents to which communities (as social units) remain within the sampled neighbourhoods (as spatial units), which provides answers of both 'yes' and 'no' to the question of whether the claim of 'crisis of cohesion' applies to the case of Nanjing or not. The answer 'yes' is supported by evidence collected in most commodity neighbourhoods, where loose and fluid neighbourly ties and extended personal networks replace tightly-knit neighbourly ties and traditional territorialised methods of social organisation—supporting the 'community liberated' argument (Wellman, 1979, 1996). The answer 'no' is upheld by some other observations, in which the 'community-saved' argument is supported by the relatively dense networks preserved in affordable neighbourhoods and privatised work units, active political participation in commodity neighbourhoods, and high levels of trust and reciprocity in privatised work units. Taking both answers together, I argue that territorial forms of cohesion can still be found in various types of urban neighbourhoods in commodified China (not just affordable neighbourhoods with dense neighbourly ties). Rather than reinforcing assertions of 'community liberated' (Wellman, 1979, 1996) and a 'crisis of social cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001), urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing have undergone a transformation of territorial communities and local forms of social cohesion, resulting in development of behavioural and cognitive cohesion across the sampled neighbourhoods.

More importantly, the development of neighbourhood cohesion is unevenly distributed across different types of neighbourhoods. The heterogeneous distribution of neighbourhood cohesion also manifests differently for different dimensions of cohesion. Compared with the sampled commodity neighbourhoods, the sampled affordable neighbourhoods host more neighbourhood interactions and develop more social ties within the neighbourhood, most of which are associated with kinship networks among on-site relocators—indicating a high level of behavioural cohesion. They also contain more welfare-oriented participation (c.f. the interest-oriented participation and recreational-oriented participation that are widely documented in Western literature) than other types of neighbourhoods, suggesting the diversification of participatory cohesion. Relatively high levels of neighbourly interactions were also found in the sampled privatised work units in Nanjing, compared with sampled commodity neighbourhoods. They are also home to trusting neighbourly relations, showing the socialist legacy of the work unit era (Huang and Low, 2008). As for the sampled commodity neighbourhoods, a dual identity is found: on the one hand, they are home to weak, loose, and fluid social ties, indicating a low level of behavioural cohesion. On the other hand, they also host frequent political participation (high levels of participatory cohesion) and exhibit strong environment-oriented neighbourhood attachment (high levels of cognitive

cohesion). Commodity neighbourhoods would, therefore, be viewed as 'mediate communit[ies]' (Guest, 2000), where the decline of neighbourly ties does not imply an inevitable demise of territorially based communities and neighbourhood cohesion.

There are two more points worth considering about the development of neighbourhood cohesion. First, while empirical evidence collected in Nanjing corresponds mostly to existing studies on a single dimension of cohesion, such as neighbourly trust (Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017a), neighbourhood attachment (Yip, 2012), and neighbourly interactions (Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2016), comparisons across dimensions of cohesion indicate that neighbourly interactions, community participation, and neighbourhood sentiment are distributed differently across the sampled neighbourhoods, and are associated with covariates in different ways. Treating the three dimensions as one overall score of neighbourhood cohesion, or focusing on one dimension and ignoring the others, masks these crucial differentiations across neighbourhoods. This is why I reported findings from the three dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion separately. The coexistence of the three dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion calls for a pluralistic analytical approach towards neighbourhood cohesion, which is a fundamental departure from the simplistic methodology applied widely in existing neighbourhood research in China.

Second, it is worth noting that I cannot make strong statements about the direction of the causal arrows with the cross-sectional data collected in the Nanjing survey. It is likely that a person's neighbourly behaviours are influenced by the type of neighbourhood in which they reside—the neighbourhood effect (Sampson, Morenoff and Gannon-Rowley, 2002), but it is also possible that they self-select into neighbourhoods that better cater to their tastes and preferences, and that people who are similar to each other make similar housing choices—the homophily effect (Mcpherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001). However, the problem of self-selection is limited in work units and some affordable housing estates, where housing choices are not made entirely by the homeowners. Instead, housing is allocated to them as welfare by their work units or local authorities. The self-selection mechanism is stronger in commodity housing estates than in other neighbourhoods, but it remains unclear how strong the selection bias would be, and, more importantly, whether a person's neighbourly behaviours are associated with the determinants of their housing choices, such as affordability, job opportunities, and preferences for public goods (Li and Li, 2006; Wu, Edensor and Cheng, 2018).

The following chapters (Chapters 6, 7, and 8) will set out to explore the political process of cohesion building. In the next chapter, I will discuss the major governance arrangements discovered in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, through which different neighbourhood organisations work differently towards cohesive neighbourhoods.

Chapter 6 Beyond the state-society-market trichotomy: four modes of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing[14]

It has been widely acknowledged that organisational environment contributes to the emergence of social connectedness and social cohesion (Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993), but limited attention has been paid to how such correlations vary across local regimes due to variations in neighbourhood organisational environment. To explore these variations, in this chapter I will classify and describe the major types of neighbourhood governance arrangements in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, which is both an ordinary city (Robinson, 2006), deserving of more attention from urban studies, and a prototypical city (Brenner, 2003), deserving of attention because of its role as precursor in the development of neighbourhood governance within the context of urban China.

Drawing on fieldwork in 32 sampled neighbourhoods, I will base the discussion on what happened in the sampled neighbourhoods 'on the ground' rather than what is hypothesised by theory. By identifying multiple rationales and examining organisational relationships and governance practices, I will develop four governance modes to describe and distinguish different types of neighbourhood organisational environment, in which neighbourhood social behaviours and sentiment are cultivated, sustained, or damaged in multiple ways (which will be discussed in Chapter 7). The varied forms of governance arrangement will not be examined with existing frameworks focusing on dominant actors (the state, the society, and the market) since such frameworks fail to provide distinguishable outcomes (Wei, 2008) due to a lack of attention to 'ordinary' actors and their interrelationships in local contexts. Instead, the governance arrangements will be examined with an action-based framework that develops from the actor-based framework and incorporates governance rationales (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008) and local contextual factors. The action-based framework will take into account both the structure of governance (i.e. key neighbourhood actors and their interrelationships) and the process of governance (i.e. essential governance practices and actors involved), and present a holistic landscape of how neighbourhoods are politically constructed in multiple possible ways in urban Nanjing.

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The following sections will be structured as follows: the chapter will start with a brief introduction of the action-based framework of neighbourhood governance, including where it originates and how it works, to classify the sampled neighbourhoods into four types. Following the introductory section, I will investigate in detail how each type of governance is organised, focusing on different rationales, institutional designs, inter-organisational relationships, and governance practices. The major characteristics of each type of neighbourhood governance arrangement will be explained with evidence from interviews with community workers, volunteers, and participants of neighbourhood organisations, and residents' representatives in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing.

6.1   The typology of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing

Consubstantial with the development of residential regimes, the last three decades have seen the rise and diversification of neighbourhood governance in urban China, dealing with multiple actors, complex structures, and complicated relationships in the collective decision-making and/or public service delivery process in neighbourhood spaces (Durose and Lowndes, 2010). In this section, I will propose an action-based framework to systematically capture and depict the multiplicity of neighbourhood governance in urban Nanjing. This framework originates from three sources: the first source is the actor-based framework that has been widely used in existing Chinese community studies, the second source is the rationale-based framework proposed by Lowndes and Sullivan (2008) based on the English experience, and the last source is empirical evidence collected in my fieldwork in Nanjing.

As discussed in Chapter 3, existing frameworks for neighbourhood governance in urban China have tended to focus on which actor is dominant – what might be termed the 'who' question, and whether they are the RC (representing local state), the HOA (representing the society), or the PMC (representing the market). The three actors are assimilated by Li (2002) into 'three carriages' (p.15) that pull neighbourhood governance (as the horse) in different directions. They constitute a tripartite actor-based classification of neighbourhood governance arrangements. The state-society-market triad has been widely adopted in Chinese literature on the subject. For example, drawing on the state-society paradigm, Wei (2003) classifies China's urban neighbourhoods into three types based on the impetus of neighbourhood development: government-led administrative governance, society-led self-governance, and a combination of the two—cooperative governance. She believes that the latter two types represent the direction of community development and will gradually replace the government-led type. Wei's classification is widely endorsed by Chinese scholars, such as Liu (2006), Zhang (2006), Wang and Li (2008), and Xia (2012). Drawing on the Shenzhen experience, Zeng (2007) introduces neighbourhood

enterprises (e.g. property manage companies) into the typology and therefore classifies neighbourhoods according to whether their governance is state-led, society-led, or market-led. This classification has been popular in explanations of a variety of neighbourhood phenomena in urban China, such as the rise of the HOA (Chen, 2013), the production of new urban spaces (He and Lin, 2015), and the delivery of neighbourhood services (Ge, 2019). On this basis, Ge and Li (2016) and Li (2017) further include the role of experts and think tanks in the discussion, and develop the framework into quadripartite: government-led, market-led, society-led, and scholar-led mode.

An alternative framework of neighbourhood governance can be found in the work of Lowndes and Sullivan (2008), which moves discussions beyond the dominant actors and towards the nature of neighbourhood governance. Drawing on the English case, but also on political economy theories of more general relevance, they identify four rationales for neighbourhood governance: the civic rationale (emphasising voice and choice), the political rationale (centring on accountability and responsiveness), the economic rationale (focusing on efficiency and effectiveness), and the social rationale (promoting joined-up local actions). These rationales are the guiding principles for neighbourhood practices towards good neighbourhood governance. Compared with the actor-based framework, the rationale-based framework delves deeper into the 'how' question, i.e. how good neighbourhood governance can be achieved and exercised.

The multiple rationales remind us of the multiple possible approaches by which neighbourhood governance can be organised. In each approach, neighbourhood practices are organised under different principles, which control the different actions of different neighbourhood organisations in different local contexts. Corresponding to the four rationales, Lowndes and Sullivan classify neighbourhood practices into four types and propose four ideals modes of neighbourhood governance accordingly. *Neighbourhood empowerment* is motivated by the civic rationale and focuses on participation and voice. Empowerment is achieved through specially designed participatory mechanisms, which pass more political power to individuals and enable them to exercise greater 'choice' and 'voice' over local service delivery (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008; Durose and Rees, 2012). *Neighbourhood government* is propelled by the political rationale and focuses on representation and accountability. The physical proximity makes residents better informed and able to monitor governance process and outcomes in the locality and is thus more likely to strengthen existing grassroots governments (such as parish and town councils in the UK and RCs in urban China). *Neighbourhood partnership* is motivated by the social rationale and focuses on partnerships and collective decision making. Partnership is established through the involvement of citizens and multiple stakeholders in governance, which forms strategic alliances between service providers and decision makers, promotes collective decision making and boosts

innovation in service delivery (Atkinson, 1999). *Neighbourhood management* is motivated by the economic rationale and focuses on efficient and effective service delivery. By referring to 'management', this mode of governance focuses on the local organisation, supervision, and delivery of core urban services (Power and Bergin, 1999), and can be viewed as a 'neo-liberal roll-out strategy' (Griggs and Roberts, 2012, p.185). With management practices, local communities are able to identify the opportunities and constraints of both markets and local consumers and realise the benefits of 'bundling' services.

Insight was also drawn from the empirical evidence collected during the fieldwork in Nanjing. Diverse governing practices and hybrid forms of governance were observed in the sampled neighbourhoods. However, the multiplicity of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing cannot be fully explained through the lens of the 'dominant actor' or 'governance rationale'. On the one hand, if I were to classify the observed governance arrangements according to whether they were led by the state (e.g. RCs), or by the society (e.g. HOAs), or by the market (e.g. PMCs), I would find that most sampled neighbourhoods would fall into the state-led or market-led groups, leaving almost no neighbourhoods that are purely self-governed. This is because the state-society-market paradigm, as Wei (2008) has noted, fails to distinguish adequately between different neighbourhoods. It only takes into account variations in the dominant organisations but overlooks 'ordinary' organisations and their roles, actions, and interrelationships in the ongoing process of neighbourhood governance (Sun and Guo, 2000; Gui, 2008). For instance, my observations in Nanjing show that PMC-led governance operated in different ways in neighbourhoods with HOAs (even where the HOA played a marginal role) than in those without HOAs. More importantly, when analysing the different methods of governance in the neighbourhoods mentioned above, I find that the persistence of the local state is not necessarily contradictory with the deployment of market instruments and the rise of civic organisations. The boundaries between the state, the society, and the market are not as 'monolithic' (He, 2006) as intended. Instead, a variety of governing techniques which I discovered in the sampled neighbourhoods shed light on multiple possible interactions among the state, the society, and the market on the local level. Existing studies have already documented a variety of these interactions, such as the 'state in society' (Zhang, 1998), 'contingent cooperation' (He, 2007), 'administrative absorption of society' (Kang, Lu and Han, 2008), 'mobile public spaces' (Zhu, 2010), 'the developmental state' (Nee, Opper and Wong, 2007) and 'state entrepreneurialism' (Wu and Phelps, 2011).

On the other hand, if the rationale-based classification is applied, a number of the sampled neighbourhoods (particularly affordable and traditional neighbourhoods maintained by local state agencies) cannot fit into any categories, since they are neither triggered by efficiency and effectiveness nor are they concerned about voice and choice or accountability. This inapplicability

is due to the fact that the rationale-based normative framework originates mostly from liberal democracies, where neighbourhood governance is exercised in ways that are often, if not always, different from those in urban China, particularly those operating under the political rationale (Yip, 2014). One significant differentiation between the West and China lies in neighbourhood institutions, especially those related to the state. In the UK, for instance, the state does not penetrate much into the most local level of urban life. Decision-making power and service delivery responsibilities are concentrated mostly in town halls and parish councils on the city or sub-city level (Wills, 2016b), albeit that there have been some devolutionary attempts to transfer power downwards to neighbourhoods in recent years. Community-based organisations are left mainly to survive on their own, although they sometimes receive a helping hand from the government (Read, 2014). In urban China, however, scholars argue that state power exists almost everywhere on the grassroots level—not only in the widespread neighbourhood institutional infrastructure (e.g. the RC) but in state-sponsored community-based organisations and market institutions (Ohmer, 2007; Heberer, 2009; Tomba, 2014).

Since existing frameworks fail to provide a satisfactory explanation for the empirical study in Nanjing, it is necessary to explore a new framework of neighbourhood governance. Drawing on the actor-based framework, the new framework should provide more distinguishable outcomes by not only focusing on dominant actors and their 'sovereign' acts, but also considering other less-powerful actors in local governance networks and how these actors operate collectively to organise collective consumption within the neighbourhood space (Castells, 1977; Deng, 2003a). Drawing on the rationale-based framework, the new framework should realise the multiplicity of governance arrangements that are contextualised, and take into consideration the China-specific factors that shape the approaches towards good neighbourhood governance, such as the penetration of local state into the grassroots level and the wider spread of neighbourhood institutional infrastructures.

Taking both points together, I propose an action-based classification of neighbourhood governance. This typology not only addresses the 'who' question by specifying key actors involved in the governance network but also considers the 'how' question by classifying key actions in neighbourhood governance and identifying the actors that are responsible for each action in each neighbourhood respectively. Rather than focusing on the 'actors' themselves, whether they are the state, the society, or the market, this framework centres on the specific 'actions' and 'roles' (Sun and Guo, 2000; Gui, 2008) these actors perform in the ongoing process of neighbourhood governance—since the same actors may take on different roles, and the same actions may be carried out by different actors in different neighbourhoods. These actions and roles are not sporadic, unlike in research based on single-case studies (e.g. Sun and Guo, 2000; Gui, 2008;

Zhang, 2009; Zhu, 2010; Guo and Shen, 2012; Jiang and Liang, 2018). Instead, they can be classified into two general types: the organisation of collective decision making, and the delivery of collective goods (Chen, 2016), since neighbourhood governance is defined as a process dealing with actors, structures, and relationships in the collective decision-making and/or public service delivery process in neighbourhood spaces (Durose and Lowndes, 2010). Therefore, 'which actor makes collective-decisions' and 'which actor provides collective goods' are included as the two indices in the classification. For the index of 'decision maker', the sampled neighbourhoods are classified into three types by whether neighbourhood collective decisions are made by the homeowners as a collective (e.g. through the HA, HOA or SMA, Column 2), by individual homeowners (Column 3), or by the local government representing residents (Column 4). For the index of 'service provider', the sampled neighbourhoods are classified into three types by the main provider of key neighbourhood services, including the PMC (Row 2), the HOA (Row 3) and the RC/SO (Row 4). The action-based classification is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 An action-based framework for classifying neighbourhood governance arrangements

Decision maker / Service provider	Homeowners (as a collective)	Homeowners (as individuals)	Homeowners (represented by the local government)
PMC	Neighbourhood partnership (Type 1)	Neighbourhood management (Type 2)	Neighbourhood government (Type 3)
HOA	Neighbourhood empowerment (Type 4)	-	-
RC/SO	Neighbourhood government (Type 3)		

Four modes of neighbourhood governance arrangement are identified and presented in Table 6.1 An action-based framework. *Neighbourhood partnership* can be found in neighbourhoods where collective consumption is organised by the HOA, which contracts out neighbourhood service provision to the PMC. All the sampled neighbourhoods which fit into this mode are commodity neighbourhoods. *Neighbourhood management* is developed from neighbourhoods where there is no effective self-governing mechanism for collective decision making, and individual homeowners have to act on their own to negotiate with the market institution about neighbourhood services in commodity neighbourhoods. *Neighbourhood empowerment* originates from neighbourhoods where the HOA takes full control of the collective consumption process and acts both as the primary decision maker and the service provider in the neighbourhood. The sampled neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode can either be traditional neighbourhoods or privatised work units. *Neighbourhood government* strengthens the role of the local state agency,

which is both a representative of residents and a provider of public services. This mode of governance is observed mostly in the sampled traditional and affordable neighbourhoods, as well as some privatised work units in Nanjing.

It is worth noting that, once an HOA is established, the Nanjing case reveals that collective decisions are not likely to be made by either individual homeowners or the representative government any more (as shown by the two blank cells in Row 3). Equally, once the property management responsibility is handed over to the local government (e.g. the RC or the SO), it is also less likely that homeowners in these neighbourhoods, whether in terms of collectives or individuals, will act as a genuine representative of themselves (as shown by the merged cells in Row 4). This is because HOAs in these neighbourhoods, as indicated by the Nanjing case, are in close relations with local state agencies in terms of financial, administrative, and personal links (such as in Neighbourhood C, D, W, and WT).

A detailed description of the key features of the four modes of neighbourhood governance is presented Table 6.2. In the rest of this section, neighbourhood governance in Nanjing will be examined with this framework. It is demonstrated to work well in making sense of both general trends and common characteristics, and the diversity and complexity of neighbourhood governance in the city.

Table 6.2 Key features of the four modes of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing

	Neighbourhood partnership	Neighbourhood management	Neighbourhood empowerment	Neighbourhood government
Primary rationale	Social: stakeholder cooperation	Economic: improving neighbourhood service	Civic: strengthening self-governance	Political: social stability
Main approaches	Bringing together key service providers and decision makers for collaboration	Empowering frontline managers	Citizens' active participation	Welfare provision and intensive RC-resident interactions
Actors' primary roles				
Residents' Committee (RC)	Designed as a broker and coordinator (but often marginalised or in conflict with the HOA, and/or sometimes in cooperation with the PMC)	The monitor, coordinator (limited), sometimes in cooperation with the PMC	The animator and co-producer	The service provider (as welfare), patron or co-producer
Property management company (PMC)	The service provider and manager of collective properties	The service provider, manager of collective properties, social entrepreneur	No commercial PMCs	The State-sponsored service provider
Homeowners' Association (HOA)	The collective decision maker (representing homeowners), implementer and (limited) monitor of the PMC	No HOA or dormant HOA	The collective decision maker and implementer, and service provider manager of collective properties in some neighbourhoods	No HOA or dormant HOA
Homeowners	Consumers and decision makers (indirect, as voters for the HOA)	Consumers, direct decision makers, negotiators with and monitors of the PMC	Consumers and decision makers (indirectly, as voters for the HOA)	Consumers and voters (for the RC)
Institutional designs	Joint conferences and double-edged governance networks based on property management contracts and homeowners' conventions	Multi-edged governance networks based on property management contracts, and negotiations between homeowners and PMC	Deliberative councils and self-governing organisations, (horizontal integration of property manage functions)	Local state agencies and co-production with local volunteers (vertical integration of property manage functions)

	Neighbourhood partnership	Neighbourhood management	Neighbourhood empowerment	Neighbourhood government
Example neighbourhoods in Nanjing[a] (neighbourhood types in parenthesis)	Neighbourhoods B, J, T, and Y (commodity neighbourhoods)	Neighbourhoods F, H, JC, R, S, and Q (commodity neighbourhoods)	Neighbourhoods A and W (traditional neighbourhoods), Neighbourhoods D, G, and X (privatised work units)	Neighbourhoods DS, GT, and YX (traditional neighbourhoods), Neighbourhood BS, JM, and N (affordable neighbourhood), and Neighbourhood SY (privatised work unit)

Note: a) In this table, I only present the sampled neighbourhoods that fit the most closely to these ideal types of neighbourhood governance arrangement. I have

analysed other sampled neighbourhoods but did not include them in the table because they are less typical of particular modes of governance.

There are four caveats on this typology. First, it is worth noting that what Table 6.2 presents are ideal types of neighbourhood governance arrangement. These ideal types capture the essential characteristics of local institutional arrangements and help to put the 'messiness' of local practices into order (Griggs and Roberts, 2012). By accentuating one or more common points in the synthesis of 'a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena' (Weber, 1997, p.90), ideal models are different from 'working models' that correspond to all characteristics of some particular cases. They also differ from moral ideals, since they describe possible configurations of social and power relations in highly abstract, logically coherent, and objectively feasible ways (Jessop, 2012).

Second, as discussed in the earlier part of this section, certain modes of governances are more likely to be found in some types of neighbourhoods (Table 6.3). For instance, the partnership and the management modes of governance tend to concentrated in sampled commodity neighbourhoods, where one is less likely to find any empowered neighbourhood institutions. Instead, the empowerment mode is more likely to operate in traditional neighbourhoods and privatised work units where neighbourhood services are provided indirectly by a civic organisation rather than a market institution.

Table 6.3 The relationship between governance mode and neighbourhood type

Governance mode / Neighbourhood type	Neighbourhood partnership	Neighbourhood management	Neighbourhood empowerment	Neighbourhood government
Traditional neighbourhood			+	+
Privatised work unit			+	+
Commodity housing estate	+	+		
Affordable neighbourhood				+

Note: '+' indicates that the corresponding governance mode can be found in at least one sampled neighbourhood of that particular neighbourhood type.

Notably, as Table 6.3 reveals, the relationships between governance modes and neighbourhood types are not linear. One cannot simply attribute governance characteristics (e.g. whether neighbourhood service is provided by the PMC or local state agency) to housing status of her neighbourhood (e.g. whether she lives in a traditional neighbourhood, privatised work unit, commodity housing estate or affordable neighbourhood), since one type of neighbourhood may fit into more than one possible modes of governance, and one mode of governance may correspond to multiple types of neighbourhood. Housing type alone cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for the diverse governing practices and hybrid forms of governance found in the sampled neighbourhoods. Instead, it is one among the many deciding factors of governance

arrangement. I, therefore, decide to use 'governance mode' instead of 'neighbourhood type' in the following analysis.

Third, the classification is neither static nor mutually exclusive, since the neighbourhood is a multifaceted entity situated in open, multi-scaled governance networks shaped by internal dynamics and external forces. Governance of the neighbourhood may fit into one modes at the one time, and evolve into different modes in the future. Therefore, I only include the sampled neighbourhoods that fit the closest to these types in the following discussion. Other sampled neighbourhoods were not included in Table 1 because they were less typical of particular modes of governance at the time of the fieldwork.

Fourth, it is also worth noting that a tracing methodology of comparison (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2017) is adopted in this research instead of the traditional 'compare and contrast' logic. Based on prior knowledge developed during the pilot study, I focus on the distinctive governing processes in each type of neighbourhood. By tracing how relevant actors—RCs, HOAs, PMCs, and homeowners—interact in the governing processes, I compare the roles of different actors in different governance arrangements, including comparing across the processes of how these governance arrangements are developed and connected. From these comparisons, I am able to make inferences about the sources of variations within the processes of neighbourhood governance, and further investigate how a similar phenomenon—the transformation of state-society-market relationship—unfolds in different geographical locations that are 'socially produced' (Massey, 2005) and 'complexly connected' (Tsing, 2011).

6.2   Neighbourhood partnership

In theories of networked governance (Rhodes, 1996) and collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash, 2008), neighbourhood partnership would be the ideal mode of neighbourhood governance. Multiple actors are included in the governance network, including local political institutions (e.g. RCs), commercial organisations (e.g. PMCs), and civil society groups (e.g. HOAs)—see Figure 6.1. These actors engage in neighbourhood governance with some degree of autonomy and form a strategic relationship. They work towards common goals—both service and power-oriented—within an institutional structure emphasising coordination, partnership, and reciprocal exchange.
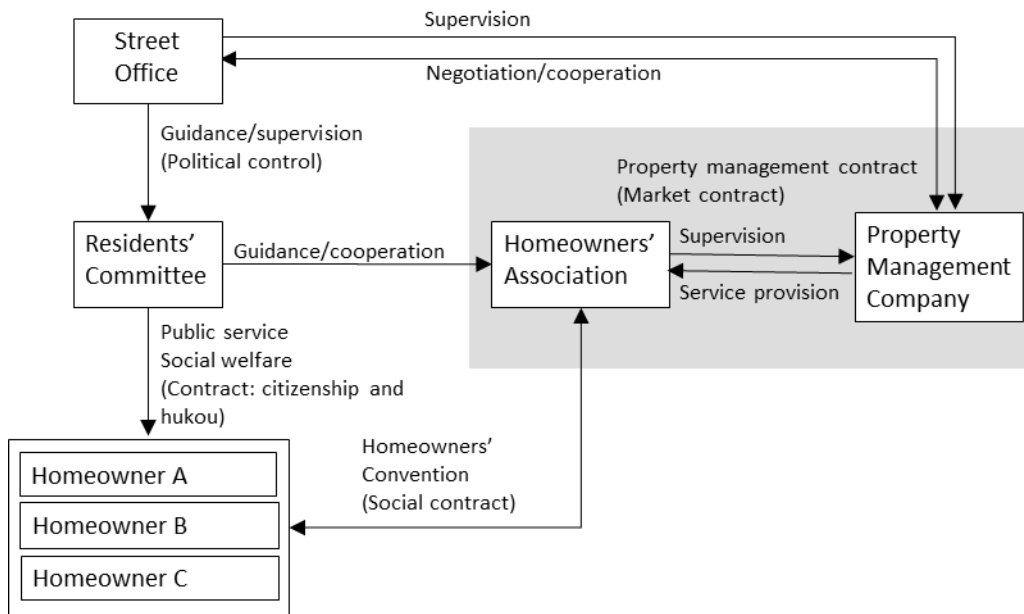
Figure 6.1 Neighbourhood partnership

According to theories of network governance and state-society synergy, the strategic alliance between mobilised citizens, responsible market institutions, and local state agencies have the potential to enhance each other's developmental efforts in collaboration (Evans, 1996). A central partnership in the collaboration is founded and maintained between the key service provider (usually the PMC) and the key collective decision maker (usually the HOA) (the grey box in Figure 6.1). This partnership, stabilised by formal contracts and informal social networks, works to constrain the competitive behaviours of individual actors and maximise overall interests under the social rationale (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008; Tarko, 2015). Furthermore, other advantages can also be found in the neighbourhood partnership mode. For instance, a platform for participation is provided by the HOA. Ideally, civic participation and collective decision making through the HOA could help homeowners to build relationships linking self-interest and private goods with collective interest and public goods. In addition, service delivery is contracted out to professional PMCs with the capacity to respond effectively to the demands of homeowners.

The Nanjing Regulation of Residential Property Management details nine responsibilities of the HOA, including implementing the decisions and resolutions of the HA or Assembly of Homeowners' Representatives (AHR); appointing and dismissing PMCs on behalf of the HA or AHR; maintaining common properties; and resolving conflicts associated with property management. According to the Regulation, the HOA is designed as the executor of collective decisions made by the HA or AHR. It is also authorised by the homeowners to establish contractual relationships with the PMC. Based on the 'association-member' model proposed by Foldvary (1994), a fully functioning HOA can be interpreted as a form of 'private government' (Gordon, 2004, p.iii) in which public services are provided indirectly by a civic organisation

governed by residents themselves, in order to reduce the associated transaction costs. Therefore, in an ideal partnership mode, a double-edged governance structure is established with the HOA at the centre (Qiu, 2016): the HOA links homeowners together for collective consumption on the one hand, and establishes contractual relationships with the PMC concerning collective goods provision on the other. The two 'edges' of HOA-centred neighbourhood partnership will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

6.2.1 The contractual basis for neighbourhood partnership

Contract management is regarded by many as the most essential step within the collaborative process. The extent to which the market contract is enforced determines the relationship between PMCs and HOAs, which varies considerably across Nanjing's neighbourhoods. In some neighbourhoods, such as Neighbourhoods J and Y, PMCs tend to respond best when external pressures are applied to them by HOAs and state agencies. In the former case, the HOA monitors the performance of the corresponding PMC and has the legal right to dismiss the PMC if it does not meet the expectations of most homeowners (e.g. for service quality, ownership of public facilities, and management of public spaces). This is the most radical approach that can be adopted towards poorly-performing PMCs, but does not always succeed due to the asymmetrical power relations between PMCs and HOAs. As one HOA member commented:

> The HOA is much weaker than the PMC… Theoretically, it is the HOA that supervises the PMC, but in reality, it is challenging to tell the PMC what they should do and should not do. They did not listen to us; sometimes, they even cheated on us… We do not want to take such measures [firing the PMC] if we have better ways to coordinate. *(Interview with an HOA member in Neighbourhood T, October 14, 2017.)*

Regarding pressure applied by state agencies, SOs also supervise property management enterprises. Rectification notices and blacklists are standard measures that SOs adopt to hold PMCs accountable. These measures, however, are regarded by local community workers as 'too soft' and 'too loose': 'we can only send out yellow cards in case of wrong-doings'. *(Interview with the vice party secretary of Neighbourhood J, November 23, 2017.)* These 'yellow cards' have limited capacity to regulate the market institution on an everyday basis.

In some other neighbourhoods, however, emerging neighbourhood conflicts and contentious actions are found, which are often attributed to uncertainty, ineffectiveness, and failure in contract enforcement (Zhu, 2011; Fu, 2015). Contentious actions in Neighbourhood T are an example of this. Interviews with local residents and community workers pieced together the story of how the market contract failed to be enforced through negotiation:

> Our neighbourhood is one of the largest in Nanjing, but the property management
> service used to be one of the worst. There were countless problems, such as sanitation,
> safeguard, elevators, and parking, to name a few. The AT PMC encroached on
> homeowners' interests… We [the HOA] and the Street Office made several attempts to
> negotiate with AT PMC over the past six years, but no satisfactory replies were
> received—the AT PMC still performed poorly. It even refused to withdraw from our
> neighbourhood after the contract was terminated and a new PMC was selected.
> *(Interview with a former HOA member in Neighbourhood T, October 14, 2017.)*

The failure of contract enforcement (both manifested by the PMC's poor performance and its
refusal to withdraw) triggered common grievances and large-scale collective actions in
Neighbourhood T. The strong 'combat power' of angry homeowners in contentious actions
against AT PMC was famous across the city:

> To cope with security guards from the PMC, we [homeowners] built up a team of
> 'guardians of homeowners' (*yezhu huwei dui*) equipped with shields, helmets and vests.
> The equipment was all purchased with the crowdfunding… More than 200 or 300
> homeowners became the 'guardians'… Some 'guardians' made a detour and entered the
> PMC building from the back door. They 'fought' with the PMC security guards with water
> bottles and fire extinguishers… Finally, we called the police, and the AT PMC agreed to
> retreat at the end. *(Interview with resident B in Neighbourhood T, October 14, 2017.)*

The case in Neighbourhood T is not unique—similar contentious actions were observed in other
sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, such as Neighbourhood YY and Neighbourhood Q, albeit that
collective actions in these neighbourhoods were limited in their scales and scope—fewer
homeowners were involved (usually dozens of neighbourhood activists) and rights-defending
activities were less antagonistic (e.g. banner and signature campaigns and appeal to media).

However, by briefly presenting cases of housing disputes in the sampled neighbourhoods, I do not
aim to judge the misbehaviours of PMCs as most existing studies do (Cai and Sheng, 2013; Yip,
2014; Ge and Li, 2016; Wu, 2016b; Xia and Guan, 2017). Instead, the stories in Nanjing
demonstrate a structural deficiency of neighbourhood partnership—the unequal de facto power
relations between the market instrument and the citizen agency. To be more specific, contractual
relationships between the PMC and the HOA, which seem reciprocal following de jure
arrangements (i.e. the PMC provides services on behalf of the HOA and gains legitimacy from the
HOA in return), did not guarantee long-term reciprocal exchanges in some, if not all, the sampled
neighbourhoods. Once the contract has been signed, powers and responsibilities tend to
concentrate in PMCs, as indicated by case studies in Neighbourhood SD, T, and YY. As a

consequence, HOAs become dependent on the willingness of PMCs to hear and respond to their demands and agendas. They lack effective measures to maintain bargaining power in the partnership. Neither through supervision, negotiation, nor collective actions can HOAs exercise effective control over PMCs daily—'the PMC will not listen to us' (Interview with an HOA member in Neighbourhood T, October 14, 2017). The lack of an effective coordination system bestows PMCs with stronger power and a leading position and transforms the governance network into a more-or-less hierarchical one. Private governance in Nanjing is therefore executed by the PMC through the 'commodification of neighbourhood services' (Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2019, p.390), rather than by the HOA as an expansion of shareholder democracy (McKenzie, 2005)—a significant departure from the original meaning of private governance in the Western context.

Notably, within these asymmetrical power relations, some interactions were observed between HOA members and the PMC which were conspiratorial in nature: in Neighbourhood SD, key members of the HOA were asked to speak for the PMC in their annual meetings and got some benefits in return, such as exemption from property management fees and free parking spaces. These conspiratorial interactions, if they were known by ordinary residents, would significantly weaken the reputation of the HOA and threaten the societal basis of neighbourhood partnership—as will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.2 The societal basis for neighbourhood partnership

If there is evidence of conflict between HOAs and PMCs, then there is also evidence of conflict between HOAs and their members (homeowners), which weakens the societal basis of neighbourhood partnership.

The relationships between the HOA and homeowners are governed by a social contract detailing rules to organise collective consumptions and prevent free-riding. However, these contracts are more like voluntary agreements and contain more content about legal practices, collective actions, and shared values than sanctioning procedures in the event of free-riding. Interviewees reported a lack of incentives for good conduct in these contracts and a lack of enforcement in cases of wrongdoing. They also reported a lack of familiarity with the contracts and the responsibilities detailed within them. In this context, much rests on social networks and their potential for generating trust, loyalty, and reciprocity (Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993), which is often lacking, especially in newly established commodity housing estates (see Chapter 5.2 for a detailed discussion).

Moreover, growing heterogeneities among homeowners were observed in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, which made the negotiation and enforcement of social contract even

more difficult. For instance, some homeowners preferred better property management services and were willing to pay more, but others cared more about cost performance. For each group, activists would seek institutional space for articulating their demands, which upgraded heterogeneities among homeowners to the organisational level. These interest-group conflicts, if not dealt with carefully, may evolve into contentious actions and faction politics within the neighbourhood (Shi, 2010; He and Zhong, 2013). One such case is Neighbourhood YY. Below is a brief outline of the contentious activities that happened in the neighbourhood in the past five years. It is provided by the RC director, who maintained a relatively neutral position in the disputes.

> At first, there were two groups of activists in the neighbourhood: one group wanted to fire the old PMC and take over the control of the community centre [which had been rented out by the PMC for many years], and the other supported the PMC as it provided fairly good services. Various actions were taken by both groups, such as signature campaigns, litigation, and appealing to media… After two years' fight, the opposition group—who won the HOA election—finally won the game and hired a new PMC. However, the poor services provided by the new PMC triggered the emergence of a third group who wanted to fire the new PMC, leading to another round of faction fighting. They sued the HOA for illegal bidding behaviours in the PMC switch. Finally, the second PMC was dismissed, and they started to look for another one. *(Interview with the RC director of Neighbourhood YY, November 15, 2017.)*

Disputes among homeowner groups and conflicts between the HOA and homeowners, as observed in Neighbourhood YY, undermine the 'democratic anchorage' of neighbourhood partnership (Sørensen and Torfing, 2007). The democratic disanchorage makes private governance in Nanjing different from a typical private government in the US on a voluntary and democratic basis (Helsley and Strange, 1998; Gordon, 2004). First, the HOA fails to constitute a fair representation of the community—in Neighbourhood YY they only represented the demands of a group of homeowners who were actively engaged in neighbourhood issues and won the HOA election. Other homeowners, as complained by an interviewee in Neighbourhood YY, were 'being passively represented' (November 15, 2017). They would probably stand out and fight against the HOA when they felt their rights were severely infringed by other homeowners, as happened with the third group in Neighbourhood YY. Second, there is currently no effective mechanism to hold the HOA accountable. In Neighbourhood YY, as well as in many other neighbourhoods, I heard lots of complaints about HOAs lacking transparency and accountability, such as 'the HOA has never laid its account open to us' and referring to 'some secret deals between the HOA and the PMC'. (Interview with residents in Neighbourhood B, April 17, 2017.) Even the RC director of

Neighbourhood YY, who was not involved in the 'association-member' relationship, did not speak highly of HOA members: 'Most activists involved in these groups, no matter whether the HOA or other groups, I would say, are selfish and petty scheming. They are only concerned about parochial interests. They do not work for the collective good of the whole community' (November 15, 2017).

6.2.3   RCs in neighbourhood partnership: broker, competitor, or synergy

Given all of these conflicts, the local state attempts to intervene through the RC. According to the national Real Estate Management Regulation, the RC is designed as the 'meta-governor' in the neighbourhood partnership, particularly in relation to the HOA: the HOA should actively cooperate with the RC in performing self-governing duties, support the RC's work and subject itself to the RC's guidance and supervision (Article 20). In reality, however, the RC has become a marginal figure in many neighbourhoods, having withdrawn from direct service provision, and now often lacks administrative resources (Min, 2009; Wang, Yin and Zhou, 2012). As such, the ability of RCs to monitor contracts and arbitrate between other actors tends to be limited, leading to complicated relationships between the RC, the HOA, and the PMC.

Existing studies in China tend to describe relationships between the RC and the HOA as either 'competitive'—competing for power, legitimacy and participation (Read, 2002; Huang, 2014), or 'conflicting'—as collective actions organised by the HOA might be (over)politicised and suppressed by the RC, leading to distrustful relationships between each other (Gui and Ma, 2014). Evidence for such relationships is found in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, where there used to be severe housing disputes, such as in Neighbourhood Y and YY:

> The RC or the SO? I would not turn to those jacks-in-office for help any more. They just sit in their office every day and read newspapers. They do not care whether the PMC encroached our rights. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood Y, January 6, 2018.)*

> Personally speaking, I do not think the HOA is a right way for self-governance. Much more problems are created than solved by them… Many troubles are stirred up because residents only hear about one side of the story, probably made up by someone with ulterior motives in the HOA. *(Interview with the RC director of Neighbourhood YY, November 15, 2017.)*

In other neighbourhoods, however, there is also evidence suggesting that the existence of the state, as well as the institutional platforms it establishes and the rules it enforces, has the potential to increase the efficiency of market institutions and strengthen the civic capacity of the

community. Neighbourhood B is a good example showing how the RC-led institutional platform mitigates neighbourhood disputes and promotes stakeholder collaboration.

> We have established a platform for four-party talks (*sifang pingtai*) on which agencies
> from local government, the PMC, the HOA, and neighbourhood organisations can sit
> down and discuss common issues every month… There are definitely dissenting opinions
> and contradictions between different stakeholders—like in other neighbourhoods.
> However, they can be expressed and discussed in a guided way on the RC-led platform
> for four-party talks. In most cases, consensus can be drawn, and action plans can be
> established, detailing the tasks and responsibilities of each stakeholder… This is much
> more efficient than other means of coordination. *(Interview with the RC director of
> Neighbourhood B, March 28, 2017.)*

The joint conference, as an institutionalised form of cooperation, can be seen as an extension of Evans's (1996) theory of state-society synergy: a facilitating government (in terms of the RC), a responsible market institution (in terms of the PMC) and a mobilised community (in terms of the HOA and other neighbourhood organisations) can mutually enhance each other's developmental efforts, as described by the vice party secretary of Neighbourhood J:

> Most issues raised at the joint meeting cannot be dealt with by the HOA or the PMC
> alone, such as the reallocation of parking spaces and the management of the
> commercial street… Sometimes the plan proposed by the HOA is too radical or idealistic;
> the RC will then help the HOA to revise the plan to avoid potential problems in
> implementation… Sometimes the PMC lacks the enforcement power to deal with illegal
> construction, and the RC will ask the urban management department to come and help.
> *(Interview with the vice party secretary of Neighbourhood J, November 23, 2017.)*

The interdependency and mutual enhancement are summarised by the secretary in three 'withouts':

> Without the RC, neither the HOA nor the PMC can carry out community work smoothly.
> Without the HOA, neither the RC nor the PMC can win support from the residents.
> Without the PMC, neither the RC nor the HOA can handle property management works
> in such a large housing estate. *(Interview with the vice party secretary of Neighbourhood
> J, November 23, 2017.)*

The administrative support from the RC, democratic support from the HOA and the managerial support from the PMC constitutes a solid basis for the 'state-society-market' synergy.

It is worth noting that the synergy in Neighbourhood J also symbolises a new return of the state in neighbourhood governance. This return differs from previous community building projects in the sense that party-building and state-building are incorporated into existing channels of neighbourhood service delivery run by the private sector. Under the banner of 'providing neighbourhood services through community-level party-building' (*dangjian yinling shequ fuwu*) (ibid), the party-state reconsolidates its grassroots engagement through co-production of neighbourhood collective goods with PMCs. Engagement of this kind was highly institutionalised in Neighbourhood J. As shown by my interviews, at least one PMC manager was appointed as the RC board member and all 'butlers' (*wuye guanjia*) act as monitoring agents (*wangge yuan*) who helped local authorities to collect neighbourhood information in the RC's 'management grids' (*wangge*).

To sum up, this section has described the neighbourhood partnership mode of governance as it is found in specific neighbourhoods in Nanjing. In its ideal form, a neighbourhood partnership involves responsible PMCs, active HOAs, cooperative homeowners, and facilitative RCs all acting in partnership to achieve good neighbourhood governance stabilised by both the market contract and the social contract, which is similar to an ideal 'private government' (Helsley and Strange, 1998; Gordon, 2004). In reality, however, neighbourhood partnership in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing was far from the US-style 'private government'. In most sampled neighbourhoods, the partnership deviated from its ideal form if one or more of the actors or relationships in the governance networks were absent or failed to work effectively. If the HOA and external pressures failed to monitor the performance of the PMC effectively, the market institution acquired a dominant position in the governance network, which was hard to regulate. The inclination towards the PMC reflects the commodified nature of private governance in Nanjing (Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2019), and often triggers common grievances and neighbourhood collective actions among homeowners (such as in Neighbourhood T and Y). If homeowners fail to be mobilised by the HOA, or the HOA fails to represent the community, the civic organisation would be disembedded from the community and may evolve into 'a game played within a small group of people' (Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood Y, January 6, 2018), which symbolises neighbourhood elitism rather than self-governance. To address these structural deficiencies, neighbourhood governance may take on alternative forms, which will be discussed in the following three sections.

6.3   Neighbourhood management

The HOA is a central actor in the neighbourhood partnership mode, but a recent survey in Nanjing found that more than half of HOAs were in 'hibernation' (Liang and Xu, 2018). The situation

appears to be the same or worse in other cities. Less than 10% of HOAs were found to be active in Shanghai (Wang, 2014). On top of this, many neighbourhoods do not have an HOA at all—whether active or inactive. In Nanjing, it is thought that only 47% of residential communities are covered by HOAs (He and Wang, 2015). In neighbourhoods without active HOAs, the neighbourhood management mode of governance can be found.

In the neighbourhood management mode, the PMC becomes the key actor in neighbourhood governance. It provides services—property maintenance but also security in poorer neighbourhoods, housekeeping in more affluent neighbourhoods, and much else in between—and takes responsibility for the effectiveness and efficiency of service provision. These services can be viewed as 'clubbed goods' available exclusively to the homeowners who buy into the neighbourhood (Webster, 2003; Wu, 2005). The relationship between the PMC and homeowners is a direct one between the service provider and consumers (Figure 6.2). It is not one-to-one, as when the PMC works in partnership with the HOA. Instead, it is one-to-many—with homeowners needing to perform numerous roles, from consumer (of services), to negotiator (of contracts), to monitor (of PMC performance).
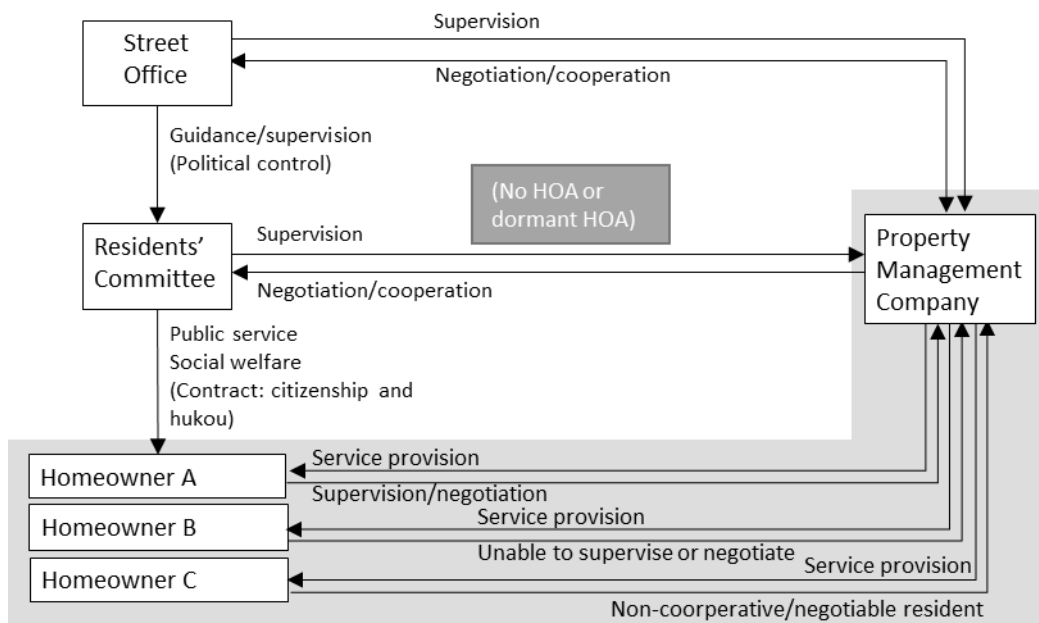
Figure 6.2 Neighbourhood management

The one-to-many relationships between the service provider and consumers in the neighbourhood management mode have been criticised for their low efficiency (Chen and Webster, 2005, Lo, 2013). While a transaction must happen only once between a PMC and an HOA, it must happen many times between a PMC and multiple homeowners. With every additional transaction comes additional costs. In the Nanjing study, I found that PMCs found it

challenging to deal with free-riders, and especially homeowners who failed to pay their property management fees. Conversely, homeowners found it difficult as individuals to govern the performance of PMCs, lacking as they did the information and other resources often available to homeowners collectively organised into HOAs.

6.3.1 Responsible PMCs and effective management

Only under rare circumstances are residents able to hold the PMC accountable in the one-to-many relations. The only case found in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing was Neighbourhood S, where the PMC had been providing 'fairly good' services at a comparatively 'low price' for ten years in the absence of the HOA (Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood S, 05 November 2017.) Both a responsible PMC and responsible homeowners were found in this neighbourhood:

> Our PMC is a big brand and provides relatively good services. For example, it did a particularly good job in the recent door-replacement project. The company invested more than 3 million CNY [approximately £342k] and did not ask us [residents] to pay for the new doors…The property fee is quite low compared with other neighbourhoods of the same level… We are all happy to pay for it. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood S, November 5, 2017.)*

The PMC's substantial investment in neighbourhood management indicates that its managerial practices do not seem to be motivated directly by profit-making. Indeed, these practices are part of its branding strategy, as demonstrated by one employee of the PMC: 'This neighbourhood is the first housing estate we [the PMC] serve in Nanjing. The effective management will enhance the company's reputation in this city and increase its chances of undertaking more management projects' (November 2, 2017).

6.3.2 Varied forms of ineffective management

In other neighbourhoods, however, the one-to-many relationships were hardly ever found to be effective. Interviews with community workers, residents, and PMC managers show that actors in one-to-many relationships often encountered the 'hold-up problem'. This problem, also known as the 'commitment problem', is an essential category in contract theory (e.g. Grossman and Hart, 1986; Ellingsen and Johannesson, 2004). It describes a situation where, in a contractual relationship, one party makes a prior commitment that gives the other party bargaining power, thus positioning the former party as vulnerable to ex-post exploitation, which ultimately is associated with generalised inefficiency and underinvestment. Deng (2002) introduced the hold-

up problem to the study of urban neighbourhoods in China. In his analysis, the consumption of real estate and the consumption of 'territorial collective goods' (Foldvary, 1994) provided by the PMC are bundled together. In such a situation, homeowners can find themselves 'held up' by the service provider. Their needs and desires for services may not be met by the PMC, but the PMC can withstand their complaints, knowing that the homeowners will probably not move away from the neighbourhood for this reason alone (Deng, 2003a, 2009). Such concerns were reported by many residents in different neighbourhoods. For example:

> The PMC is powerful, rude and aggressive. We are homeowners. We hire and pay for it, but it turns out to be the actual 'OWNER' of our estate. We can do nothing but obey its command, as we are less powerful than the company… Moving? I have spent most of my money on this property. I would not consider moving due to PMC problems. If I have more money, I will probably move. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood H, November 25, 2017.)*

Apart from limited ex-post mobility (Deng, 2003b), residents reported that the main reason that they were held up by PMCs was the high transaction cost of searching and information, usually for a replacement PMC, as indicated by the following interview:

> I am not satisfied with the maintenance job the PMC does in the neighbourhood...Well, we [neighbours] have already discussed the possibility of firing the PMC and hiring a new one, but the primary concern is that no one can guarantee the new PMC will do a better job… So most of us are just sitting on the sidelines. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood R, November 5, 2017.)*

Furthermore, the PMCs also complained a lot about being 'held up' by irresponsible homeowners who were 'self-serving' and 'lack[ed] public spirit', especially those refusing to pay the PC fees regularly (Interview with a PMC manager in Neighbourhood Q, January 5, 2018.) A vicious circle of neighbourhood management could often be observed in poorly managed neighbourhoods, as described by the party secretary of Neighbourhood H:

> Homeowners are not satisfied with the service the PMC provides, so they refuse to pay PMC fees. As a consequence, the PMC cannot run normally due to money issues. They will probably lay off employees and lower service standards, which in turn aggravates homeowners' dissatisfaction. There is much to be said on both sides: homeowners complain about poor services, and the PMC complains about the money issue.
> *(Interview with the party secretary of Neighbourhood H, November 23, 2017.)*

Given all these difficulties, it is perhaps surprising that approximately one-third of the neighbourhoods in our sample fitted the neighbourhood management mode of governance. Why should this be so? Collective action theory (e.g. Olson, 1965) proposes that actors in some neighbourhoods may perceive the costs of collective action required by the neighbourhood partnership mode to outweigh the benefits returned to them as individuals. I found some evidence for this in the sampled commodity housing estates, where high individual transaction costs were reported in the establishment and operation of an HOA.

One such transaction cost is the cost of bargaining in the establishment of an HOA. It always takes a long time and great effort for active homeowners to reach an agreement and to draw up the social contract underpinning the HOA (Yau, 2011; Chen, 2013). For some neighbourhoods, such as Neighbourhood Z and Neighbourhood SD, no volunteers could be found who were willing to act as community leaders in organising community self-governing activities (e.g. establishing an HOA). Interviews with ordinary residents in these neighbourhoods show that some residents said they were too busy with their works, leaving little time for meetings and other community issues. Some rented out their houses and no longer lived there. Some acted more like free-riders, who took advantage of collective actions but refused to participate. Others treated HOAs as tokenism, as they did not think HOAs could make any differences to their lives.

Even when some homeowners volunteer to lead the HOA, whether they are accountable community representation (Chaskin, 2003) or effective entrepreneurial leaders (Purdue, 2001) remains questionable. Case studies in Neighbourhood S, H, and YY all pointed out the pervasive dissent among self-elected neighbourhood activists. The following interview presents how motivations varied across neighbourhood activists:

> The main reason that some homeowners want to set up an HOA is that they want to use the maintenance fund, which is a large sum of money [over a hundred million CNY, approximately 11 million pounds]. They argue that the neighbourhood is not in very good condition and they want to use the money for some redesigning and lighting projects. But I don't think so. It is better not to spend this money on trivial issues such as lighting, but to leave it for more substantial things in the future, such as the replacement of elevators and other large electric machines. Otherwise, we won't have enough money for these big projects in the future. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood S, November 5, 2017.)*

The conflicts of interest were even greater among neighbourhood activists in Neighbourhood H, where some homeowners shared a close relationship with the PMC. These homeowners usually opposed the HOA, the establishment of which was seen as a signal of PMC switching. The

existence of such homeowners significantly increased the transaction costs of bargaining, as indicated by the following interview:

> Some homeowners stand for the PMC as they work for it, such as security guards and cleaners. This is part of the government's re-employment policy. We can say nothing about it. But they will definitely oppose the establishment of an HOA, which would challenge their 'rice bowls'… With these hardcore supporters, the PMC's position is hard to challenge. Although we have tried twice, it is almost impossible to win enough votes to establish an HOA. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood H, November 25, 2017.)*

Furthermore, even when homeowners have overcome the transaction cost of bargain and successfully established an HOA, the transaction costs of enforcement are another obstruction of collective action and the development of neighbourhood partnership. The cost of enforcement is associated with attempts to make sure that every actor in the governance network abides by the market contract. However, as discussed at the beginning of this section, both PMCs and homeowners are likely to hold up each other. What is worse, one tends to reduce their contribution to the collective good when others contribute more (Olson, 1965). Apart from these free-riders, a wider group are those who are apathetic about their neighbours and community issues which may not be directly relevant to them, as indicated by the following interview:

> I have been suffering from water leakage for almost a month. I went to the PMC for help, but they said I should apply for the maintenance fund to fix this problem… However, to apply for the maintenance fund, one needs to get all the neighbours in the same building to sign it. How can I do this all by myself? I do not have the energy to persuade all my neighbours to do me such favour… I even don't know most of their names! *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood F, November 5, 2017.)*

The problem of enforcement can hardly be resolved with governmental actors in the neighbourhood management mode—neither the RC nor higher levels of government are subject to 'accountability from below' (Read, 2008, p.15), as they believe that 'social problems are better dealt with by the society itself'. (Interview with the RC director of Neighbourhood H, November 23, 2017.) This reserved attitude was emphasised by the RC director of Neighbourhood Z as well: 'As the RC, we don't have any enforcement power. Nor are we legitimate to intervene in these social tensions among the people. The only thing we can do is to provide a platform for negotiation' (November 17, 2017).

Notably, these conservative attitudes were read by some residents as prevaricating, or even as being supportive of the irresponsible PMCs. More often than not, they complained that their appeals and collective actions—a reflection of their dissatisfaction with the performances of the PMC or developers—were not dealt by local authorities in an even-handed manner. 'They [the RC] just followed the procedure (*zhaozhang banshi*),' complained one resident, 'they won't help you wholeheartedly. They tend to side with the PMC because there is a conspiracy (*youguanxi*) between the PMC and local government' (interview with a resident in Neighbourhood H, November 25, 2017). This 'conspiracy' is interpreted by some scholars as a territory-based coalition between the local authority and selective enterprises (Shi and Cai, 2006; Read, 2008; Fu and Lin, 2014), which is a neighbourhood-based extension of the growth coalition between local government and the developer formed during the real-estate development period (Sun and Huang, 2016). For further discussion of this coalition, see Chapter 7.3.2.

Taking all types of transaction costs into consideration, I find from the case studies that transaction costs for collective actions were usually very high in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, which could hardly be offset by the benefits returned to homeowners as individuals. The high transaction costs indicate the difficulty of organising neighbourhood collective actions and establishing stable neighbourhood partnerships, providing a plausible explanation for why neighbourhood management, given its low effectiveness, is widely spread across the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing.

It is worth noting that a considerable amount of homeowner activism and rights-defending activities (*weiquan*) were observed in the sampled neighbourhoods, indicating the potential for overcoming the problems with collective action. These rights-defending activities, triggered by common grievances from 'focusing events' (Xiong, 2008), targeted a variety of actors and took a wide range of forms, such as negotiation with the local government over flooding issues in Neighbourhood JC, suing the HOA for illegal procedures during the election in Neighbourhood YY, and public demonstration against the poorly performing PMC in Neighbourhood T. But what stops these collective actions from evolving into long-term neighbourhood partnerships? One plausible answer might be the transient and issue-centred nature of the 'focusing events' underlying collective actions (Melucci, 1996; Heckscher and McCarthy, 2014). In Neighbourhood Z, for instance, flooding became a heated topic in the summer of 2016. It triggered a common grievance among homeowners and transformed into a series of collective actions within only two weeks: some volunteers stood out as leaders of each building; they set up online chat groups to collect opinions and signatures of all homeowners for the application of the maintenance fund. They also acted collectively to put pressure on the PMC, which accelerated the pace of road repairs after the flooding. These collective actions, however, failed to be institutionalised into the governance

network. Most chat groups were dissolved soon after the flooding. The only group that remained, commented a resident, 'is nothing more than a space for ads and spam' (December 3, 2017).

6.4   Neighbourhood empowerment

One response to the multiple hold-up problems characteristic of the neighbourhood management mode has been the (re)introduction of HOAs (or other forms of self-governing organisations) and/or strong local government (via SOs) to neighbourhoods, and then institutional integration within neighbourhoods (Deng, 2003b). This can take the form of horizontal integration between PMCs and HOAs (the neighbourhood empowerment mode) or vertical integration between PMCs and SOs (the neighbourhood government mode—see next section).

The neighbourhood empowerment mode is a representation of the civic rationale where voice and choice can be exercised for neighbourhood self-governance and the co-production of collective goods. In the neighbourhood empowerment mode, residents—now including tenants in addition to homeowners (Chen and Webster, 2005)—get to participate in empowered neighbourhood organisations to influence service provision and other aspects of neighbourhood governance, promoting a horizontal integration of decision makers and service providers. In some cases, where the integration is complete, residents may even be involved in providing their collective goods (Figure 6.3).
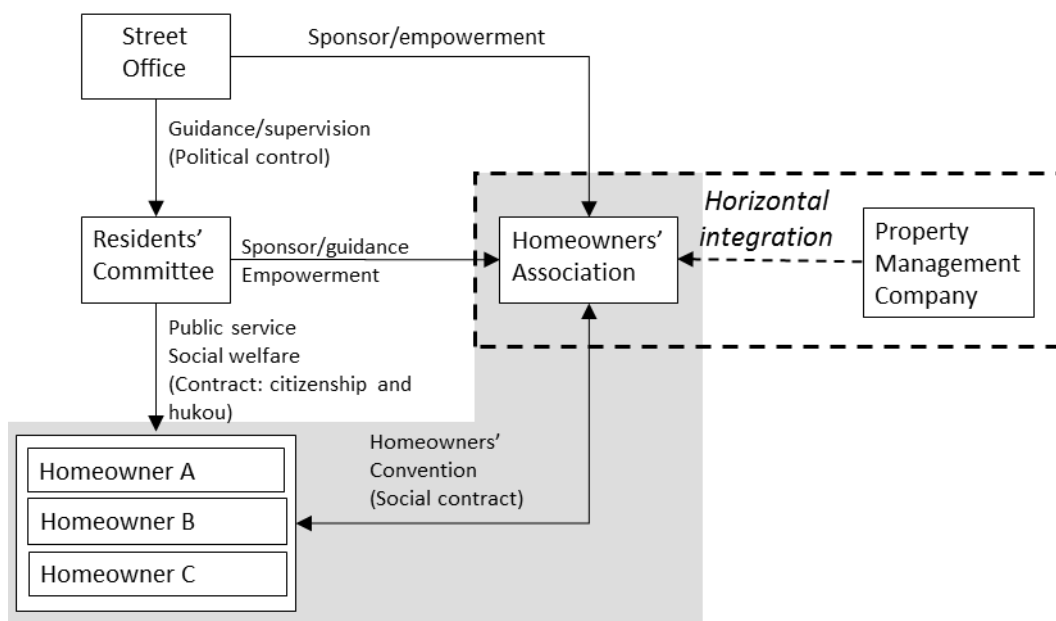
Figure 6.3 Neighbourhood empowerment

Since the community building projects were initiated in the 2000s, the popularity of the neighbourhood empowerment mode has grown and taken a wide range of forms—from RC-led DCs to HOAs and other self-governing organisations. The powers and responsibilities devolved to

these participatory bodies can vary significantly across neighbourhoods, which influences their abilities to promote neighbourhood participation and to enable horizontal integration. Each institutional path will be elaborated in the following parts.

6.4.1   Deliberative engagement: the 'invited space' for empowerment

The last 20 years have seen the establishment of democratic arrangements in neighbourhood governance in Nanjing. A new neighbourhood council system has been established, within which the DC is the primary neighbourhood deliberative agency dealing with neighbourhood indigenous affairs, such as handling public affairs and meditating civil disputes. For different actors within the neighbourhood, the DC provides a regular and reliable platform on which conflicting parties are invited to sit together and negotiate a solution for neighbourhood issues. In some neighbourhoods, a further step has been made under the name of 'union of deliberation and execution' (*yizhi heyi*). In Neighbourhood A, for instance, those who proposed matters during DC meetings were directly responsible for implementing the decisions made by the DC. In this way, some responsibilities which once belonged to the PMC are transferred to the DC (and further to citizens), such as managing neighbourhood properties. The empowered DC can thus be regarded as a form of horizontal integration.

While DCs had been widely established and incorporated into neighbourhood governance systems in most of the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, their effectiveness varied significantly. Institutional design is found to be one of the most critical determinants of effective deliberative governance (Coelho, 2006). Neighbourhood A is representative of the making of 'deliberative governing engagement' (Liu, 2005, p.126), and the interview with its party secretary disentangles the carefully designed deliberative system:

> The governance system was established with the help of a professional consulting company in 2014. Their experts helped us lay down the rules and regulations of deliberation and training local residents in the first year… We kept trying and modifying and finalised the deliberative governance system in 2016. Its major characteristics can be summarised into five 'commons' (*wu chang*): commonly elected representatives [a neighbourhood-wide genuine electoral system] (*daibiao changxuan*), commonly held meetings [regular meetings and discussions] (*huiyi changkai*), commonly opened channels for inquiries and demands (*yijian changti*), commonly organised implementation and supervision (*jiandu changzai*), and commonly arranged neighbourhood activities (*huodong changgao*). *(Interview with the party secretary in Neighbourhood A, March 27, 2017.)*

The five 'commons' indicate that the participatory venues provided by the DC were highly institutionalised in Neighbourhood A, offering formal spaces and 'structured opportunities' for communication, coordination, and consensus-building (Read, 2003). These democratic arrangements worked effectively and generated positive social outcomes within and beyond Neighbourhood A, as demonstrated by the following interview:

> We don't have a formal property management company. Most community issues are discussed in DC meetings. Through this mechanism [the DC], I get to know other representatives in the neighbourhood… We work together to organise community activities at least once a month. While the activities are similar to [those in] other neighbourhoods, such as birthday parties, flea markets, and Spring Festival galas, a lot more residents are involved in our neighbourhood… Those who live in other neighbourhoods sometimes come to our activities as well. I would say they are quite jealous of the cosy and friendly atmosphere in our neighbourhood. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood A, April 8, 2017.)*

Notably, the structured participatory opportunities provided by the DC are difficult to sustain without the support from the RC and local state. Governmental interventions in and support for deliberative engagement take on many forms, including financial resources (e.g. the 'Happiness Fund' in Neighbourhood A), organisational resources ('Our RC workers are also responsible for organising various meetings of the DC, they even work full time for the DC during its election' (Interview with the party secretary in Neighbourhood A, March 27, 2017)), policy support ('Our neighbourhood is selected as the first experimental unit for deliberative governance in District Q' (ibid)), and more importantly, the types and extents of powers and responsibilities devolved to residents. Interviewees reported low take-up by residents of opportunities for discussion, deliberation, and monitoring of other actors (e.g. in Neighbourhood WT), but higher take-up of opportunities for decision making and service provision (e.g. in Neighbourhood A). Therefore, rather than demonstrating 'empowered autonomy' (Liu, 2016, p.61), the DC is indeed an 'invited space' (Cornwall, 2004, p.2) for participation, where citizens and neighbourhood organisations contribute their time, resources, and energy to the collective wellbeing of the community at the behest of the state.

6.4.2 Self-governing organisations: the 'invented space' for empowerment

Apart from state-led empowerment reforms, there are also bottom-up initiatives aiming for deeper civic engagement and better neighbourhood service delivery. This is especially the case in neighbourhoods where a professional PMC is absent or incapable of providing necessary

neighbourhood collective goods. These bottom-up initiatives often take the form of the HOA, such as in Neighbourhood X, or the SMA or other neighbourhood civic groups, such as in Neighbourhood C, D, and W, when the legal requirements for establishing an HOA or recruiting HOA members fail to be satisfied. These empowered self-governing organisations offer participatory opportunities for citizens voluntarily. Compared with the 'invited spaces' created by RC-sponsored DCs, participatory venues provided by neighbourhood civic groups are called 'invented space' (Kersting, 2014, p.270) or 'popular space' (Cornwall, 2004, p.2), where individuals gather for collective actions at their own instigation.

The effectiveness of 'invented' participation via neighbourhood civic groups varied significantly across the sampled neighbourhoods, depending not only on self-organisation, participation, and the exercise of power (Read, 2008) but also on the power and responsibilities devolved to these groups. According to my survey in Nanjing, in some neighbourhoods, SMAs were no more than 'window-dressing' utilities with limited involvement in everyday governing practices, such as in Neighbourhoods N and BS. In some neighbourhoods, such as Neighbourhoods F and JC, civic groups were granted decision-making powers for some neighbourhood issues. In other neighbourhoods, such as Neighbourhoods X and C, there was a further step for self-governance: not only decision making powers but also responsibility for implementing these decisions were transferred to HOAs/SMAs. The functions of HOAs and PMCs were thus horizontally integrated into these empowered civic groups. This integration sets empowered HOAs apart from ordinary HOAs in the neighbourhood partnership mode, as the former acts both as the decision maker and the service provider in the neighbourhood.

The operation of empowered HOAs/SMAs, as indicated by observations in Nanjing, bears some similarities with private governments in the US context (Helsley and Strange, 1998)—both are voluntary and self-financing in nature. These characteristics are demonstrated by the interview with a resident in Neighbourhood X:

> We used to have a PMC, but the services it provided were poor. Then we decided to do it all by ourselves… The self-governance mode is led by the RC and organised by activists (*jiji fenzi*) in the neighbourhood. We had a fundraising campaign for the SMA. Each household was asked to pay 15 CNY a month [approximately £1.80]. That is not much, right? Much cheaper than the PMC fees. We hired two security guards with these fees, and they did pretty a good job and assisted with small maintenance issues. *(October 21, 2017.)*

Local community leaders also spoke highly of the multiple roles of the SMA, as it served as an alternative to public spending by incorporating welfare maximisation in service delivery, and

ultimately compensated for the retreat of the welfare state (Mayer, 2003). Such praise was expressed by an RC member of Neighbourhood W, where most neighbourhood issues were handled by a neighbourhood-based civic group called the Neighbourhood Governance and Development Association (*Shehui zhili fazhan xiehui*) (NGDA):

> They [the NGDA] assist us [the RC] a lot. They do a wide range of things in the neighbourhood, such as cleaning neighbourhood public spaces regularly, taking care of the elderly, and organising neighbourhood sports activities. What they do significantly relieve the fiscal and administrative pressure on the RC… What is more, volunteers from the NGDA take good care of disadvantaged groups in this neighbourhood. This makes poor residents feel that they are embraced by the community. One such resident told me last week that he felt so lucky living in this neighbourhood, and he really appreciated the help from the community [*shequ*]. *(Interview with a community worker in Neighbourhood W, December 20, 2017.)*

Three features set self-governing organisations in the neighbourhood empowerment mode in Nanjing apart from the private government mode in the US (e.g. Helsley and Strange, 1998; Nelson, 2004; McCabe, 2011). First, service levels are different. Most services provided by empowered HOAs/SMAs in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing were on basic levels, such as security and sanitation, since these neighbourhood groups lacked the professional knowledge, skills, and resources to deal with complicated management issues. These services are substantially different from the improved services delivered by HOAs in some high-end communities in the US. The limited capacity for service delivery is also a weakness of the empowerment mode in Nanjing. Second, empowered neighbourhood civic groups in Nanjing are by no means an entire private government, since they cooperate with the public sector, rather than compete with them for legitimacy and taxation. Moreover, the empowerment can be viewed as a form of downloading— the responsibilities for providing welfare and collective goods are partly transferred from the public or private sectors to neighbourhood civic groups, as happened in Neighbourhood W. Collective goods delivered by empowered HOAs/SMAs are thus alternative, rather than supplementary in nature (c.f. Helsley and Strange, 1998).

It is also worth noting that the empowerment of neighbourhood civic groups and the creation of 'invented spaces' for participation are not motivated by grievances or protest against local authorities. This starting point sets self-governance in the empowerment mode apart from that in the neighbourhood partnership mode, where civic groups are assumed to counterbalance top-down interventions. Instead, bottom-up initiatives in the neighbourhood empowerment mode are supported by local state agencies through institutional platforms, administrative assistance

and financial resources. More importantly, local state agencies assist with mobilising residents' participation and accountable community representation, which are increasingly difficult to achieve in 'liberated neighbourhoods' nowadays (Chaskin, 2003). As the director of Neighbourhood D complained in preparation for the SMA election:

> It is almost the most difficult task for us to recruit volunteers for the SMA. Nobody wants to serve the neighbourhood. Their qualities (*suzhi*) are lower than in the past generation… We have approached many residents, but no one wants to do some real work. They always say they don't have time… We found a potential candidate last week, but he was reluctant as he did not want to get into trouble with the neighbours he meets regularly. As you know, working for the SMA, particularly collecting management fees, one cannot escape from such troubles… If no volunteers can be found by the end of next month, the last thing we can do to keep the SMA running is to persuade existing members to serve for another term of office. *(Interview with a community worker in Neighbourhood D, April 6, 2017.)*

The cases of the neighbourhood empowerment in Nanjing indicate that, rather than attempting to resist the 'long-arm of the state' (O'Hare, 2018), neighbourhood civic groups seek autonomy and self-governance in a way that is in accordance with, and sustained by, the local state. Urban neighbourhoods thus become the 'co-production' of the state and the society (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008), which points to the paradox of state-led self-governance in urban China. On the one hand, neighbourhood empowerment has involved the growth of interest-oriented participation (Yang, 2007) and 'responsible citizens', who are civically cultivated to exercise their powers as both customers and partners in neighbourhood collective consumption and the everyday making of community wellbeing (Swyngedouw, 2005; Cochrane, 2007). In this sense, empowerment attempts in Nanjing followed a communitarian approach: by stressing the importance of individual responsibilities and collective commitments, empowered communities serve as an alternative to market institutions (e.g. PMCs) and state agencies (e.g. RCs), and attempt to revitalise the foundations of collective attachment upon which community life and social order depend (Etzioni, 1993).

On the other hand, the cases of the neighbourhood empowerment in Nanjing indicate that neighbourhood civic organisations are in cooperative relationships with the local state, which offers indispensable institutional spaces for the growth of neighbourhood democratic forces, particularly in neighbourhoods with relatively low levels of civic capacities (low *suzhi*) (Interview with a community worker in Neighbourhood D, April 6, 2017). In these neighbourhoods, civic groups—either RC-led DCs or HOAs (and other self-governing organisations), compensate for,

rather than counterbalance, state-centred approaches of neighbourhood governance, which depart from the traditional communitarian approach adopted in capitalist states (Sage, 2012). Furthermore, the 'responsibilisation' of citizens is accelerated by state-sponsored civic education programmes, as happened with the professional consulting company in Neighbourhood A. Therefore, the devolution and empowerment attempts can be regarded as 'technology' of government (Barnett, 2002; Blakeley, 2010; Wan, 2013),(Barnett, 2002)(Barnett, 2002) whereby empowered neighbourhood organisations are 'steered' or 'captured' by their state sponsors (e.g. RCs). In this sense, even empowered neighbourhoods in Nanjing can be seen as representations of state intervention, since most commitment to empowerment is dependent on policy support for it, such as the powers and responsibilities devolved to residents and neighbourhood groups, and the selection of pilot neighbourhoods for empowerment projects (e.g. Neighbourhood A).

The facilitating role of the state in neighbourhood empowerment, however, should not be regarded as the continuation or revival of the authoritarian state. This is because local state intervention is neither coercive (hard authoritarianism) nor persuasive (soft authoritarianism) (c.f. Pei, 2000), as reflected by the difficulties RCs face in recruiting volunteers for self-governance. Instead, the state and empowered citizens are in a reciprocal relationship: the devolution of decision-making powers and responsibilities not only eases the administrative burdens on local state agencies, but also transform citizens into collective builders of their own community, significantly strengthening social connectedness between them. The reinforcing effects between the state and empowered neighbourhoods can be seen as a new form of state-society synergy.

6.5   Neighbourhood government

If neighbourhood empowerment seeks to solve the hold-up problem through horizontal integration of PMCs and HOAs (or other participatory bodies), then neighbourhood government seeks to solve the problem through vertical integration of PMCs and SOs—local centres of administration concerned with both responsive government and social welfare (Figure 6.4).
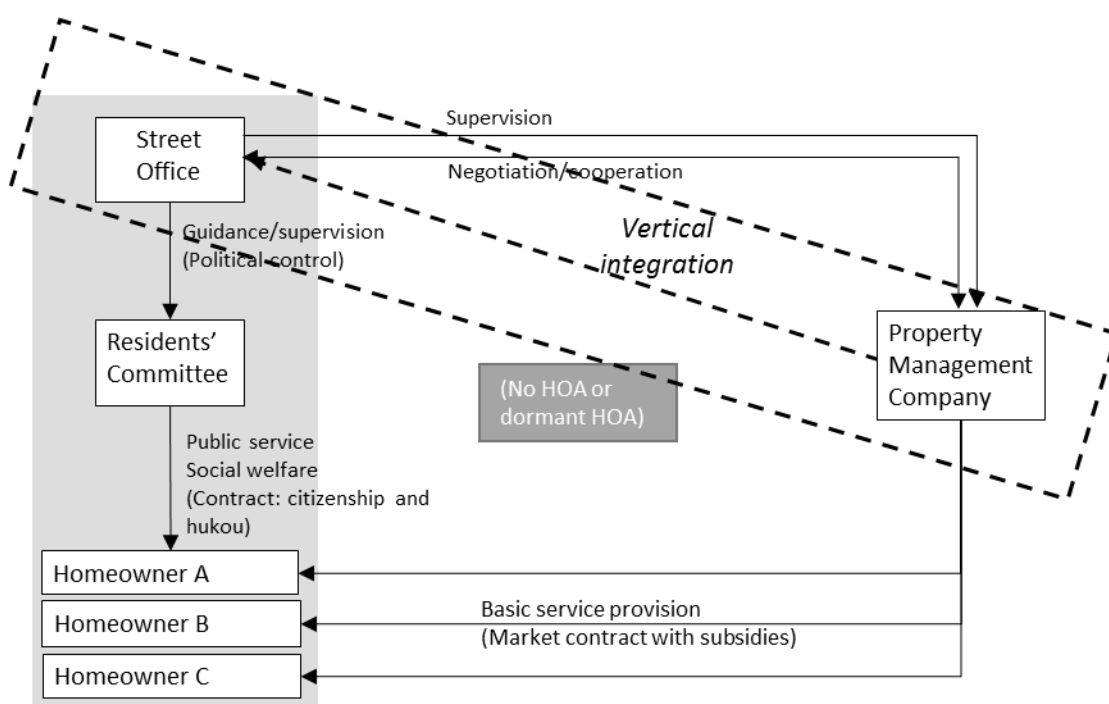
Figure 6.4 Neighbourhood government

The neighbourhood government mode, as under the political rationale, operates in different ways in Nanjing than in its capitalist counterparts. The primary focus of neighbourhood government in Nanjing is grassroots administration, rather than accountability, and the principal task is delivering essential social services. This is not surprising looking at neighbourhoods which are characterised primarily by the neighbourhood government mode—some of them were traditional neighbourhoods in dilapidated inner-city areas (such as Neighbourhood L and Neighbourhood GT), some were degraded work units (such as Neighbourhood S), and others were affordable and resettlement neighbourhoods (such as Neighbourhood N and Neighbourhood YX), all suffering from varying degrees of social crisis. Stories in these neighbourhoods show that privatisation does not always lead to higher effectiveness in the provision of collective goods (Wu, 2018), since commercial PMCs tend to be held up by residents with low income (not suitable for the neighbourhood management mode) and low civic capacity (not suitable for the neighbourhood empowerment mode). When privatisation fails, the state often intervenes, leading to the emergence of neighbourhood governments.

Drawing on interviews with community workers, local volunteers, and residents, the following parts elaborate the major approaches of the state's top-down interventions (SO-sponsored PMC, SO-subsided PMC and co-production) and the community's bottom-up reactions (co-production and controlled participation) in the neighbourhood government mode.

6.5.1   RCs as the local welfare state: the state-led neighbourhood service delivery

Local SOs and RCs act as the leading organisations in state-sponsored neighbourhood governance. Through establishing PMCs or subsidising commercial PMCs, SOs set up a welfare-oriented property management system, which can be understood as welfare policies aimed at distributing essential services and reinforcing basic security in disadvantaged areas.

Establishing PMCs under the direct control of local SOs was observed in some affordable neighbourhoods in suburban Nanjing, such as Neighbourhood BS and Neighbourhood N, and some traditional neighbourhoods in the inner city where signs of deterioration can be observed, such as Neighbourhood ST. In these economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, SO-sponsored property companies ensured that essential services, at least, were provided at affordable rates to residents (e.g. cleaning blocked sewage or fixing broken windows), so that basic living needs were met. Compared with commercial property management companies that often 'held up' homeowners, SO-sponsored property companies were assumed to be more socially responsible, at least by their managers:

> While there are no 'sharp tools' to monitor commercial PMCs, such 'tools' do exist for us [the SO-led PMC]—that is the evaluation system for SOs… We are required to deal with all pressing concerns of residents, including all relevant issues reported by residents through the mayor's hotline (*shizhang rexian*) 12345… We will be blamed or even fired by the SO for low response rates or poor performances *(Interview with the manager of the property management company in Street Office M, March 22, 2017.)*

Apart from establishing their own PMCs, SOs also achieve vertical integration by providing subsidies to commercial companies. Services are thus provided at discounted prices, and poor residents are more likely to be able to afford them, as happened in Neighbourhood QX and Neighbourhood ZD. Subsidised commercial PMCs are required to provide higher levels of services to local neighbourhoods. These services go beyond basic living needs and extend to additional services, such as strict access control, green space maintenance, and community activity organisation.

New hold-up problems can also appear for welfare-oriented property management. Residents may become overly dependent on local government agencies for neighbourhood services. Summarised as 'waiting, depending, and wanting' (*deng, kao, yao*), this dependency significantly increases the RC's administrative burden, as expressed by the following interview with a community director:

They [residents] are used to government rescues and lack the common sense of 'paying for service'. Most of them refuse to pay PMC fees as they think all services should be provided by the CPC… If they lack something, they just turn to the RC for help. For example, the problem of sewage blockage should be dealt with by the PMC, but they ask the RC to fix it. We cannot say no, but have to call the plumber to come… *(Interview with the RC director of Neighbourhood GT, March 20, 2017.)*

However, while complaining about heavy administrative burdens, the director also expressed a strong sense of fulfilment when he spoke of the intimate relationships with his constituents:

We [RC officers] are treated by the residents as family members. When we wander around the neighbourhood, it is quite common that we run into some residents, and they often ask us whether we have had lunch or dinner. If not, they could warmly invite us to their home and cook for us. Actually, we were touched by this and willing to provide help when necessary. *(Interview with the RC director in Neighbourhood GT, March 20, 2017.)*

The family-like atmosphere in Neighbourhood GT was also widely endorsed by some long-term residents, as expressed by one older man who stepped into the RC office to say hello to the director:

The director (*zhureng*) treats us well with all his heart. He has been working here for more than ten years and has taken very good care of us. Almost no one in the neighbourhood does not know him. We are not just long-term friends but a big family. He is the father of us all. *(Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood GT, September 23, 2017.)*

The expression 'the father of us all' is reminiscent of the traditional 'father-mother officials' (*fumu guan*) in ancient China who rule in a caring way (Chu, 1962). The re-emergence of such paternalistic governing strategies in contemporary China is interpreted by Lin and Kuo (2013) in their model of 'community pastorship', where citizens are ruled by local (Party) leaders through the provision of neighbourhood services as well as their representation of ethics and morality. However, departing from the Shanghai model described by Lin and Kuo (ibid), paternalistic governance in neighbourhood government in Nanjing did not aim at creating self-governance and responsible citizens (although there were many co-production attempts which will be discussed in the next section), which would ultimately free local state agencies from indigenous issues and allow them to focus on urban development projects. Instead, the paternalistic governing strategies in the neighbourhood government mode in Nanjing followed the 'logic of assistance'

(Tomba, 2014, p.173), which emphasises the persistent presence of the state in local issues wherever there are signs of social decline. Maintained through charismatic leaders (e.g. the RC director) and extensive infrastructure (e.g. dense local networks and high levels of reciprocity), the presence of the state in neighbourhood government is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it deals with social crises and revitalises the party-state's paternalistic governing strategies, which can hardly be seen in other privately governed spaces (e.g. commodity neighbourhoods), and which ultimately strengthens support for and legitimacy of the party-state. On the other hand, it also produces dependence among weak groups and generates heavy administrative burdens for local authorities, which prevent, rather than promote, local state agencies from pursuing local and extra-local development (e.g. those relating to the global market). This is the dilemma of the RC as the local welfare state.

6.5.2 Co-production through volunteerism

Compared with the previous approaches, the co-production approach delivers community services more informally. Instead of being produced by PMCs and contractual relationships, neighbourhood collective goods are coproduced voluntarily by the local state and the society. To be more specific, basic cleaning services are normally provided by the SO, and local security is maintained with the help of neighbourhood activists working analogously to Neighbourhood Watch groups in the United States (Read, 2003). Neighbourhood DS is such a neighbourhood where the joint production of community services had achieved great success for more than ten years. Two neighbourhood activists shared their stories with me:

> Once a week, I go on patrol. It usually takes me four hours… We patrol in every streets and lane within and around this neighbourhood. We have distinctive red armbands and red jacket to show our identity as security patrols. Although I have not ever caught a thief myself, I keep an eye on local comings and goings, which is a strong deterrent. *(Interview with Resident A in Neighbourhood DS, November 4, 2017.)*

> I have been a member of the security patrol for more than 20 years. What I have done is voluntary. I did not ask for even a cent from the RC or residents… See, there is a guard room in our neighbourhood. I sit there almost every day as the gatekeeper. I also help my neighbours to collect parcels. Everyone in this neighbourhood knows me; they often say, 'If you have anything in trouble, just go to Senior M [the interviewee]'. *(Interview with Resident M in Neighbourhood DS, November 4, 2017.)*

When asked about why they actively engaged in community voluntary works, these activists provided similar answers, such as 'contributing to the community', 'mingling with friends and

neighbours', as well as 'showing a vanguard role of CPC members' (neighbourhood activists in Neighbourhood DS, November 4, 2017). These motivations are combinations of 'local volunteerism' (Read, 2003)—which is similar to civic participation in the West, and an abstract commitment to the party-state—inherited from the work unit era. This commitment, however, should not be understood in the same way as the totalitarian school interprets communism in Mao's era (e.g. Godley, 1989; Lipset and Bence, 1994; Poznanski, 2001). This is because CPC membership no longer involves strong implications for socialist ideals, due to the CPC's very limited control over material resources on the neighbourhood level in the post-reform era (Yu and Tang, 2018). Instead, CPC membership implies one's 'psychological susceptibility' (ibid, p.6) to mobilisation by the RC, as demonstrated by a neighbourhood activist: 'I will come whenever the RC asks for help from me' (neighbourhood activist in Neighbourhood W, December 20, 2017).

However, co-production based on volunteerism and commitment does not always succeed. Either a lack of volunteers among residents or a lack of mobilisation capacity on the part of the RC would result in the under-provision of neighbourhood services, leading to further deterioration in the neighbourhood environment. Observations in old and dilapidated spaces of Neighbourhood D and Neighbourhood ST tell stories like these. Under such circumstances, the pressure to provide neighbourhood services gave birth to a new form of exchange relationship between the RC and those who received benefits from the state agency (e.g. low-income benefits, or *dibao*). Such a relationship, as observed in Neighbourhood GT, Neighbourhood G and Neighbourhood SY, is reciprocal rather than coercive in nature: volunteers help the RC with fundamental maintenance issues, such as sweeping hallway floors, and keeping an eye on suspicious people, and in return they get easy access to RC resources (albeit that these resources are limited), such as state welfare, free medical examinations, and small holiday gifts.

It is worth noting that co-production in the neighbourhood government mode differs in two respects from that in the neighbourhood empowerment mode. First, the nature of co-production is distinctive: unlike in the neighbourhood empowerment mode, the co-production of services in the neighbourhood government mode does not involve the devolution of powers and responsibilities to participants, such as in Neighbourhood DS. Rather than involving participatory democracy, co-production with neighbourhood activists can in some ways be thought of an institutionalised mechanism through which the state intentionally absorbs and incorporates local resources (e.g. local networks and the participation of neighbourhood activists) into its governance networks (Wu, 2018). These resources are used by the RC to facilitate administrative tasks, such as providing essential social services for weaker social groups who cannot afford the versions provided by market instruments. Second, institutional support from higher levels of government plays a less fundamental role in the neighbourhood government mode than it does in

the empowerment mode. In the neighbourhood government mode, residents participate in community voluntary works either with social and psychological motivations (commitment-oriented participation), or with economic motivations (welfare-oriented participation) (Yang, 2007), but not out of any intentions of self-governance (interest-oriented participation).

6.5.3   The authoritarian legacy: controlled participation and tokenism

Apart from service provision, the effectiveness of neighbourhood governance, according to Tomba (2014), is also benchmarked against the RC's capacity to guide community participation. In the neighbourhood government mode where HOAs are lacking, the RC becomes the only legitimate neighbourhood self-governance organisation that offers an opportunity—never the only opportunity, but one which is immediately at hand—for political engagement. This participatory opportunity had been created, structured, and incorporated into the formal governance structure of the RC in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, creating institutional space for civic engagement (Liu, 2005b, 2016). The interviews show that, even in neighbourhoods with limited civic capacity, a full set of democratic decision-making bodies had been established, including a general electoral system, a DC, an Assembly of Residential Representatives (ARR, the primary decision-making bodies), and regular hearings and ad hoc meetings (as the supervision mechanism).

The RC-led participation, however, was found to be constrained in various ways. First of all, the participatory platforms provided by RCs cannot be fully interpreted as initiatives of self-governance or reflections of democracy, since they are guided, monitored, and audited by higher levels of government (Tomba, 2014). The RCs are very much subordinate to SOs, from which RCs acquire their legitimacy, resources, and operational capacities (Wan, 2013). What RC members do, commented a community worker in Neighbourhood GT, 'needs to satisfy the leaders [from the SO]' (March 20, 2017). It is therefore impossible for the RC, as the representative of residents, to challenge the SO. The RC route is thus not a realistic route by which residents can challenge SOs and express their own needs regarding service delivery and other community issues.

Furthermore, my observations in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing show that institutional spaces created by the RC did not always transform into organisational sources, unlike in the empowerment mode (Liu, 2016; Wang, Liu and Pavlićević, 2018). This is because participation was under the supervision of the RC, and participation opportunities were constrained to 'abler and more qualified people' (CPC Central Committee and the State Council, 2010). As the vice party secretary in Neighbourhood BS put it: 'the election of building heads should convey 'organisational intentions' (*zuzhi yitu*). The RC will screen all candidates carefully' (March 22,

2017). As a consequence, 'not just anyone can become a resident representative' (the community director of Neighbourhood YX, April 11, 2017). The people who were finally included in the RC governance system were political and social elites, a large proportion of who shared intimate relationships with the state, and who were less likely to challenge the political order established by the local state agency.

In addition, most RC-led participation in the sampled neighbourhoods was treated as tokenism by local residents, as limited levels of decision-making were involved, and limited choices were offered (c.f. the empowerment mode). This is why a large proportion of residents were indifferent to RC-led discussions, the stakes of which were perceived to be too low to be worth attention. More than half of the interviewees reported that they never heard about the DC or ARR, and 'even if we have one in this neighbourhood, it is nothing more than a democratic decoration (*baishe*)' (resident in Neighbourhood JM, December 2, 2017). Even some RC directors did not speak highly of such initiatives, which were mainly used as a platform for information diffusion:

> We inform residents about every hearings and ad hoc meetings via SMS and community
> bulletin board. That is our [the RC members'] responsibility. We have to do this. It is
> required by laws and regulations. But whether residents participate or not is not our
> business… Actually, residents here do not have much sense of democracy (*minzhu yishi*),
> and the turnout rates of hearings and ad hoc meetings are usually quite low. *(Interview
> with the RC director of Neighbourhood GT, March 20, 2017.)*

To sum up, even with active state intervention, the neighbourhood government mode goes beyond the traditional understanding of 'authoritarian state' in urban China (Zhao and Zhang, 1999; Liu, 2005b; Heberer, 2009; Lee and Zhang, 2013). Instead, it lies between bureaucratic government (e.g. SOs and higher levels of government) and self-government (where homeowners act as home-voters through general electoral and decision-making systems). It is not just a representation of service responsiveness and accountability—the traditional political rationale for devolved governance in the West (Bailey and Pill, 2011); nor is it merely an implication of 're-statisation' and local control—a pervasive view on neighbourhood government in China (Sigley, 2006; Ohmer, 2007; Heberer, 2009). It should instead be understood from both perspectives simultaneously. From the perspective of responsive government, the neighbourhood government attempts to guarantee that basic levels of neighbourhood services are available to weak social groups who would otherwise face serious social crises. This is a specific advantage of neighbourhood government that has been largely ignored by some existing research in China (Ohmer, 2007; Heberer, 2009; Yip, 2014). From the perspective of local control, collective decision making via RC-led platforms, such as the DC and the ARR, is controlled and constrained. With

limited participatory opportunities and 'thin veneers' of faux participatory venues (Read, 2014), these RC-led practices should be regarded as a rescaling of the state's soft control strategies, which ultimately aim to maintain social stability and enhancing state legitimacy (Wang, 2005; Yip, 2014).

6.6   Conclusion

In order to answer Research Question 2 (*What are the major forms of governance arrangement in urban Nanjing?*), this chapter focused on multiple neighbourhood governance arrangements in Nanjing and how those arrangements worked out differently in different neighbourhoods. The case of Nanjing has been presented because Nanjing is both an ordinary city (Robinson, 2006) deserving of more attention from urban studies, and a prototypical city (Brenner, 2003) due to its role as an experimental zone for neighbourhood governance within the context of urban China (as discussed in Chapter 4).

Drawing on interviews and observations in 32 systematically selected neighbourhoods, in this chapter, I took a mid-level view of neighbourhood governance. The focus was on neither national nor city-wide policies (a view from altitude that overlooks diversity on the ground), nor just one or two 'demonstration neighbourhoods' (a narrow focus that makes generalisation and theory building difficult). Instead, the study compared neighbourhood governance on the ground in 32 different sites in Nanjing. What was made visible by this view? Neighbourhood governance works in Nanjing in diverse and complex ways. We should be cautious when generalising about decentralisation, devolution, and localism—at the scale of the city, let alone the nation-state, let alone the globe. Still, beyond a general claim about complexity and diversity, four modes of neighbourhood governance can be identified in Nanjing with the action-based framework. By classifying key actions in neighbourhood governance (collective decision making and neighbourhood service delivery), and key actors responsible for each action (e.g. the RC, the HOA, and the PMC), for modes of neighbourhood governance were identified: neighbourhood partnership; neighbourhood management; neighbourhood empowerment; and neighbourhood government. Each mode of neighbourhood governance is equipped with a distinct combination of actors, as presented in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Key actors and their responsibilities for key actions in each mode of neighbourhood governance

Neighbourhood governance mode	Neighbourhood organisation		
	Residents' Committee	Self-governing organisations (e.g. HOAs)	Property management company
Neighbourhood partnership	+	+ (decision-maker)	+ (service provider)
Neighbourhood management	+	-	+ (service provider)
Neighbourhood government	+ (decision-maker and service provider)	-	+
Neighbourhood empowerment	+	+ (decision-maker and service provider)	-

Note: '+' symbolises the existence and successful functioning of the organisation, and '-' refers to the dysfunction or non-existence of the organisation in the sampled neighbourhood. Key functions of each organisation are in parenthesis.

The four modes of governance depict the complex political landscapes of urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing in an abstract form. They represent four dominant ways in which neighbourhood governance is organised in the sampled neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood partnership mode favours co-governance among responsible PMCs, active HOAs, cooperative homeowners, and facilitative RCs. This mode of governance rests primarily on the cooperation between a responsible PMC (the service provider) and an active HOA (the decision maker), and the RC's role as the broker is sometimes limited. The neighbourhood management mode prioritises efficiency in neighbourhood service delivery and empowers frontline managers (PMCs). This mode of governance seems to arise when HOAs are absent or have become dormant over time, making neighbourhood partnership less possible. While these managers and residents hold each other up due to various reasons (e.g. poor services and low affordability)—which happened quite often in my sampled neighbourhoods—institutional integration is introduced as a way to strengthen neighbourhood governance. The integration can take the form of horizontal integration between PMCs and HOAs (the neighbourhood empowerment mode), or vertical integration between PMCs and RCs/SOs (the neighbourhood government mode).

The empirical study demonstrated that the action-based framework worked well with the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. The four ideal types of neighbourhood governance generated from this framework captured both the general trends and common characteristics, and the diversity and complexity of neighbourhood governance in the city. The action-based framework and the four ideal governance modes helped to move discussions of neighbourhood governance in China beyond existing frameworks which focused primarily on dominant actors

(the state, the society and the market) and the classifications they provide (e.g. Wei, 2003; Zeng, 2007; Ge and Li, 2016; Li, 2017)—the usefulness of which has been questioned in recent years (Xu and Xu, 2004; Wei, 2008; Guo, Wu and Liu, 2017). By focusing on specific actions of governance and the distinctive roles key actors play in these actions, this framework addresses simultaneously the structure of governance (by capturing key actors and their interrelationships) and the process of governance (by crystalising governance into actions of making collective decisions and organising collective consumptions).

More importantly, the action-based framework admits the coexistence of multiple actors, actions, and governance rationales, such as the economic rationale focusing on the private provision of neighbourhood goods (e.g. Deng, 2004; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018), the political rationale addressing the persistent existence of the state (Heberer, 2009; Zhou, 2014), the civic rationale promoting self-governance (e.g. Chen and Webster, 2005; Fu et al., 2015) and the social rationale advocating stakeholder cooperation and networked governance (e.g. Deng, 2018). The coexistence of governance rationales therefore moves the discussion beyond debates about whether China as a whole fits into models of neoliberalism and market-led governance which focus only on the economic rationale (e.g. Lee and Zhu, 2006; He and Wu, 2009; Stephens, 2010; Wu, 2010; Buckingham, 2017; Zhou, Lin and Zhang, 2019) or models of authoritarianism and state-led governance which target only on the political rationale (Fukuyama, 1992; Nathan, 2003; Heberer, 2009; Lee and Zhang, 2013).

One point worth noting is that, while recognising the persistent existence of the state in neighbourhood governance, social control is not the mainstream discourse for neighbourhood governance—either in the neighbourhood government mode where social welfare and social security are vital objectives, or in other neighbourhoods where the local state agency has been increasingly marginalised regardless of its designated role as the meta-governor. Even in the neighbourhood government mode, where the most influential state intervention can be seen, the party-state's attempts at social engineering should be regarded as a rescaling of the state's soft control strategies, which is neither coercive (hard authoritarianism) nor persuasive (soft authoritarianism), but reciprocal in nature (e.g. welfare-oriented participation).

To sum up, the study of neighbourhood governance in Nanjing captures the multiplicity of governance actors, practices, strategies, and techniques on the ground, which is co-produced by the economic, civic, social, and political rationales of neighbourhood governance. The processes and outcomes of the co-production are diverse and complex, pointing to multiple possible ways that they might be shaped by or might shape neighbourhood social life and social cohesion. This will be further explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 7   The political construction of cohesive neighbourhoods in Nanjing

This chapter addresses the fundamental question underlying the geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood. Given that communities are liberated from their localities, and neighbourhood cohesion is decreasing (albeit to varying degrees), it remains unknown whether neighbourhood governance arrangements that often begin from assumptions of geographically concentrated social connectedness still work on the ground, and reinvigorate territory-based social life.

Previous chapters have already set the scene for this question. The different arrangements of neighbourhood governance (e.g. the partnership mode, the management mode, the empowerment mode, and the government mode) and multiple elements of neighbourhood cohesion (e.g. neighbourly ties, neighbourhood participation, and neighbourhood sentiment) suggest multiple possibilities for ways in which neighbourhood life and local power relations might be correlated. There are diverse possible approaches through which a cohesive neighbourhood can be constructed, with the help of multiple neighbourhood organisations in different neighbourhood contexts, including a state-led approach where both behavioural (Hypothesis 1.1) and cognitive cohesion (Hypothesis 1.2) are positively correlated with performances of the RC, a market-led approach where the performance of the PMC is negatively associated with behavioural cohesion (Hypothesis 2.1) but positively associated with cognitive cohesion (Hypothesis 2.2), and a society-led approach where higher levels of behavioural cohesion (Hypothesis 3.1) and lower levels of cognitive cohesion (Hypothesis 3.2) are likely to be found in neighbourhoods with high-performing HOAs.

To aid conciseness, I will divide the multiple possible approaches to cohesion building by major neighbourhood institution: the state-centred approach led by the RC, the market-centred approach led by the PMC, and the society-centred approach led by the HOA. Each approach works through a distinctive neighbourhood organisation. A measure of perceived governance effectiveness can capture the characteristics of each neighbourhood organisation in the cohesion-building process. By linking perceived governance effectiveness and perceived neighbourhood cohesion, I am able to test whether hypothesised relationships exist between cohesion (both behavioural and cognitive) and governance (measured by neighbourhood governance effectiveness), and whether the hypothesised approaches of cohesion-building (the state-centred approach, the market-centred approach, and the society-centred approach) work in the Chinese context, an institutional environment that is different from the places in which the cohesion debate and governance theories originally emerged (North America and Europe, for the most

part). This test is conducted against different neighbourhood institutional backgrounds, since the same organisation may adopt different governing strategies and play different roles within different neighbourhood governance arrangements in different neighbourhoods.

The following chapter will be divided into seven parts. In the first section, I will introduce how measures of neighbourhood governance effectiveness are generated from the survey data, followed by a brief discussion of the spatial distribution of self-reported governance effectiveness across organisations and neighbourhoods and neighbourhood governance types. Then the chapter will proceed to examine the relationships between cohesion (both behavioural and cognitive dimensions) and governance (perceived performances of major neighbourhood organisations) in each of the four modes of neighbourhood governance arrangement respectively: neighbourhood partnership, neighbourhood management, neighbourhood empowerment and neighbourhood government. Multiple regression analysis will be carried out to test whether the hypothesised relationships between neighbourhood governance effectiveness and neighbourhood cohesion exist and whether they remain constant when multiple neighbourhood organisations are included simultaneously. This will be followed by an experimental study of the interaction between the local state agency and the neighbourhood civic group in the empowerment mode. The final section will compare the governance-cohesion relationships discovered in each mode of governance, and discuss their further implications in the cohesion debate.

7.1 Quantifying neighbourhood governance: the evaluation of governance effectiveness

Existing theories, as discussed in Chapter 2, suggest for links between good governance and cohesive neighbourhoods. Well-performed neighbourhood political organisations can be causes, as well as outcomes, of intensive neighbourly interactions, active participatory behaviours and reciprocal community attitudes (Ostrom, 1990; Putnam, Robert and Raffaella, 1993; Stanley, 2003). To explore these relationships, I will elaborate on how neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance are crystallised and measured.

In this research, both cohesion and governance variables are generated from the residents' questionnaire survey: each survey respondent was asked about certain cohesive behaviours and attitudes, and to evaluate the performances of community-based organisations in their neighbourhood. The evaluation of organisational performance was operationalised into three questions concerning how individuals evaluated levels of responsiveness, satisfaction, and accountability on a 5-point Likert scale for each of the three neighbourhood organisations: the RC,

the HOA, and the PMC (see Chapter 4.2.2 for detailed expression of the questions). The average score of the three questions was calculated as the evaluation of the organisational performance of each neighbourhood organisation.

7.1.1   Comparisons across neighbourhoods

The resident survey provides a concrete measure of perceived neighbourhood organisational performances. Figure 7.1 presents average scores for each neighbourhood organisation. ANOVA tests indicate that statistically significant differences exist among the performances of RCs, HOAs, and PMCs in terms of accountability, responsiveness, and satisfaction. Generally speaking, the RC ranks the highest in all three measures, with average scores of 2.80, 2.85, and 2.94 for accountability, responsiveness, and satisfaction respectively. The HOA has a higher average score than the PMC in terms of accountability (2.58 vs 2.49), but scores lower in terms of responsiveness (2.53 vs 2.61) and satisfaction (2.62 vs 2.64). These findings corroborate Min's (2009) research in Nanjing but are partly in contrast with studies from Chen and Webster (2005) in Hong Kong, and He and Wang (2015) in Guangzhou—the former study suggests that efficiency is associated with the privatisation of bureaucracy (e.g. the PMC), and the latter argues for the emergence of the HOA as an important force which outperforms both the RC and the HOA.
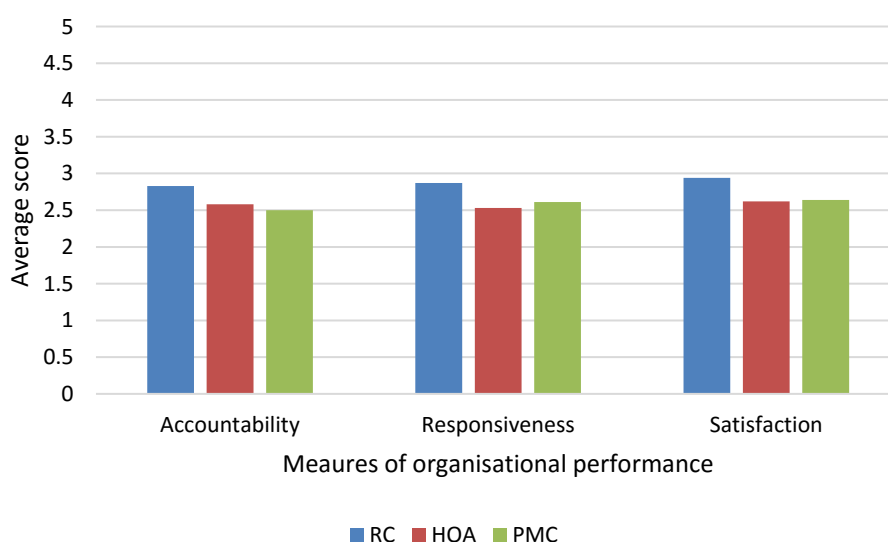
Figure 7.1 Comparisons of organisational performances of the RC, HOA, and PMC in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing (n=677 for RC and PMC measures, n=320 for HOA measures)

Taking neighbourhood variation into consideration, however, relationships between neighbourhood organisations are much more complicated. Neighbourhood governance arrangements are an essential variable to consider at the neighbourhood level. Classifying the sampled neighbourhoods into four modes according to their governance arrangements, I found significant between-group distinctions in organisational performances. As discussed in Chapter 6.6, each mode of neighbourhood governance is equipped with a distinct combination of neighbourhood organisations: an accountable RC, a responsible PMC, and an active HOA in the neighbourhood partnership mode; a leading PMC and a weak RC in the neighbourhood management mode; an empowered HOA and a facilitating RC in the neighbourhood empowerment mode; and a strong RC and a state-sponsored PMC in the neighbourhood government mode.

The distinctions in organisational performance across neighbourhood governance types are presented in Figure 7.2. The RCs in neighbourhoods which fit the partnership and management modes score higher than HOAs and PMCs for all three measures of governance effectiveness. This finding seems to contrast with existing literature suggesting a marginal position for the RC in commodity neighbourhoods (He and Wang, 2015; Chang *et al.*, 2019), which mostly use the partnership and management modes of governance. One possible explanation is provided by the disconfirmation paradigm (Brady and Cronin, 2001). The paradigm suggests that residents are probably more familiar with the leading organisations in their neighbourhoods (e.g. PMCs in the management mode and HOAs in the partnership mode), leading to relatively higher expectations for those organisations. If the organisations fail to live up to these expectations (even if they provide good services in reality), the gaps between the expected and perceived levels of organisational performances are widened, resulting in lowers levels of perceived service quality (Parasuraman, Zeitham and Berry, 1988).

On the other hand, compared with HOAs and PMCs, RCs are found to be less effective, according to the reports of residents in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment and government modes of governance. This perceived 'ineffectiveness' might be attributed to residents' dissatisfaction with the local services provided by the RC or other related organisations (e.g. PMCs run by local SOs). More importantly, dissatisfaction with local government performance may also arise from poverty (Wang, 2010), since most of the sampled neighbourhoods under the empowerment or government mode are economically disadvantaged—they are home to more than 75% of the lower-income quartile residents of Nanjing. In addition, the survey data shows that neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode of governance generally have better-performing HOAs, which have higher average performance scores than RCs. This observation corresponds with He and Wang's (2015) study, suggesting that the HOA is becoming a 'new centre' in the

neighbourhood governance network. Moreover, more effective PMCs are found in places governed by neighbourhood government than in those governed by neighbourhood partnership or neighbourhood management. The average scores of PMCs are much higher than those of the corresponding RCs. This finding confirms Chen and Webster's (2005) findings, suggesting the high efficiency of the privative provision of community goods.
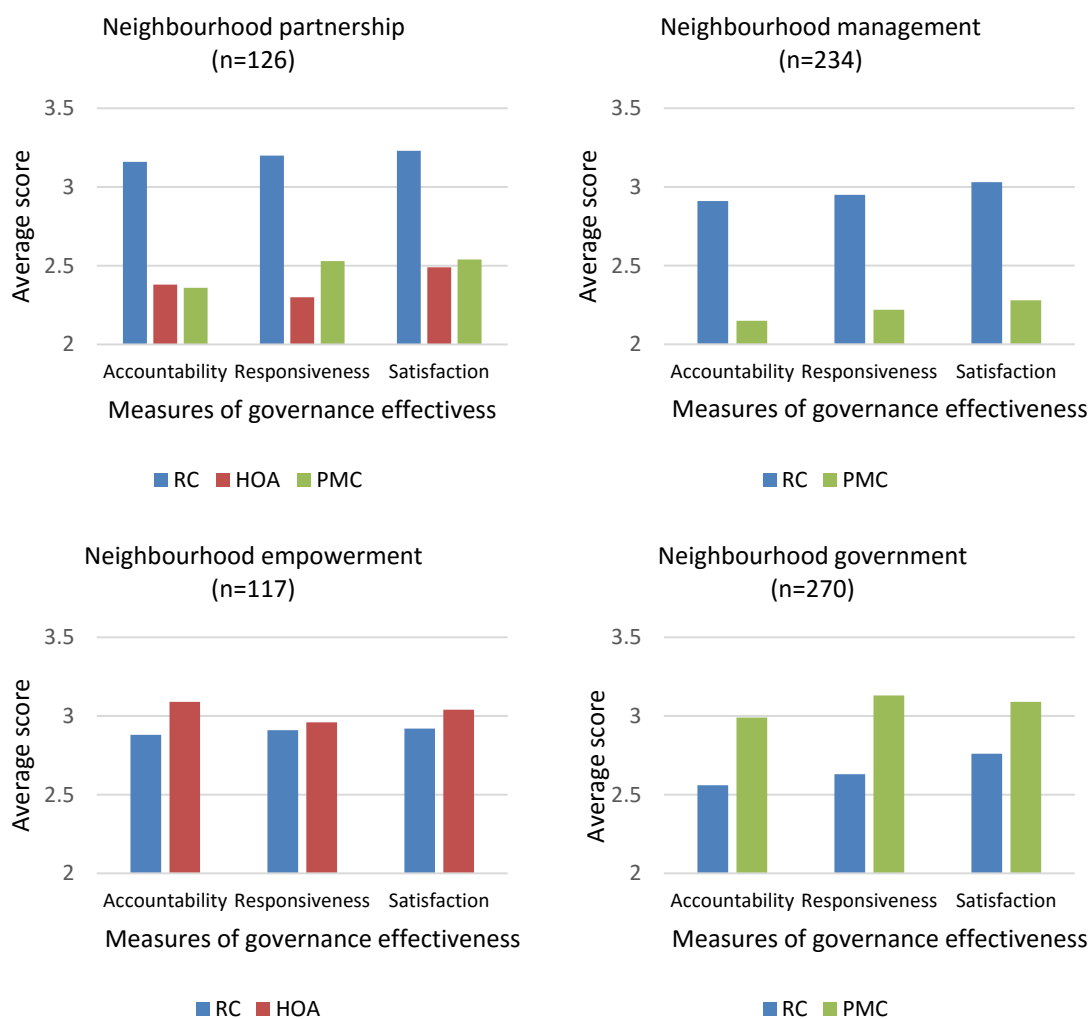
Figure 7.2 Comparisons of self-reported governance efficacy of the RC, HOA, and PMC in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing by neighbourhood governance type (n= number of survey respondents)

The cross—governance type differences should be interpreted with caution due to the limited sample size on the neighbourhood level. There are twelve neighbourhoods (270 valid responses) fitting the neighbourhood government mode, seven neighbourhoods (127 valid responses) fitting the neighbourhood empowerment mode, nine neighbourhoods (234 valid responses) fitting the neighbourhood management mode, and four neighbourhoods (126 valid responses) fitting the

neighbourhood partnership mode. The limited numbers of neighbourhoods, particularly with the empowerment and partnership mode, prevents me from getting a valid cluster-robust variance estimation and reduces the statistical power of comparisons on the neighbourhood level. More rigorous analysis of governance effectiveness may be carried out on the individual level.

7.1.2 Comparisons within neighbourhoods

Apart from cross-neighbourhood differences, variations in neighbourhood organisational performances within neighbourhoods (intra-neighbourhood correlations) and within each individual at a time (intrapersonal correlations) should be taken into consideration as well. These correlations help determine how neighbourhood governance can be measured and modelled in the governance-cohesion relationship.

7.1.2.1 Intra-neighbourhood heterogeneity of organisational performances

The intra-neighbourhood correlation coefficient reflects the homogeneity of organisational performance on the neighbourhood level. If organisational performance varies significantly between neighbourhoods but is similar within neighbourhoods (i.e. large intra-neighbourhood correlation), it is better to adopt multilevel models. Otherwise, we may ignore neighbourhood-level clustering and use single-level techniques. Table 7.1 presents the intra-neighbourhood correlation coefficient estimates and their 95% confident intervals for organisational performances evaluation.

Table 7.1 Intra-neighbourhood correlations for neighbourhood organisational performance evaluation

Dependent Variable	Intra-Neighbourhood Correlation Coef.	F	Prob > F	Clustered Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
RC	0.1827	5.39	0.000	0.0927	2.9062	3.2696
HOA	0.2505	5.29	0.000	0.1200	2.8721	3.3425
PMC	0.2844	8.82	0.000	0.1148	2.5706	3.0206

Table 7.1 indicates that organisational performances have high levels of intra-neighbourhood correlation,[15] suggesting that survey respondents/organisations are nested within neighbourhoods (Table 7.1). Therefore, from the empirical view (Luke, 2004), multilevel models

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[15] To interpret intraclass correlations, Cohen (1988) suggested a rule of thumb: 0.059 can be considered the threshold for a moderate level of intraclass correlation, and 0.138 for a high level of intraclass correlation.

are preferable than traditional regressions in exploring the general relationships between governance and cohesion. Their applicability will be further assessed statistically with likelihood ratio tests comparing the model fits between aggregated approaches (e.g. multilevel regressions) and disaggregated approaches (e.g. OLS and logistic regressions).

7.1.2.2 Intra-personal heterogeneity of organisational performances

To evaluate the overall governance effectiveness of each neighbourhood, I also calculated the intrapersonal correlation coefficient to explore whether there is substantial consistency among every single person's (intrapersonal) perceptions of the various neighbourhood organisations. If there are relatively high intrapersonal correlations for neighbourhood organisational performances, I can simplify measures of neighbourhood governance effectiveness into an average, or aggregation, of the performance scores of all neighbourhood organisations.

To analyse the intrapersonal variations in organisational performances, I adopted two-way mixed-effects models (Gwet, 2014), since each survey respondent was asked the same questions addressing neighbourhood organisational performances. The models set out to explore whether one's evaluation for one neighbourhood organisation is associated with her evaluation of another neighbourhood organisation, e.g. the lead organisation. Intrapersonal correlation coefficient estimates, and their 95% confident intervals for each cohesion measure, were calculated by inter-rater reliability tests, using STATA 14.0 based on an absolute agreement. The results for each cohesion measure are presented in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Inter-rater reliability test for neighbourhood organisational performance evaluation in predicting dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion

Dependent variable	Coef.	F	P>F	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Weak ties	0.0000	1.58	0.0000	0.0791	0.1311
Strong ties	0.0000	1.65	0.000	0.0901	0.1431
Social participation	0.0031	1.64	0.0000	0.0887	0.1416
Political participation	0.0042	1.63	0.0000	0.0859	0.1385
Attachment	0.0083	1.64	0.000	0.0875	0.1402
Collective goals	0.0087	1.64	0.000	0.0876	0.1404
Trust	0.0089	1.63	0.000	0.0870	0.1398

The results show poor reliability of performance evaluations between raters since none of the 95% confident intervals is higher than the rule of thumb of 0.5 (Koo and Li, 2016). The poor inter-rater reliability reveals significant variations in the performances of different neighbourhood organisations, even as perceived by the same survey respondent. The heterogeneity of raters further indicates that I cannot calculate 'governance effectiveness scores' by simply aggregating

or averaging the scores of neighbourhood organisational performance. Instead, evaluating the performance of each neighbourhood organisation separately is a preferable approach for measuring governance effectiveness in each neighbourhood.

To sum up, comparisons of neighbourhood governance effectiveness reveal that neighbourhood organisations perform heterogeneously both within and across the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. The 'effectiveness score' should, therefore, address each neighbourhood organisation in each type of neighbourhood. Taking the four types of neighbourhood governance arrangement into consideration, in the following four sections I will further explore and explain how different dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion are correlated with varying levels of neighbourhood governance effectiveness in different modes of governance.

7.2 Building cohesive neighbourhoods with neighbourhood partnership: facilitation from the state and the market

Regression analysis is necessary to examine whether the hypothesised relationships exist between dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion and levels of neighbourhood governance effectiveness. Although intra-neighbourhood correlation coefficient tests indicate a hierarchical data structure of self-reported cohesion measures, likelihood ratio tests show that neighbourhood variance is not statistically significant and that variances in neighbourhood level intercept do not significantly improve model fit. Therefore, traditional single-level analysis is adopted in this chapter to explore cohesion-governance relationships, including multiple linear regression (for neighbourhood attachment, orientation towards collective goals, and trust), logistic regression (for social and political participation), and negative binomial regression (for weak and strong neighbourly ties).

These regression models are used in this section to examine governance-cohesion relations in neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode, where political institutions (e.g. RCs), commercial organisations (e.g. PMCs), and civil society groups (e.g. HOAs) are all included in the governance network. Measures of organisational performances of the RC, HOA, and PMC are included as independent variables for predicting levels of neighbourhood cohesion. Following a pluralistic analytical approach, neighbourhood cohesion is disaggregated into seven elements: weak ties, strong ties, social participation, political participation, neighbourhood attachment, orientation towards collective goals, and neighbourly trust, corresponding to the seven models in Table 7.3. In addition, the following characteristics are included as control variables for each model: sex, hukou status, homeownership, length of residence, whether they have dependent children or not, educational attainment, household income, residential satisfaction, and type of neighbourhood.

The results of the regression models predicting governance-cohesion relationships in neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode are presented in Table 7.3. Significant variations are found between each neighbourhood organisation in terms of their relationships with different elements of neighbourhood cohesion.

Table 7.3 Regression models predicting dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion with perceived performances of RCs, PMCs, and HOAs in neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode (n=126)

Variables	Model 1 Weak ties	Model 2 Strong ties	Model 3 Social participation	Model 4 Political participation	Model 5 Attachment	Model 6 Collective goals	Model 7 Trust
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performance							
RC	−0.093	0.389	1.027	1.742	0.109	0.053	0.249***
	(0.139)	(0.211)	(0.415)	(0.886)	(0.093)	(0.094)	(0.064)
HOA	−0.166	−0.273	0.889	1.190	−0.049	−0.060	−0.080
	(0.137)	(0.177)	(0.330)	(0.506)	(0.085)	(0.086)	(0.058)
PMC	0.067	0.362	1.036	1.230	0.198*	0.119	−0.071
	(0.163)	(0.196)	(0.414)	(0.662)	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.065)
Individual factors							
Sex (ref=female)	0.112	0.401	1.502	1.210	−0.028	0.025	0.013
	(0.219)	(0.290)	(0.847)	(0.941)	(0.133)	(0.135)	(0.091)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)							
Urban, non-local	−0.812	−0.345	0.174	-	0.255	−1.333*	−1.165*
	(1.119)	(1.427)	(0.252)		(0.660)	(0.668)	(0.453)
Rural local	0.324	0.265	0.270	1.883	0.007	−0.667	−0.790
	(1.036)	(1.313)	(0.406)	(3.190)	(0.625)	(0.632)	(0.429)
Urban local	−0.797	0.224	-	-	−0.277	−1.354*	−0.855*
	(0.987)	(1.214)			(0.588)	(0.595)	(0.404)
Homeownership	0.396	0.799*	1.891	1.406	0.023	0.028	−0.017
	(0.261)	(0.348)	(1.242)	(1.095)	(0.157)	(0.159)	(0.108)
Length of residence	0.109***	0.129***	0.930	1.437***	−0.001	−0.009	−0.009
	(0.026)	(0.030)	(0.0608)	(0.156)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.010)
No. of children	0.095	0.395	7.962***	2.850	−0.194	−0.058	−0.119
	(0.222)	(0.305)	(5.683)	(2.154)	(0.133)	(0.134)	(0.091)
Years of schooling	−0.031	0.016	0.710*	1.141	−0.017	0.008	−0.001

	(0.048)	(0.057)	(0.125)	(0.145)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.017)
Household income (ln)	0.432*	−0.059	0.381*	0.917	0.081	0.160	−0.033
	(0.192)	(0.209)	(0.199)	(0.547)	(0.106)	(0.108)	(0.073)
Neighbourhood factors							
Residential satisfaction	0.260	0.106	1.362	0.725	0.066	0.079	0.121*
	(0.145)	(0.176)	(0.494)	(0.389)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.056)
Neighbourhood type (ref=traditional neighbourhood)							
Commodity neighbourhood	−0.655	−0.658	0.538	3.748	−0.320	−0.575**	−0.260
	(0.349)	(0.457)	(0.496)	(3.781)	(0.200)	(0.203)	(0.137)
Constant	2.044	−1.783	1,055*	0.00158*	3.560***	4.240***	4.432***
	(1.441)	(1.834)	(3,869)	(0.00530)	(0.825)	(0.834)	(0.566)
Pseudo R^2	0.0482	0.0749	0.1998	0.3400	0.1869[a]	0.3141[a]	0.3993[a]

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. a) R^2 is presented for Models 5, 6, and 7.

7.2.1 RC-led cohesion building in neighbourhood partnership

Regarding RCs, Table 7.3 shows their positive association with attitudinal cohesion, particularly with neighbourly trust (Model 7, coefficient = 0.249, p<0.001). This finding supports Hypothesis 1.2 (see Chapter 3.5), which states that cohesive perceptions are *positively* correlated with the performance of the local state agency. The positive association between RC performance and neighbourly trust indicates that deep mutual trust and reciprocal activities are more likely to be found in neighbourhoods with an accountable, responsible and satisfactory RC.

The positive correlation of neighbourly trust with RC performance can be attributed to RCs' 'formal identity' associated with the local state, which in the Chinese context receives a high level of regime support and institutional trust (Tang, 2018). As the 'pseudo-state' grassroots agency (Yip and Jiang, 2011), RCs share intimate relationships with the SO and higher levels of government (Wang, 2005). It is from this state apparatus that RCs acquire their legitimacy and operational capacities, and receive economic resources and administrative guidance. The RCs' close relationships with the local state are viewed by residents as an administrative resource, which provides the RC with a formal identity that is trustworthy. The RC's formal identity could be found almost everywhere in my survey in Nanjing. Most respondents failed to distinguish differences between the RC, the SO, and local government. Even when some respondents realised the distinctions between the SO as a branch of local government and the RC as a legally self-governing organisation, they treated this distinctions as 'within the administrative system' (*tizhi nei*) rather than 'across the system' (*tizhi wai*) (Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood B, April 17, 2017). The RCs are thus regarded as the 'arm and foot' of the local government (Wang, 2005) with high levels of institutional trust, which in turn generates interpersonal trust within the neighbourhood and spreads trust relations more widely in the society. This is demonstrated by my own experiences in the survey. As discussed in Chapter 4, my affiliation with the RC established in the interviews, although very weak, significantly reduced the suspicion of the respondents when they were approached by my research assistants for the survey. When they were asked about taking part in the survey, a typical response from the residents was 'I can spare some time for the survey if you [the researcher] really know the RC and can report our issues to the government' (Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood F, November 15, 2017). This response indicates that researchers establish trust relationships with residents, at least to a moderate extent, with the help of the 'formal identity' associated with the RC, which in turn acquires institutional trust with its 'formal identity' associated with local government—a representation of how institutional trust has the potential to influence particular trust, especially among strangers, in urban neighbourhoods in China.

7.2.2   PMC-led cohesion building in neighbourhood partnerships

Apart from the RC, the PMC is also found to be positively associated with cognitive cohesion, particularly with neighbourhood attachment (Model 5, coefficient = 0.198, p<0.005). This finding supports Hypothesis 2.2 (see Chapter 3.5), which states that cohesive perceptions (Hypothesis 2.2) are *positively* correlated with the performances of market institutions in neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode of governance.

To be more specific, the positive relationship of neighbourhood attachment with PMC performance is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, after controlling for performances of the RC and the HOA, and socioeconomic factors on the individual and neighbourhood levels. That is to say, high-performing PMCs contribute to a person's sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, and a one-unit increase in PMC scores contributes to a 0.198 unit increase in self-reported attachment, supporting Hypothesis 2.2 (Chapter 3.5). This finding echoes the research of Lu, Zhang and Wu (2018), which states that the private provision of community services through the PMC can satisfy the different needs of local residents and thus cultivate their attachment to the neighbourhood. This relationship remains statistically significant when controlling for residential satisfaction and the performances of other neighbourhood organisations. More importantly, this research expands on previous studies by quantifying 'privatisation' though evaluating the performance of the PMC in everyday life. By doing so, this study provides substantial evidence that it is the implementation of entrepreneurial strategy and its everyday operation in the neighbourhood that matters for the cultivation of neighbourhood attachment. Taking both points together, I could argue that PMCs and the private provision of community services, if operationalised effectively, have the potential to strengthen neighbourly ties and cultivate neighbourhood attachment—a new social bonding mechanism associated with privatisation and contractualism.

7.2.3   HOA-led cohesion building in neighbourhood partnership

Regression analysis of HOA performances indicates that the HOA, as a platform for collective decision making, does not have any statistically significant effect on neighbourhood cohesion (Table 7.3). The regression analysis does not provide any empirical evidence for either Hypothesis 3.1 or Hypothesis 3.2 (Chapter 3.5), suggesting that the civic group is neither beneficial for cohesive behaviours nor detrimental to cohesive perceptions. This finding challenges previous studies which argue for the revolutionary role of the neighbourhood civic group (Davis, 2006; Fu and Lin, 2014; Xia and Guan, 2017). Rather than developing a territory-based collective identity (P. Chen, 2009), HOAs in the sampled neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode do not serve as a

potent force that bonds residents together. This is because, like Yip and Forrest (2002) observed in Hong Kong, HOAs' participatory venues and mobilisation networks failed to mobilise the general public in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. One reason for the ineffectiveness of HOAs is that, according to my survey, 40% of HOAs did not hold any forms of HA or ad hoc meeting within the past year. The low frequencies of HOA activities provided few chances for citizens to civically engage, which partly explains why the participation rate in HOA-led activities was much lower (37.50%) than for RC-led activities (55.34%) (Table 5.4). Another reason traces back to the weak civic capacity and political apathy of residents in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. For most HOA meetings (except those related to the PMC switch), incentives for participation were not strong enough to mobilise the general public who would otherwise pursue privacy and safety rather than social and political engagement (Duca, 2013; Lo, 2013). The HOA thus becomes 'a game played within a small group of people' (Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood Y, January 6, 2018). Such a concentration of participation may not directly lead to a hegemonic version of elitism (Duca, 2013). Instead, it often ends up in a notice on the bulletin board that 'nobody else will pay attention to' (Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood Y, January 6, 2018).

Although the HOA is not directly associated with any dimension of neighbourhood cohesion, its inclusion in the regression models affects the effects of other neighbourhood organisations. For example, as presented in Appendix E (Table E.2), RC performances are positively associated with the probability of political participation (odds ratio = 2.461, $p<0.01$) in the RC-only model (Model 13) and it is the same for the PMC in Model 15 (odds ratio = 2.787, $p<0.01$). Including the performance scores of all three organisations in the models simultaneously, the odds ratios of the RC and the PMC drop significantly and become not statistically significant. The changes in odds ratios indicate that performances of the HOA and the RC, as well as performances of the HOA and the PMC, are correlated.[16] In other words, the HOA acts as a moderator that modifies the strengths of the RC-participation relation and the PMC-participation relation. The moderating effects, according to Mackinnon (2011), indicate potential interactions between the moderator and the independent variables affected. That is to say, not only the RC and the PMC but also their interactions with the HOA, contribute to community political participation. Such interactions have often been overlooked in previous community studies that quantitatively model relationships

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[16] The correlation test shows that both correlations between the RC and the HOA, and between the PMC and the HOA fall into the 'moderately correlated' range (Landau and Everitt, 2004), with coefficients of 0.50 and 0.53 respectively. The variance inflation factor (VIF) test shows that all VIF values are smaller than 5, indicating that multicollinearity between organisational performances is statistically tolerable (Akinwande, Dikko and Samson, 2015).

between local power relations and community social organisation in urban China (e.g. Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015).

Apart from in organisational performance, statistically significant relationships at the 0.05 level or higher are found between neighbourly ties and homeownership (Model 2) as well as length of residence (Model 1 and Model 2) on the individual level, which confirms the findings of Guest and Wierzbicki (1999) and Glaeser (2001) which state that long-term property owners are more embedded in neighbourhood life because they have already invested time and money in the neighbourhood. This explanation also applies to the positive association between length of residence and political participation (Model 4). Those who have dependent children are also more likely to participate in community social activities, suggesting that neighbourhoods are potential sources of support for those with family obligations (Buonfino and Hilder, 2006). Household income is also positively correlated with weak ties (Model 1), suggesting that high-income groups have more free time and better civic skills to construct neighbourhood networks. This observation lies in contrast with existing studies in urban China which suggest that income and education attainment have negative effects on community life (Gui and Huang, 2006; Xu, Perkins and Chow, 2010; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017a), but corresponds to some observations made in liberal democracies (e.g. Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Twigg, Taylor and Mohan, 2010). This may imply that the sampled neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode are organised in ways that are different from traditional Chinese neighbourhoods (where educated and high-income residents are less locally engaged), but similar to more democratised neighbourhoods in the Western context. In this sense, the partnership mode of governance, if operates effectively, accelerates the process of neighbourhood democratisation in urban China.

To sum up, regression analysis indicates that statistically significant relationships exist between the RC and neighbourly trust, and the PMC and neighbourhood attachment. These positive relationships between governance arrangements and cohesion outcomes shed light on the facilitating roles of both the state and the market in building cohesive neighbourhoods through partnership. While the RC cultivates neighbourhood cohesion top-down through regime support and institutional trust, and government-sponsored community activities, the PMC works through a neoliberal approach that prioritises service delivery. The HOA, representing the civic force from the bottom up, does not exert direct influence on neighbourhood cohesion in the partnership mode in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, a finding different from those of many intellectuals favouring ideas of civil society in China (e.g. Xia, 2003; Davis, 2006; Shi, 2007; Fu and Lin, 2014; Xia and Guan, 2017). The HOA's impact on neighbourhood cohesion is indirect—

through its interactions with both the state and the market in carrying out neighbourhood management tasks. This finding consolidates arguments from Yip and Forrest (2002) and Breitung (2014), who point out the economic nature of the HOA as a social mechanism for property right protection that lies between the state and the market.

7.3   Building cohesive neighbourhoods with neighbourhood management: a control coalition between the state and the market

A similar analysis is carried out to test whether the hypothesised relationships exist between dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion and levels of neighbourhood governance effectiveness in the second type of neighbourhood: those with leading PMCs and dormant HOAs. Considering the functionality of neighbourhood organisations, I include measures of the organisational performances of the PMC and the RC as independent variables in this section. The same individual and neighbourhood characteristics are included in the models as control variables. Results of the regression models predicting governance-cohesion relationships in neighbourhoods fitting the management mode are presented in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Regression models predicting dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the management mode (n=234)

Variables	Model 1 Weak ties	Model 2 Strong ties	Model 3 Social participation	Model 4 Political participation	Model 5 Attachment	Model 6 Collective goals	Model 7 Trust
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances							
RC	0.140	0.506***	1.059	3.003	0.122	0.316*	0.299**
	(0.109)	(0.141)	(0.389)	(3.810)	(0.098)	(0.141)	(0.090)
PMC	−0.064	−0.113	1.673	0.555	0.193	0.375*	0.291**
	(0.117)	(0.150)	(0.701)	(0.557)	(0.103)	(0.149)	(0.095)
Individual factors							
Sex (ref=female)	−0.331	−0.088	0.244*	0.0945	−0.188	0.156	−0.037
	(0.205)	(0.263)	(0.196)	(0.200)	(0.183)	(0.265)	(0.169)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)							
Urban, non-local	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rural local	-	-	-	-	0.181	1.096	−0.050
	-	-	-	-	(0.841)	(1.217)	(0.775)
Urban local	0.884*	1.104*	0.798	4.182	0.414	−0.232	0.179
	(0.365)	(0.488)	(0.902)	(10.50)	(0.327)	(0.472)	(0.301)
Homeownership	0.026	0.559	0.240	72.25*	−0.058	−0.786*	−0.493*
	(0.308)	(0.384)	(0.253)	(158.0)	(0.267)	(0.386)	(0.246)
Length of residence	0.009	−0.015	0.922	0.714	−0.001	0.038	−0.024
	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.0597)	(0.158)	(0.017)	(0.024)	(0.015)
No. of children	−0.135	0.316	5.424**	3.980	0.232	0.070	0.101
	(0.221)	(0.271)	(4.638)	(9.578)	(0.196)	(0.283)	(0.180)
Years of schooling	−0.143***	−0.156**	0.782	0.337	−0.075*	0.043	−0.028
	(0.038)	(0.048)	(0.121)	(0.227)	(0.034)	(0.050)	(0.032)
Household income (ln)	0.103	−0.023	0.256**	0.888	−0.053	−0.030	−0.260*

	(0.146)	(0.183)	(0.140)	(1.077)	(0.119)	(0.172)	(0.110)
Neighbourhood factors							
Residential satisfaction	−0.323**	−0.301*	2.263**	2.317	0.166	0.128	−0.063
	(0.106)	(0.128)	(0.902)	(1.895)	(0.102)	(0.147)	(0.094)
Neighbourhood type (ref=traditional neighbourhood)							
Privatised work units	1.279*	1.129	0.0554	-	−0.074	0.275	0.749
	(0.527)	(0.653)	(0.105)	-	(0.450)	(0.652)	(0.415)
Commodity neighbourhoods	1.065**	0.597	3.260	-	0.589	0.089	−0.081
	(0.407)	(0.498)	(4.081)	-	(0.347)	(0.502)	(0.319)
Constant	4.652***	2.592*	76.88	1.549e†06	2.847**	0.566	3.640***
	(0.902)	(1.210)	(247.8)	(1.663e†07)	(0.835)	(1.208)	(0.769)
Pseudo R^2	0.0785	0.0831	0.3091	0.5906	0.3329[a]	0.2974[a]	0.4692[a]

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$. a) R^2 is presented for Models 5, 6, and 7.

7.3.1   RC-led cohesion building in neighbourhood management

Positive associations are found between RC performance and both dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion, supporting both Hypothesis 1.1 and Hypothesis 1.2 (Chapter 3.5). To be more specific, high-performing RCs are positively correlated with strong neighbourly ties (coefficient=0.506, p<0.001), orientation towards collective goals (coefficient=0.326, p<0.05) and neighbourly trust (coefficient=0.299, p<0.01). Regarding the RC–strong tie relationship, the causal arrow is likely to run from effective RCs to dense neighbourly networks, since all the sampled neighbourhoods fitting the management mode are commodity housing estates characterised by extended social networks, and weak neighbourly interactions, which fail to serve as the territorial basis of the RC's 'loyalist-activist networks' (Guo and Sun, 2014). In return, effective RCs make efforts to cultivate neighbourhood ties and promote neighbourly interactions.

Similarly to what happens in the partnership mode, the facilitating role of the RC in neighbourhood management is realised through organising community activities. These activities provide not only opportunities for interaction, but also common themes for communication even if residents are not directly engaged in community activities (as demonstrated by the low participation rate discussed in Chapter 5). Meanwhile, regarding the RC-trust relationship, the explanation derived from the partnership mode applies to the management mode as well. Institutional trust in the RC, originating from its administrative power and personal relationships with local government (Min, 2009), has the potential to cultivate and spread trust relations to the neighbourhood and the wider society.

In addition, the regression analysis reveals a positive relationship between RC performance and residents' orientation towards collective goals, lending support to Hypothesis 1.2 (Chapter 3.5). This relationship also appears between effective RCs and the accomplishment of collective goals, since RCs in China are not held directly accountable to residents through a genuine election system (Read, 2003b). That is to say, the more accountable, responsive, and satisfactory an RC is, the more likely it is that its constituents can organise themselves to work collectively towards common goals that benefit the whole community. This positive association provides substantial evidence for the facilitating role RCs play in the promotion of responsible citizens and self-managed neighbourhoods, which has often been discussed in the context of state-sponsored civic education programmes in the empowerment mode (e.g. Liu, 2005a, 2016; Liu and Ma, 2015) but not in the management mode. The case studies in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing indicate that, although they are marginalised, minimised or even hidden in the shadows of leading market institutions (Deng, 2008; Min, 2009; Wang, Yin and Zhou, 2012; Chang *et al.*, 2019), local

state agencies maintain an active role in cultivating responsible citizens and neighbourhood self-governance.

The proactive role of the RC can be interpreted from two angles. First, as there is no properly working HOA in neighbourhoods which fit the management mode, the RC-led venue is the only institutionalised platform on which collective decisions can be made, and collective actions can take place (Heberer, 2009). In Neighbourhood S, for instance, the RC acted as the broker between residents and the PMC. Every month, the RC organised consultative meetings that invited residents and PMC managers to discuss common issues arose in the neighbourhood, such as garbage disposal and dog walking. The RC director in Neighbourhood S commented:

> Even though not all issues raised at the meeting can be solved, these meetings are effective communication channels. The residents can understand the difficulties of the PMC, and the PMC can understand the appeals of the residents as well. Otherwise, some issues may evolve into serious housing disputes. (*Interview on November 2, 2017.*)

This interview also reveals the second reason why RCs actively engage in neighbourhood self-governance. By cultivating responsibility, participation, and civic-mindedness, the RC could produce and keep an eye, alongside the PMC, on all neighbourhood issues that may trigger collective actions. Instead of governing 'at a distance' (Rose, 1996; Isin, 2000), the state is always present in neighbourhood management through creating and sustaining 'governable and self-managed' communities 'free of conflict' (Interview with the RC director in Neighbourhood J, November 23, 2017).

7.3.2   PMC-led cohesion building in neighbourhood management

The regression analysis also provides strong evidence for the determinant role of the PMC in attitudinal cohesion, whereby both orientation towards collective goals (coefficient = 0.375, $p<0.05$) and neighbourhood trust (coefficient = 0.291, $p<0.01$) are positively associated with perceived PMC performance at the 0.05 level or greater. The positive relationships between PMC performance and cognitive cohesion support Hypothesis 2.2 (Chapter 3.5), which states that measures of cohesive perception are positively associated with PMC performances in the management mode, and the most significant effect is found for orientation towards collective goals. These relationships remain statistically significant controlling for residential satisfaction (which is also positively associated with attachment and trust), and other socioeconomic factors on both the individual and the neighbourhood level. That is to say, the better a PMC works, the more satisfied residents feel with it, and the more likely it is that they will organise themselves to

participate in community collective actions, which can establish common vision, build neighbourhood attachment, and strengthen neighbourly trust (Zhu, 2011; Wang, Li and Cooper, 2017). This finding confirms and expands on studies from Zhu, Breitung and Li (2012) and Lu, Zhang and Fu (2018), which point out that the PMC is not only beneficial in fostering neighbourhood attachment, but also facilitative in promoting trust and cultivating civic-minded citizens. The PMC-led approach to cohesion building works through the private provision of community services (ibid), the effectiveness of which influences people's cognitive representations of the neighbourhood—as a satisfactory living environment to feel attached to, as a social group to trust, and a 'common good' to be devoted to. My observations in Nanjing provide empirical evidence for such representations, albeit in an opposite way. It is widely observed that irresponsible PMCs weaken mutual trust and trigger civic disengagement within the neighbourhood. The non-payment of management fees is widely adopted as 'passive everyday resistance' (Scott, 1985) to poorly performing PMCs. Knowing that their neighbour isn't paying the management fees, it is highly likely that a person would act as a free rider as well, which ultimately weakens mutual trust and norms of reciprocity in the neighbourhood.

It is worth noting that the reinforcing effect of PMC performance on trust does not lie in sharp contrast with the general decline trend of trust associated with privatisation and modernisation (Geddes and Zaller, 1989; Fukuyama, 1999). The empirical evidence collected in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing demonstrates that residents in neighbourhoods with similar levels of privatisation (e.g. commodity neighbourhoods managed by professional PMCs) can have significantly different levels of trust, controlling for socioeconomic factors. Such variations in trust cannot be simply explained by levels of 'privatisation' and 'marketisation' (c.f. Deng, 2016b; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018), but should be interpreted in a way that considers how privatisation and marketisation are carried out on the ground. This finding confirms Yang and Tang's (2010) finding that the generation of trust, as well as other neighbourhood perceptions, is an individual process that is influenced by a person's perceptions of how a market institution performs in everyday neighbourhood life.

In addition, the step-wise regression analysis (Appendix E, Table E.4 and Table E.6) shows that PMC and the RC mutually reinforce each other's efforts in building neighbourhood cohesion. Table E.4 in Appendix E shows that the PMC acts as a moderator between the RC and strong ties since the coefficient of RC performance increases when PMC performance is considered (Model 6 compared with Model 4). Similarly, Table E.6 in Appendix E shows that the inclusion of performance scores of the RC also influences the relationship between PMC performance and cognitive cohesion, particularly in terms of neighbourly trust and orientation towards collective goals, as indicated by the increase in coefficients of PMC performance in Model 18 (compared

with Model 16) and Model 21 (compared with Model 19). The mutually reinforcing effects between the RC and the PMC in the neighbourhood management mode remind us of the coalition between the market institution and local state agencies (Shi and Cai, 2006; Read, 2008; e.g. Fu and Lin, 2014; Sun and Huang, 2016). The existence of such a coalition is also demonstrated by several interviews with residents in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. They complained very often that their appeals about the PMC and the developer were not dealt by local authorities in an even-handed manner because 'there is a conspiracy (*youguanxi*) between the PMC and local government' (Interview with a resident in Neighbourhood H, November 25, 2017). Instead of developmental goals, what unites PMCs and RCs is the common goal of creating and sustaining 'governable communities' free of conflict (Interview with the RC director in Neighbourhood J, November 23, 2017). The goal of conflict-avoidance indicates that the RC-PMC coalition in neighbourhood management is not just an extension of the 'growth coalition' in the post-development phase (Sun and Huang, 2016), but a further evolution towards a 'control coalition'.

The regression analysis also indicates that in neighbourhoods fitting the management mode, dense neighbourly ties (both strong and weak) are likely to be found among urban residents who are less well-educated (Model 1 and Model 2), corresponding to previous research on urban hukou (Wu, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2019) and educational attainment (Gui and Huang, 2006; Liu, Wu, *et al.*, 2017). Active participants in neighbourhood groups and social activities are more likely to be low-income with at least one dependent child, which supports both the 'family obligation' (Buonfino and Hilder, 2006) hypotheses of cohesion building. Active participants in neighbourhood political activities, such as voting and attending hearings and ad-hoc meetings, are very likely to be homeowners, as indicated by the large odds ratio in Model 4 (odds ratio = 72.25, $p < 0.05$). This observation provides empirical evidence of the 'homeowner effect' (Glaeser, 2001; Li and Wang, 2012), which suggests that homeowners have a stronger propensity to engage in neighbourhood politics. This effect, however, only holds for residents of commodity housing estates fitting the management mode of governance (i.e. with a dominant PMC and a dormant HOA). Other commodity neighbourhoods (e.g. those in the partnership mode) do not see the statistically significant correlation between homeownership and political participation. In other words, it is not the housing tenure, but the power relations between neighbourhood organisations that influence homeowners' participatory behaviours. The 'homeowner effect' does not apply to the cognitive dimension of neighbourhood cohesion as well, since both neighbourhood attachment and neighbourly trust have negative relationships with homeownership (Model 6 and 7). Measures of cognitive cohesion are also in negative association with years of schooling (Model 5), and household income (Model 7), which suggests that low

socioeconomic status gives residents a marginal position and prevents them from being integrated into the community (Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017b).

To summarise, the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing provide some counterintuitive evidence of the roles of the RC and the PMC in neighbourhood management where an HOA is not active. Rather than being 'a great disruption' to social order and moral values (Fukuyama, 1999; Kipnis, 2007), the PMC can act as a new social bonding mechanism that cultivates responsible and governable citizens that are not only deeply attached to their neighbourhood (Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018), but have mutual trust in their neighbours (and the wider society) and are willing to devote time and money to public projects. In terms of the RC, instead of being 'hidden' in the shadow of the leading market institutions (Deng, 2008; Min, 2009; Wang, Yin and Zhou, 2012; Chang et al., 2019), my research finds that local state agencies still actively engage in community life and contribute to neighbourhood cohesion in areas privately managed by PMCs. More importantly, the step-wise regression analysis indicates that the RC and the PMC mutually reinforce each other's cohesion-building efforts in neighbourhood management. The coalition between the RC and the PMC, however, is not society- or economy-oriented. It is not established upon common goals of fostering social connectedness or sustaining urban growth, but rather on creating a governable community. Therefore, the promotion of neighbourhood cohesion can be viewed as a by-product of the control-oriented governing strategies adopted by the 'control coalition' between the RC and the PMC.

7.4   Building cohesive neighbourhoods with neighbourhood empowerment: variations in self-governance

Regression analysis is carried out to test the relationship between neighbourhood cohesion and governance effectiveness in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode, where there is a leading HOA (both as the decision maker and the service provider) and a usually facilitating RC. Throughout this section, the term 'HOA' refers to neighbourhood organisations that deal with self-governance issues. These organisations not only include the HOA as the statutory body elected and authorised by the homeowners' assembly but cover other self-governing organisations such as the SMA. These organisations and groups emerge when legal requirements for establishing an HOA or recruiting HOA members fail to be satisfied. They serve as a 'quasi-HOA' and take up the role of making and implementing collective decisions concerning neighbourhood services.

The distinction between the two types of self-governing organisation should be taken seriously, especially in terms of how the distinction is perceived by residents, which matters much to how

the self-reported effectiveness of governance can be interpreted. The RC and local authorities are actively involved in the establishment and operation of the SMA, blurring the boundary between the state and society. The involvement of the state in neighbourhood self-governance not only includes providing financial resources and policy support but is also related to the composition of the group. Board members may not be elected directly by residents but are nominated or appointed by the RC (such as in Neighbourhood C, D, W, and WT). The establishment and empowerment of SMAs are not motivated by grievances or protest against property management agencies or local government, which is unlike the situation of most HOAs in the partnership mode. Instead, SMAs are often born out of urgent needs of property management and service delivery: this happened in Neighbourhood F, for example, where an SMA was established after the government's regeneration project. The blurred boundary between neighbourhood civic groups and local state agencies was reflected in residents' perceptions of these organisations in the survey. Although some survey respondents could sense the difference between the RC and the SMA, most of them treated the two as more or less interchangeable. When asked about their evaluation of the self-governing organisation, these respondents were likely to give answers regarding the RC. This is why HOA-related questions had a lower response rate (less than 60%) in empowered neighbourhoods, compared with their counterpart in the partnership mode (more than 80%).

For the regression analysis, measures of organisational performances of the RC and the HOA are included in the models as independent variables. The same individual and neighbourhood characteristics are included in the models as control variables as previous sections. It is worth noting that the low response rates for HOA-related questions decrease the statistical power of the study, particularly for logistic regression models predicting social and political participation.

Table 7.5 Regression models predicting dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion with perceived performances of RCs and HOAs in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode (n=127)

Variables	Model 1 Weak ties	Model 2 Strong ties	Model 3 Social participation	Model 4 Political participation	Model 5 Attachment	Model 6 Collective goals	Model 7 Trust
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances							
RC	0.427	0.660	3.130	1.385	−0.133	0.163	0.377*
	(0.270)	(0.369)	(3.625)	(1.758)	(0.214)	(0.282)	(0.175)
HOA	−0.180	0.003	1.963	0.780	0.100	−0.095	0.077
	(0.235)	(0.295)	(1.645)	(0.649)	(0.196)	(0.258)	(0.160)
Individual factors							
Sex (ref=female)	−0.314	−0.570	1.230	5.890	−0.066	0.021	0.089
	(0.258)	(0.357)	(1.379)	(7.743)	(0.248)	(0.327)	(0.203)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)							
Urban, non-local	0.794	20.802	-	-	1.754	0.660	1.298
	(0.976)	(5,612.375)	-	-	(0.964)	(1.271)	(0.789)
Rural local	1.864	18.322	-	-	2.606	4.466*	0.637
	(1.305)	(5,612.376)	-	-	(1.291)	(1.701)	(1.056)
Urban local	3.430***	19.649	-	-	0.755	1.967	0.671
	(0.925)	(5,612.375)	-	-	(0.916)	(1.207)	(0.749)
Homeownership	−1.999**	0.624	-	-	0.131	−0.389	0.067
	(0.763)	(1.112)	-	-	(0.758)	(1.000)	(0.621)
Length of residence	0.021	0.010	1.055	1.159	−0.030*	−0.023	0.007
	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.0657)	(0.105)	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.011)
No. of children	0.426	0.111	1.730	1.508	−0.536	−0.285	0.140
	(0.289)	(0.415)	(2.104)	(2.314)	(0.308)	(0.405)	(0.252)
Years of schooling	−0.142*	0.017	0.727	1.111	−0.011	0.047	−0.033
	(0.056)	(0.069)	(0.156)	(0.256)	(0.052)	(0.068)	(0.042)
Household income (ln)	0.350	0.274	3.388	3.849	−0.190	−0.158	0.136

	(0.338)	(0.429)	(4.622)	(6.156)	(0.288)	(0.380)	(0.236)
Neighbourhood factors							
Residential satisfaction	0.238	−0.242	0.778	2.115	0.372*	0.108	0.242
	(0.175)	(0.216)	(0.542)	(1.558)	(0.164)	(0.216)	(0.134)
Neighbourhood type (ref=traditional neighbourhood)							
Privatised work units	0.064	0.033	0.0375**	0.303	0.407	−0.078	−0.126
	(0.285)	(0.347)	(0.0592)	(0.433)	(0.269)	(0.355)	(0.221)
Commodity neighbourhoods	−1.433*	−0.880	1.509	-	0.059	0.020	−0.178
	(0.653)	(0.839)	(4.907)	-	(0.553)	(0.728)	(0.452)
Constant	1.338	−20.141	0.0475	0.000235	2.703*	1.332	0.815
	(1.392)	(5,612.376)	(0.286)	(0.00170)	(1.278)	(1.684)	(1.046)
Pseudo R^2	0.0844	0.1106	0.3158	0.1990	0.5999[a]	0.4425[a]	0.6537[a]

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05; a) R^2 is presented for Models 5, 6, and 7.

7.4.1   RC-led cohesion building in neighbourhood empowerment

The results presented in Table 7.5 show that the presence of an effective RC is an essential indicator of a cohesive neighbourhood, whereby the better performance of the RC is associated with higher levels of neighbourly trust (coefficient = 0.277, p<0.05). This positive associations confirm Hypothesis 1.2 (Chapter 3.5), which states that a high-performing RC contributes to the emergence of cognitive cohesion in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode. The empirical study in Nanjing indicates that the top-down cultivation of neighbourhood cohesion in neighbourhood empowerment is operationalised in approaches similar to what happens in other types of neighbourhoods: neighbourly trust is originated in and strengthened by a person's institutional trust in and support for the regime of local state agencies.

7.4.2   HOA-led cohesion building in neighbourhood empowerment

No statistically significant relationships have been found between the performance of neighbourhood self-governing organisations and cohesion measures. The results provide no statistical evidence for either Hypothesis 3.1 or Hypothesis 3.2 (Chapter 3.5), indicating that the neighbourhood civic group is neither beneficial to cohesive behaviours nor detrimental to cohesive perceptions.

Further analysis with step-wise models (Table E.9 in Appendix E) shows significant improvement in R^2 in models predicting cognitive cohesion when the performance score of the HOA is added (an increase of 46.18% in R^2 for neighbourhood attachment, 26.88% for orientation towards collective goals, and 36.76% for trust). The changes in R^2, however, do not pass the F tests, indicating that the improvement in model fit associated with the HOA is not statistically significant. Apart from a small sample size (n=127) and weak civic capacity (as discussed in Chapter 7.2), there are two reasons why the HOA effect is not statistically significant. First, my observations in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing reveal considerable variations in self-governing organisations across neighbourhoods (as discussed in Chapter 6.4). Other than the variations between HOAs (elected and authorised by the homeowners' assembly) and SMAs (often established with the help of local RCs) discussed at the beginning of this section, even within HOAs, there are huge disparities across neighbourhoods, depending mainly on the power and responsibilities devolved to and exercised by the neighbourhood civic groups. These variations lead to large fluctuations in HOA performance regardless of sample size, which may preclude me from drawing any reliable conclusions about the general relationship between the performance of neighbourhood self-governing organisations and neighbourhood cohesion.

Second, a large body of studies discussing the social effects of the HOA focuses primarily on HOA-oriented contentious actions. They propose a contention-oriented approach where housing conflicts trigger homeowners' common grievances and collective actions (Li, Wen and Xu, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2013; Breitung, 2014; Wu, 2016a), which in turn expand homeowners' neighbourly networks and strengthen their trust in each other (Zhu, 2011; Wang, Li and Cooper, 2017). However, empirical evidence collected in Nanjing does not lend much support for this approach because contentious actions only account for a tiny proportion of neighbouring in the sampled neighbourhoods. According to the survey, only 2.40% of survey respondents had participated in any forms of neighbourhood contentious actions in the past year. Although this rate rises to 4.48% for survey respondents in the empowerment mode, it is too low to trigger any statistically significant neighbourhood effects that can be captured by regression models.

In addition, the step-wise models also reveal the moderation effects of the HOA. Tables E.7, E.8, and E.9 in Appendix E show that the HOA acts as a moderator in the relationships between the RC and almost all dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion, by reducing the coefficients and significance levels of RC performance in the prediction of weak ties, social participation, political participation, neighbourhood attachment, and orientation towards collective goals. Meanwhile, the RC also serves as a moderator for the HOA, since the relationship between HOA performance and social participation differs in strength and significance when RC performance is included in the model (comparing Model 8 and Model 9 in Table E.8, Appendix E). The moderation effects demonstrate the existence of RC-HOA interactions in everyday neighbourhood life. Whether such interactions are cooperative (Fu, 2014) or competitive (Read, 2002) will be further explored quantitatively in the last section of this chapter.

Considering socioeconomic factors, I found that the associations with weak ties are positive for urban and local hukou status, and harmful for homeownership and educational attainment (Model 1 in Table 7.5), which corresponds mostly to the observations in the management mode discussed in the previous section. Meanwhile, the relationships are negative between neighbourhood attachment and length of residence, but positive between neighbourhood attachment and residential satisfaction (Model 5), suggesting that the shorter time a person has spent in their neighbourhood and the more satisfied they are with the residential environment and neighbourhood services, the more likely it is that they will feel attached to their neighbourhood, corresponding to the conclusions of Twigg, Taylor and Mohan (2010). Although the estimated coefficient for the length of residence is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, it is too small (coefficient = −0.030) to be substantively meaningful, indicating that reducing the length of residence is not a practical approach to cultivating neighbourhood attachment.

One should be cautious applying this conclusion to other neighbourhoods with self-governing and empowerment attempts, due to the multiple possible approaches through which neighbourhood empowerment and self-governance are exercised. The empowerment attempts can either be led by the SMA (as happened in most of the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing) or be supported by the HOA, which cases have received increasing academic attention but have rarely been practised in everyday neighbourhood life (Tang, Wang and Chai, 2014; Chen, 2016). The conclusion drawn from the SMA-led empowerment mode may differ significantly from HOA-led empowerment, considering the close relationships between the SMA and local state agencies.

7.5 Building cohesive neighbourhoods with neighbourhood government: a state-mediated form of cohesion

Similar sets of regressions are also carried out to test whether the hypothesised governance-cohesion relationships exist in the sampled neighbourhoods fitting the neighbourhood government mode. The neighbourhood government mode features a leading role for local state agencies in neighbourhood organisational networks. Self-governing organisations are rarely found in these neighbourhoods due to lack of civic capacity. Commercial PMCs tend to be held up by residents who cannot afford to put much money into property management. Therefore, a typical neighbourhood fitting the neighbourhood government mode is often managed by an RC and a state-sponsored PMC. Measures of organisational performances of the RC and the PMC are included in the models as independent variables. The same individual and neighbourhood characteristics are included in the models as control variables.

Table 7.6 Regression models predicting dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the government mode (n=270)

Variables	Model 1 Weak ties	Model 2 Strong ties	Model 3 Social participation	Model 4 Political participation	Model 5 Attachment	Model 6 Collective goals	Model 7 Trust
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances							
RC	−0.062	0.272*	1.417	2.125**	0.149	0.203*	0.161*
	(0.154)	(0.136)	(0.404)	(0.711)	(0.075)	(0.094)	(0.078)
PMC	0.339*	0.115	1.023	0.494**	−0.038	-0.092	−0.076
	(0.136)	(0.130)	(0.314)	(0.176)	(0.078)	(0.097)	(0.081)
Individual factors							
Sex (ref=female)	0.470	0.324	1.329	1.069	0.131	0.204	0.381*
	(0.262)	(0.249)	(0.802)	(0.657)	(0.146)	(0.182)	(0.152)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)							
Urban, non-local	2.336	2.209	-	-	-0.028	0.245	0.202
	(1.538)	(1.363)	-	-	(0.435)	(0.543)	(0.452)
Rural local	2.279**	2.865***	0.379	0.299	0.223	0.599	−0.031
	(0.753)	(0.738)	(0.616)	(0.504)	(0.387)	(0.483)	(0.402)
Urban local	2.415**	2.655***	0.612	0.805	0.284	0.629	−0.052
	(0.763)	(0.720)	(0.944)	(1.343)	(0.368)	(0.459)	(0.382)
Homeownership	−0.760	−0.749	3.620	1.104	−0.649**	−0.302	−0.203
	(0.436)	(0.422)	(3.465)	(0.898)	(0.203)	(0.254)	(0.211)
Length of residence	0.068***	0.033	1.013	1.008	0.005	−0.019	−0.002
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.0488)	(0.0535)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.011)
No. of children	0.045	0.139	0.247**	0.213**	−0.171	−0.138	−0.004
	(0.279)	(0.274)	(0.143)	(0.136)	(0.145)	(0.181)	(0.151)
Years of schooling	−0.164**	−0.076	1.017	1.074	−0.015	0.048	−0.022
	(0.058)	(0.053)	(0.103)	(0.113)	(0.025)	(0.031)	(0.026)
Household income (ln)	−0.280	−0.124	1.246	0.939	0.170	−0.078	0.123

	(0.273)	(0.266)	(0.614)	(0.467)	(0.124)	(0.154)	(0.129)
Neighbourhood factors							
Residential satisfaction	0.528*	0.378	1.674	1.854	0.323***	0.149	0.126
	(0.229)	(0.198)	(0.641)	(0.719)	(0.093)	(0.116)	(0.097)
Neighbourhood type (ref=traditional neighbourhood)							
Privatised work units	−1.138*	−0.564	5.752	2.062	0.148	0.395	0.066
	(0.515)	(0.499)	(7.323)	(2.738)	(0.267)	(0.333)	(0.278)
Commodity neighbourhoods	−1.136	−1.382	-	-	0.250	0.595	0.258
	(1.528)	(1.364)	-	-	(0.474)	(0.591)	(0.493)
Affordable neighbourhoods	1.278**	0.959*	0.586	0.665	0.123	0.362	0.254
	(0.423)	(0.412)	(0.444)	(0.549)	(0.197)	(0.246)	(0.205)
Constant	1.526	−0.863	0.0441	0.592	2.162***	1.610*	2.777***
	(1.276)	(1.206)	(0.100)	(1.487)	(0.568)	(0.709)	(0.590)
Pseudo R^2	0.0587	0.0710	0.2443	0.2315	0.4067[a]	0.2671[a]	0.2356[a]

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$; a) R^2 is presented for Models 5, 6, and 7.

7.5.1   RC-led cohesion building in neighbourhood government

The regression results presented in Table 7.6 reveal positive associations between performances of the RC and almost all measures of neighbourhood cohesion, indicating that the state-centred approach has the potential to reach both the behavioural and the cognitive dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion in the neighbourhood government mode—supporting both Hypothesis 1.1 and Hypothesis 1.2 (Chapter 3.5). To be more specific, the RC plays a significant role in the prediction of neighbourhood strong ties (coefficient = 0.272, p<0.05) as well as neighbourly trust (coefficient = 0.161, p<0.05). The RC-trust relationship can be partly interpreted in the same way as in the partnership and management modes (e.g. through regime support and insitutional trust since the major governing approaches that RCs adopt are 'considerably consistent' (Read, 2003, p.47) across most neighbourhoods.

However, what distinguishes the neighbourhood government mode from other modes of governance is that the 'community-saved' argument is supported by most affordable and traditional neighbourhoods managed by the neighbourhood government (as discussed in Chapter 5.2.1). The dense neighbourly networks preserved in these neighbourhoods act as a social foundation for the RC's 'loyalist-activist networks', which on the one hand increase the RC's governing capacity through facilitating information transmission, resource reallocation, and co-production of neighbourhood services; and on the other hand strengthen interpersonal ties through the shared experiences of serving the neighbourhood, and formal identities linked with the party-state (as happened in Neighbourhood DS; see detailed discussion in Chapter 6.5.2). Therefore, instead of a clear direction for the causal arrow, the relationships between RC performance and neighbourly ties are likely to run in both directions in the neighbourhood government mode. Effective RCs have the potential to cultivate close-knit social networks through government-sponsored community activities and the co-production of neighbourhood services with volunteers and activists. They are also facilitated by the dense neighbourly networks preserved in these neighbourhoods, which are inherited from kinship networks (in affordable and resettlement neighbourhoods), and cultivated by long periods of co-working (in privatised work units) and cohabitation (in both traditional neighbourhoods and privatised work units).

Moreover, statistically significant relationships at the 0.05 level or greater are also found between RC performance and other measures of neighbourhood cohesion, including political participation (odds ratio = 2.215, p<0.01) and orientation towards collective goals (coefficient = 0.203, p<0.05). The positive relationships between RC performance and civic engagement—measured by both the action of engagement (e.g. political participation) and the willingness to engage (e.g.

orientation towards collective goals), can be interpreted in ways that differ from those in discussions of the management mode (Chapter 7.3). These differences are revealed by the comparisons of the aims and identities of participants. Rather than the responsible and civic-minded citizens in the management mode, who participate due to legitimacy and responsibility to protect their own property (e.g. Chen, 2010, 2016; Lo, 2013), the most active participants in the government mode in Nanjing are those sharing close relationships with the local state agency—either welfare recipients (welfare-oriented participation, as discussed in Chapter 6.5.2) or neighbourhood activists (*jiji fenzi*) and CPC members (commitment-oriented participation, as discussed in Chapter 6.5.3). Therefore, in the neighbourhood government mode, RCs play a 'controlled' facilitative role in the cultivation of both actions of and willingness for community participation. The local state agencies promote regimented 'invented spaces' for civic engagement, from which a state-mediated form of cohesion can emerge.

7.5.2 PMC-led cohesion building in neighbourhood government

As for the PMC, the regressions show that it has a determinant role in the prediction of behavioural cohesion whereby weak ties (incidence rate ratio= 1.404, p<0.05) is positively and political participation (odds ratio = 0.494, p<0.01) is negatively associated with perceived PMC performance. The former finding opposes Hypothesis 2.1 (Chapter 3.5), which states that PMCs promote informal neighbourhood interactions, while the latter finding supports Hypothesis 2.1 (Chapter 3.5), indicating that PMCs hinder community political engagement in neighbourhoods fitting the government mode. As PMCs in the government mode are mostly sponsored or subsided by the local state, their positive associations with neighbourly ties can be interpreted in ways similar to that of local state agencies, as discussed in previous paragraphs. Their negative associations with community participation, however, can be seen as an extension of the 'contention-oriented approach' widely documented in commodity neighbourhoods (Li *et al.*, 2006; Wang, Zhengxu *et al.*, 2013; Breitung, 2014; Wu, X., 2016). The dissatisfaction with PMC performances triggers community political participation, albeit often in more cooperative and less antagonistic forms, as revealed by an interview with a resident in Neighbourhood QX: 'once the PMC does not work well, we will turn to the RC, either for suggestions or complaints' (*November 11, 2017*). Apart from these relationships, it is worth noting that the PMC no longer plays a significant role in the cultivation of neighbourhood attachment in the neighbourhood government mode, which differs from its facilitative roles in other types of neighbourhood. This is because PMCs in the government mode are more or less related to the local state. Rather than private governance, state-sponsored PMCs represent a welfare-oriented property management system aimed at distributing essential services and reinforcing basic security in disadvantaged areas. Such

a management system, even when it operates effectively, fails to cultivate neighbourhood cohesion. This observation also confirms the research of Lu, Zhang and Wu (2018), which states that only private provision of community goods has the potential to cultivate neighbourhood attachment.

Apart from organisational performance, the regression models indicate that less-educated local residents who reside in a neighbourhood for a long time tend to have more friends in their neighbourhoods, especially when they are more satisfied with neighbourhood services (Model 1). Family obligation contributes negatively to participatory cohesion in the government mode, both socially and politically (Models 3 and 4). This contrasts to observations in the management and empowerment mode, indicating the unique welfare-oriented nature of community participation in the government mode. Meanwhile, a positive relationship is found between neighbourhood attachment and residential satisfaction, and this relationship turns negative when neighbourhood attachment is linked with homeownership (Model 5). This contrasts with existing studies arguing for higher levels of attachment among homeowners (Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2017b), which is probably because most neighbourhoods fitting the government mode are low-income neighbourhoods with poorly managed facilities and environment. The dissatisfaction with their neighbourhood environment prevents homeowners from developing strong emotional belongingness to the neighbourhood.

To sum up, the strong intervention of the state sets the neighbourhood government mode apart from other modes of governance. As the leading organisation in the neighbourhood government mode, the RC actively engages in neighbourhood life and contributes to both behavioural and cognitive cohesion. Its facilitative role in building cohesive neighbourhoods, however, should be interpreted with caution from two angles. Rather than having causality, effective RCs and dense neighbourly ties mutually enhance each other—an extension of the 'administrative grassroots engagement' (Read, 2003, p.iii). Instead of emphasising self-governance and responsibility, most community participation in the government mode is welfare and commitment-oriented. Such participation is promoted, as well as controlled, by the local state agency, leading to a state-mediated form of neighbourhood cohesion.

7.6   An exploration of organisational interactions

As discussed in the previous sections, not only individual organisations but also their interactions, play a significant role in the political construction of cohesive neighbourhoods in Nanjing. In this section, I will explore the effects of interaction in the cohesion-building process. By including performance scores of multiple organisations and their interactions simultaneously in the

regression analysis, I can disentangle the directions and strengths of the interaction effects and search for different relationships across neighbourhood organisations.

The following part will take neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode as an example. It will address interactions between the RC and the HOA in the cultivation of behavioural and cognitive cohesion. Discussion of other interactions in other types of neighbourhood is not included here due to limited space. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 7.7. All organisational performance measures have been group centred for better interpretability.

Table 7.7 Regression models predicting dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion with perceived performances of RCs and HOAs in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode (n=127, group centred)

Variables	Model 1 Weak ties	Model 2 Strong ties	Model 3 Social participation	Model 4 Political participation	Model 5 Attachment	Model 6 Collective goals	Model 7 Trust
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances							
RC	−0.400	−0.620*	0.317	0.782	0.176	−0.225	−0.349
	(0.267)	(0.290)	(0.371)	(1.000)	(0.204)	(0.284)	(0.179)
HOA	0.040	0.377	0.523	0.558	−0.379*	0.310	−0.172
	(0.256)	(0.270)	(0.534)	(0.668)	(0.220)	(0.309)	(0.195)
RC-HOA interaction	−0.212	0.699***	1.035	0.431	−0.336*	0.290	−0.129
	(0.168)	(0.207)	(0.799)	(0.348)	(0.168)	(0.234)	(0.148)
Individual factors							
Sex (ref=female)	−0.438	−0.086	1.259	3.840	−0.179	0.224	−0.002
	(0.276)	(0.322)	(1.551)	(5.298)	(0.285)	(0.363)	(0.229)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)							
Urban, non-local	0.837	16.094	-	-	1.581	0.607	1.321
	(0.961)	(640.175)	-	-	(0.919)	(1.258)	(0.794)
Rural local	2.454	12.038	-	-	2.933	3.619	1.015
	(1.368)	(640.176)	-	-	(1.436)	(1.817)	(1.146)
Urban local	3.746***	14.373	-	-	0.967	1.541	0.862
	(0.944)	(640.175)	-	-	(0.926)	(1.242)	(0.784)
Homeownership	−2.227**	0.997	-	-	−0.166	−0.099	−0.063
	(0.766)	(0.997)	-	-	(0.725)	(1.016)	(0.641)
Length of residence	0.020	0.021	1.056	1.131	−0.032*	−0.021	0.006
	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.0661)	(0.104)	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.011)
No. of children	0.409	0.091	1.730	1.472	−0.454	−0.289	0.142
	(0.287)	(0.331)	(2.102)	(2.383)	(0.293)	(0.401)	(0.253)
Years of schooling	−0.143**	−0.003	0.727	1.084	0.011	0.044	−0.031

	(0.055)	(0.059)	(0.156)	(0.261)	(0.050)	(0.067)	(0.042)
Household income (ln)	0.360	0.341	3.379	2.975	−0.176	−0.160	0.137
	(0.331)	(0.350)	(4.609)	(4.859)	(0.268)	(0.376)	(0.237)
Neighbourhood factors							
Residential satisfaction	0.273	−0.325	0.772	2.192	0.451**	0.068	0.261
	(0.173)	(0.182)	(0.553)	(1.597)	(0.156)	(0.217)	(0.137)
Neighbourhood type (ref=traditional neighbourhood)							
Privatised work units	0.060	0.135	0.0377**	0.281	0.247	−0.067	−0.131
	(0.274)	(0.294)	(0.0594)	(0.410)	(0.281)	(0.351)	(0.222)
Commodity neighbourhoods	−0.932	−2.123*	1.389	-	1.087	−0.711	0.148
	(0.764)	(0.843)	(5.151)	-	(0.672)	(0.932)	(0.588)
Constant	2.015	−13.731	12.98	0.00177	1.784	1.538	2.180*
	(1.238)	(640.175)	(68.59)	(0.0121)	(1.297)	(1.526)	(0.963)
Pseudo R^2	0.0885	0.1463	0.3159	0.2327	0.6845[a]	0.4772[a]	0.6649[a]

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$; a) R^2 is presented for Models 5, 6, and 7.

The results show that significant interaction effects between the RC and the HOA can be found predicting strong ties (coefficient = 0.699, p<0.001) and neighbourhood attachment (coefficient = –0.336, p<0.05). The presence of statistically significant interactions indicates that an RC's effects on strong ties and neighbourhood attachment are different when the corresponding HOA performs differently, and vice versa—as shown by the plots of conditional marginal effects (Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.4). The left part of Figure 7.3 illustrates how the conditional marginal effect of the RC on strong ties change across the observed range of HOA performances. The upward-sloping line, as well as the 95 confidence intervals around the line, indicates that the reductive effect of the RC on strong ties (indicated by its negative coefficient) is mitigated when the performance of the corresponding HOA improves. These marginal effects are statistically significant at the 0.05 level when both bounds of the confidence interval are above (or below) the zero line. That is to say, when the average score of the HOA is higher than 3.7, I am 95% confident that the higher score the HOA has, the less negatively the RC is associated with strong neighbourly ties. A similar interpretation can be applied to the role of the RC in the HOA–strong ties relationship (the right part of Figure 7.3). The marginal effects plot indicates that the higher the RC scores, the less negative/more positive the HOA is in predicting the number of friends a person has in their neighbourhood. The marginal effects are statistically significant when the score of the RC is higher than 3.9.
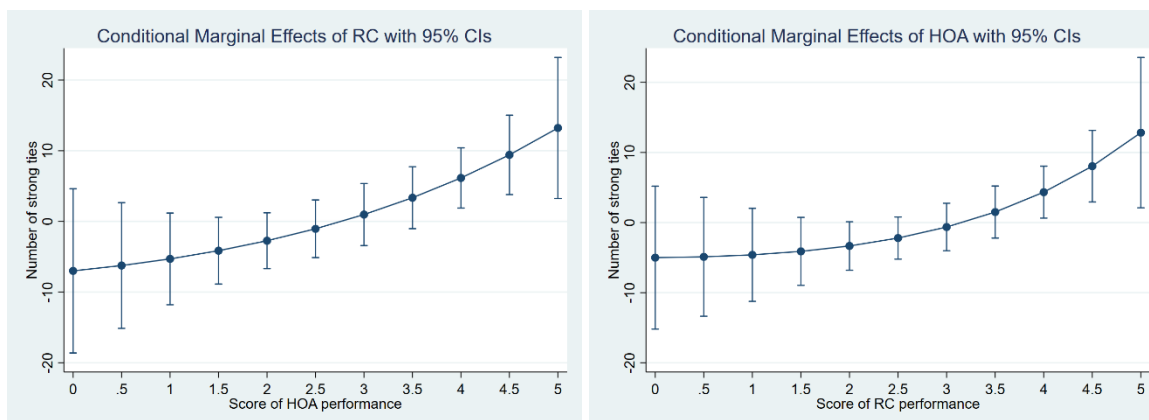
Figure 7.3 Conditional marginal effects of HOA performance on strong ties affected by RC performance (left) and RC performance on strong ties affected by HOA performance (right) in the neighbourhood empowerment mode

Similar analysis is carried out to examine the conditional marginal effects of the HOA and the RC on neighbourhood attachment (Figure 7.4). The downward-sloping line, as well as the 95 confidence intervals around the line, indicate that the HOA plays a negative role in the RC-

attachment relationship, and this role is statistically significant with a high-performing HOA (scores higher than 4.5). Similarly, the RC acts as a moderator in the HOA-attachment relationship. It negatively affects the HOA-attachment relationship, and these interaction effects are statistically significant only with a poorly performing RC (scores lower than 2.4).
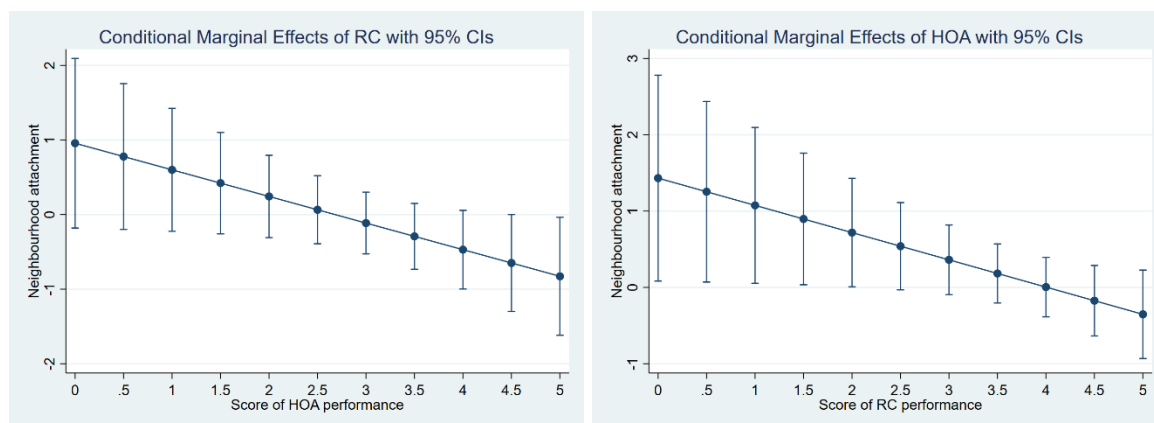
Figure 7.4 Conditional marginal effects of HOA performance on neighbourhood attachment affected by RC performance (left) and RC performance on neighbourhood attachment affected by HOA performance (right) in the neighbourhood empowerment mode

Comparing Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.4, the interaction effects between the RC and the HOA work in diverging ways for strong ties and attachment. For the behavioural dimension of neighbourhood cohesion, the RC and the HOA mutually reinforce each other's efforts to foster neighbourly ties and cultivate neighbourhood networks. For the cognitive dimension of neighbourhood cohesion, however, the RC and the HOA compete and undermine each other's cohesion-building efforts. This is further demonstrated by the contour plots (Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.6). The two figures are coloured in opposite ways. Areas coloured yellow-red—representing more neighbourly strong ties or deep neighbourhood attachment—are found in the lower-left corner and upper-right corner in Figure 7.5, and in the upper-left and lower-right corners in Figure 7.6. That is to say, dense neighbourly ties tend to be concentrated in neighbourhoods where both the RC and the HOA work highly effectively (a 'high-high' scenario) or highly ineffectively (a 'low-low' scenario) at the same time. In both scenarios, the HOA and the RC mutually enhance each other—a representation of the 'state-society' synergy (Evans, 1996). When one organisation performs better, the relationship between neighbourhood cohesion and the other organisation is improved. The mutually reinforcing effects can be understood from both directions. On the one hand, the RC works as a modifier between neighbourhood organisations and residents through fiscal, administrative, and policy support. As discussed in Chapter 6.4.2, the RC provides vital support and institutional spaces for civic participation (particularly those associated with SMAs),

which trigger informal neighbourhood interactions. On the other hand, self-governing organisations act as a moderator between the state agency and the society. The interview with an RC member of Neighbourhood W indicates that well-organised self-governing organisations can relieve the fiscal and administrative pressure on the RC by assisting residents with daily issues, taking care of the elderly, and organising sport and cultural activities that unite the community (December 20, 2017). More importantly, in the empowerment mode, the self-governing organisation is capable of delivering neighbourhood services by itself, which compensates for the retreat of the state and the failure of the market. Otherwise, responsibility for service delivery would be shouldered by local state agencies instead. That is why local RCs are often highly supportive of SMAs, as happened in Neighbourhood X and D.
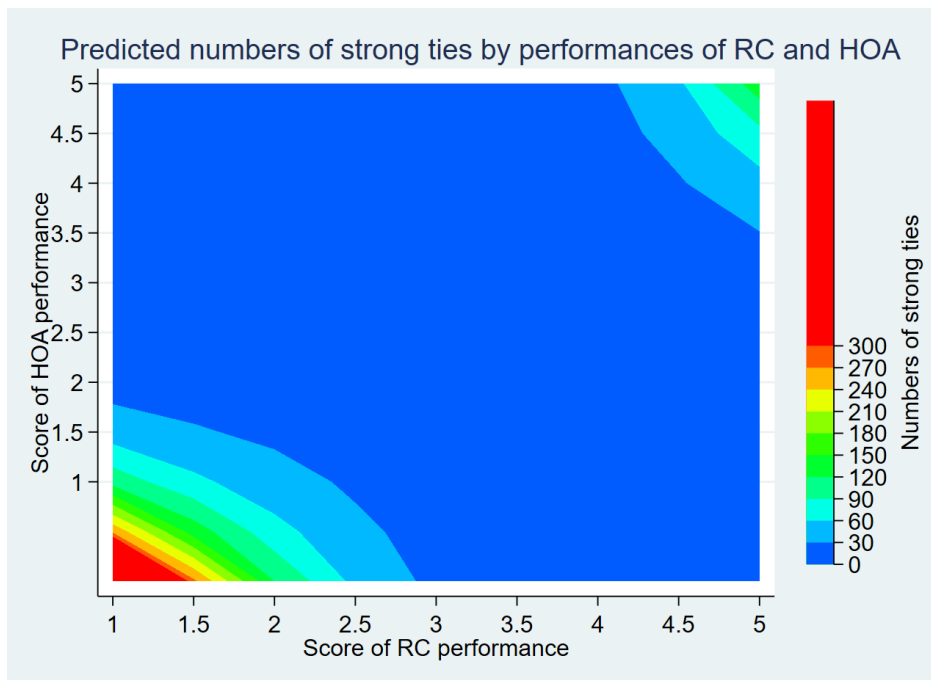
Figure 7.5 Predicted strength of strong ties by performances of the RC and HOA in the neighbourhood empowerment mode

On the other hand, deep neighbourhood attachment is more likely to be found in neighbourhoods where either the HOA or the RC operates effectively—the 'high-low' scenario. This is especially the case with effective HOAs and poorly-performing RCs, considering the large reddish area in the upper left corner in Figure 7.6. The 'high-low' scenario of neighbourhood attachment in the empowerment mode can be interpreted from two angles. First, the self-governing organisation acts not only as the platform for collective decision making but as the primary provider of neighbourhood services in the empowerment mode. The explanation associated with the privatisation of services to foster attachment may apply to the empowered self-governing

organisation as well. Neighbourhood attachment in the empowerment mode is thus generated from satisfaction with the services provided by the empowered self-governing organisation. The more productive an HOA is at providing neighbourhood public goods, the more likely it is that a person will feel attached to their neighbourhood. Second, the contrasting relationships between the RC and the HOA reveal potential areas of competition between the two organisations. Competition is more likely to happen in areas relating to cognitive cohesion. That is to say, the RC and the self-governing organisation compete for a political identity that residents feel attached to (the cognitive dimension), rather than for residents' participatory energies (the behavioural dimension), which is different from situations observed previously (Read, 2002; Shi, 2010).
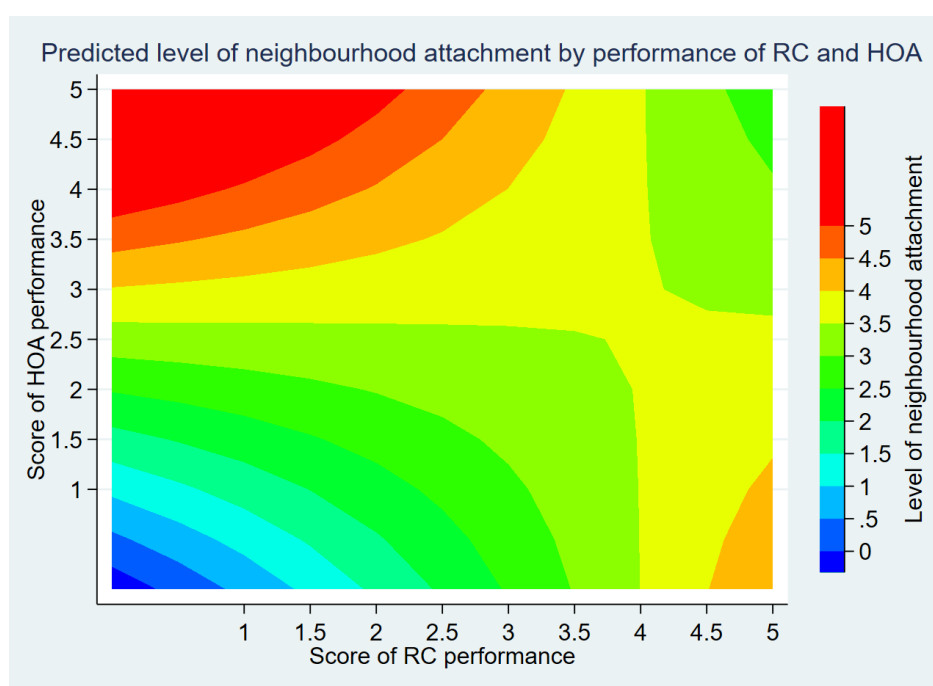
Figure 7.6 Predicted neighbourhood attachment by performances of the RC and HOA in the neighbourhood empowerment mode

Taking these scenarios of cohesion building together, it is too broad-brush to assert that the interactions between the local state agency and the self-governing organisation are entirely cooperative (Fu, 2014) or competitive (Read, 2002; Huang, 2014). Instead, the Nanjing case tells us that in everyday neighbourhood life the RC and the HOA/SMA are more likely to cooperate in areas relating to the behavioural dimensions of cohesion, such as organising neighbourhood activities and promoting community participation. They are more likely to compete with each other in the cognitive dimensions, such as competing for a well-recognised identity that can represent the community—an identity closely associated with the legitimacy of the organisation.

7.7   Conclusion

To summarise, in this chapter I explored the underlying question of the geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood: whether and how the rise of neighbourhood governance fits into the discussion of the crisis, if it exists, of neighbourhood cohesion. To explore this question, I quantitatively measured both neighbourhood governance and neighbourhood cohesion with a city-wide survey in the city of Nanjing, China, and their relationships were modelled with multiple regression strategies. The analysis reveals multiple scenarios of cohesion building on the neighbourhood level, which go well beyond the static scenarios described by the state-led, market-led, and society-centred approaches. These scenarios are not only shaped by the major actors involved (i.e. leading neighbourhood organisations) but are influenced by the power relations between these actors, which are deeply embedded in local cultural and institutional environments.

Before delving into any details of the cohesion-building process, I first summarise the general picture of the governance-cohesion relationships in Table 7.8. Three main conclusions can be drawn from comparing multiple cohesion-governance relationships across neighbourhood governance types.

Table 7.8 Directions of main effects of organisational performance on dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion (by neighbourhood governance type)

Cohesion measures / Organisation	Behavioural cohesion				Cognitive cohesion		
	Weak ties	Strong ties	Social partici-pation	Political partici-pation	Attach-ment	Collective goals	Trust
Neighbourhood partnership (n=126)							
RC							+***
HOA							
PMC					+*		
Neighbourhood management (n=234)							
RC		+***				+*	+**
PMC						+*	+**
Neighbourhood empowerment (n=127)							
RC							+*
HOA							
Neighbourhood government (n=270)							
RC		+*		+**		+*	+*
PMC	+*			-**			

Note: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. Non–statistically significant results are not presented in the table. Areas are shaded if the relationships between the neighbourhood organisation and measures of neighbourhood cohesion support the relevant hypothesis.

First, the comparisons across rows in Table 7.8 indicate that the dimensions and measures of neighbourhood cohesion are not homogeneously affected by neighbourhood governance. This demonstrates the necessity for a pluralistic analytical approach to cohesion—which has been widely discussed theoretically (e.g. Chan, To and Chan, 2006; Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009; Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017; Fonseca, Lukosch and Brazier, 2018) but seldom tested empirically. The empirical evidence in Nanjing shows that neighbourly ties and neighbourhood sentiment are more sensitive to changes in neighbourhood governance effectiveness compared to community participation. To be more specific, the determinant role of the RC in cultivating strong neighbourly ties has been revealed in neighbourhood management and neighbourhood government. The PMC, when it is sponsored by the local state, also plays an active role in building local social networks, as happens in the neighbourhood government mode. Regarding cognitive cohesion, the RC has the potential to spread cooperative norms and expand its radius of trust from institutional trust to trust more widely within the neighbourhood. The performance of the PMC is positively associated with neighbourhood attachment in all neighbourhoods except those in fitting the government mode. Regarding participatory cohesion, statistically significant relationships are only found in the neighbourhood government mode between the performances of local state agencies and political participation, most of which are welfare- and commitment-oriented.

Second, comparisons across columns in Table 7.8 reveal the different roles that neighbourhood actors play in the cohesion-building process, indicating the coexistence of multiple cohesion-building approaches led by different neighbourhood organisations. The RCs, as 'pseudo-state' grassroots organisations (Yip and Jiang, 2011) with stable funding and 'formal identities', encourage the sustainable growth of behavioural and cognitive cohesion on the neighbourhood level, particularly the growth of neighbourly trust. The facilitative role that RCs play is quite stable across neighbourhood types, indicating the 'considerable consistency' (Read, 2003, p.47) of the RC system. The RCs also play an active role in cultivating orientation towards collective actions in the management and government mode, where there is no effective mechanism for collective decision making in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, PMCs, as market institutions, are associated with the cognitive dimension of neighbourhood cohesion in all privately-managed sampled neighbourhoods (e.g. those not fit into the government mode). This is especially the case for neighbourhood attachment, which consolidates the idea that the private provision of community service through the PMC, if it operates effectively, can act as a new social bonding mechanism that cultivates responsible and governable citizens who feel a sense of emotional belonging to their neighbourhood (Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018). This new bonding mechanism has a broader social impact on collective goals and neighbourly trust in the neighbourhood management mode, where

the PMC plays a dominant role. Unlike the state and market institutions, the neighbourhood civic groups (e.g. HOAs) in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing showed weak civic capacities and organisational abilities, which prevented them from developing into a strong force that bonds residents together—contrasting with the view of those favouring civil society theories, who argue for the revolutionary role of neighbourhood civic groups (e.g. Davis, 2006; Fu and Lin, 2014; Xia and Guan, 2017).

Third, apart from the multiple dimensions of cohesion and diverse actors of governance, the plurality of cohesion building is also captured by the effects of interaction between neighbourhood organisations. That is, levels of cohesive behaviours and perceptions are not only conditioned by the performance of the neighbourhood actor, but also by its inter-relationships with other actors in the local context—which have never been taken into account quantitatively by previous studies focusing only on a single neighbourhood organisation (e.g. Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015). The effects of these interactions are explored through the holistic framework by simultaneously including multiple neighbourhood organisations in the regression models. By doing this, I addressed how neighbourhood organisations are embedded in the neighbourhood governance networks, and affect, as well as being affected by, other actors in the governance network. It was found that the HOA, for instance, acts as a moderator that modifies the strengths of the RC-participation relationship and the PMC-participation relationship in the partnership mode. It also moderates the RC's relationship with neighbourly ties and cohesive perceptions in the empowerment mode. Further explorations of organisational interaction in the empowerment mode indicate that the effects of interaction can either be cooperative (Fu, 2014) or competitive (Read, 2002): the state agency and the civic group reinforce each other's efforts in building participatory cohesion through mobilising participation and co-organising community activities. At the same time, the two actors compete with each other for a political identity that residents feel attached to.

Taking all sources of plurality together, the empirical evidence in Nanjing indicates that there is not a single conclusion about whether neighbourhood governance fits into the discussion of neighbourhood cohesion. Even for the same neighbourhood organisation, its relationships with the same dimension of neighbourhood cohesion can be different when interacting with different organisations in different local contexts. The multiple regressions conducted in this chapter highlight multiple possible relationships between governance and cohesion, some of which have neoliberal characteristics (e.g. effective PMCs and increasing neighbourhood attachment),some fit into the discussion on communitarianism and governing through communities (e.g. the HOA in the state-society synergy, and the cultivation of neighbourly ties in the neighbourhood empowerment mode), and others show the strong influence of the party-state (e.g. the RC's role

in cultivating neighbourly trust). The multiple possibilities of neighbourhood cohesion highlight the significance of 'plural causalities' (Pickvance, 1986): similar outcomes may be attributed to different causes (e.g. led by a different neighbourhood organisation or following a different cohesion-building process), and similar inputs may generate different outputs as well (e.g. considering local embeddedness and organisational relationships of neighbourhood governance). What matters in understanding neighbourhood phenomena is not only the different approaches led by different actors, such as the state-led approach (Liu, 2007a; Wan, 2013; Wang, Liu and Pavlićević, 2018), the market-led approach (Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018), and the society-led approach to cohesion building (Yip and Forrest, 2002; Read, 2008; Fu *et al.*, 2015), but how these approaches are embedded in local power relations and operate 'on the ground'.

Chapter 8   Conclusion

The neighbourhood is not only a spatial container of social relations and processes (Gieryn, 2000) but also 'spatialised governmentality' (Jacoby, 2017). The purpose of this research was to consider whether and how the neighbourhood acts effectively as a spatial level of governance in otherwise liberated communities, and whether it has the potential to transform such communities into spatially-bounded governable sites and facilitate a greater local-oriented notion of cohesion. The structural tension between the liberation of social relationships from residential neighbourhoods and the concentration of power relationships in neighbourhood governance was mitigated in this research through a comparative investigation of the social and political geographies of neighbourhoods in the city of Nanjing, China.

Drawing on fieldwork in 32 neighbourhoods in Nanjing, including a survey of almost 1000 residents and interviews with 60 key informants, this research made use of a sequential explanatory approach to unravel the entwined social and political processes within the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. It mapped the spatial distribution of neighbourhood cohesiveness (both neighbourhood-based social ties and local solidarities) with the survey data and ascertained local variations of governance arrangements (involving multiple actors in a variety of configurations) with qualitative information collected via interviews, site visits, and participant observations. The assessment of both the social and political geographies of the sampled neighbourhoods enabled exploration of the relationships between the two processes, i.e. the relationships between varying levels of neighbourhood cohesion and the varied roles of neighbourhood organisations in different neighbourhood contexts, which shed light on practical possibilities for mitigating the structural contestation between liberated communities and revived neighbourhood governance in urban Nanjing.

The main lessons learned from this research will be further presented in the following sections. In the first section, I will elaborate the main findings of this research relating to each research question. I will also talk about the potential contributions, both theoretical and methodological of these findings. After that, there will be a discussion of the broader implications of the research, in relation to wider debates on China's urban governance and comparative urban studies. This chapter will end with the limitations of the research and possible future lines of enquiry.

8.1 Main findings and contributions

This research addressed the geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood with the empirical case of Nanjing, China. It examined the social and institutional processes that generate and sustain neighbourhood connections and social solidarity in otherwise liberated urban communities. By examining the social and political geographies of urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing, this research revealed the 'multiplicity' of neighbourhood life in urban Nanjing and answered three research questions: *how neighbourhood cohesion is distributed in different neighbourhoods in urban Nanjing* (Research Question 1), *what the major forms of governance arrangement are in urban Nanjing* (Research Question 2), and *how neighbourhood governance arrangements and neighbourhood social cohesion are related* (Research Question 3).

8.1.1 The development of neighbourhood cohesion

Drawing on the resident survey conducted in 32 neighbourhoods in Nanjing, this thesis provides a comprehensive description of the social geography of neighbourhood cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods. Cohesive behaviours and perceptions territorialised in the sampled neighbourhoods were reversed reflections of 'liberated community' (Wellman, 1979, 1996) and the 'crisis of social cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). The measurement of these indicators, therefore, enabled me to revisit the cohesion debate in the local context of Nanjing, and answer the first research question.

The multilevel regression analyses conducted in Chapter 5 revealed a complex picture of the spatial distribution of neighbourhood cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing. Rather than demonstrating assertions of 'community liberated' (Wellman, 1979, 1996) or a 'crisis of social cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001), the empirical evidence showed that urban neighbourhoods in Nanjing have undergone a transformation of territorial community and seen the development of local forms of cohesion, which depend both on the type of neighbourhood and the dimension of cohesion.

To be more specific, the observations in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing showed that neighbourly ties and neighbourhood interactions decreased between more established neighbourhoods and newly established neighbourhoods. While the neighbourhood itself remained a meaningful spatial container for social interactions in some neighbourhoods (e.g. affordable neighbourhoods and privatised work units), it was no longer the basis of social life for most residents in newly established commodity housing estates, where their levels of neighbourly interaction were significantly lower than in other neighbourhoods. This observation in Nanjing echoes existing research in other cities across China, such as Tian's (1997) survey in Wuhan,

Farrer's (2002) study in Shanghai, and Forrest and Yip's (2007) research in Guangzhou, indicating that Chineses cities, like Western ones, are experiencing a decrease in territory-based social ties during the rapid process of urbanisation and modernisation.

Apart from the decrease in neighbourly ties, the analysis also indicated a diversification of community participation. Unlike for neighbourly ties, the differences between levels of community involvement lie primarily between disadvantaged and middle-class neighbourhoods—which is different from the findings of previous studies which assert that variations in local involvement are found between old and new neighbourhoods (Forrest and Yip, 2007; J. Li, 2009). Compared with other neighbourhoods, the sampled commodity neighbourhoods hosted a considerable level of community participation among middle-class homeowners, particularly rights-oriented participation in the collective decision-making process (led either by the RC or the HOA). This observation challenged Forrest and Yip's (2007) argument that only a low level of engagement persisted in urban neighbourhoods in contemporary China, since that study only took RC-oriented participation into account, and overlooked neighbourhood civic groups. The Nanjing survey also indicated that in affordable neighbourhoods (some of which were built in the last ten years), the disadvantaged residents were less likely to take part in community activities than in other neighbourhoods—confirming the relative deprivation theory (Galster, 2010). If there were any participatory behaviours among these disadvantaged groups, they were more likely to be mobilised through material incentives (Chen and Yao, 2005) or social exchanges (Li, 2008)—a manifestation of welfare-oriented participation.

Meanwhile, cognitive cohesion (in terms of neighbourhood attachment, orientation towards collective goals, and neighbourly trust) was also found to be distributed heterogeneously across the sampled neighbourhoods. Compared with those in other neighbourhoods, survey respondents in the sampled commodity housing estates were the most satisfied with their neighbourhood environment and scored the highest in attachment-related questions, demonstrating high levels of environment-oriented attachment (Li, Zhu and Li, 2012; Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012; Liu et al., 2017). At the same time, the sampled privatised work units were found to be home to more trusting and reciprocal citizens than commodity neighbourhoods, indicating that traditional practices based on collectivism still existed in privatised communities. This observation provides a counterargument to the assertion that urbanisation and modernisation will inevitably lead to a 'loss of community' and a 'crisis of cohesion' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001) and produce 'passive accepters' and 'critical thinkers' with lower levels of trust (Geddes and Zaller, 1989).

Taking all dimensions of cohesion together, the Nanjing story did not manifest a clear trend of 'liberation' or 'crisis', but rather showed multiple development trajectories. While most neighbourly ties extended (at least partly) beyond the spatial boundaries of the neighbourhood (particularly in commodity neighbourhoods), emerging participatory behaviours were observed within the sampled neighbourhoods, where increasing opportunities were provided by various neighbourhood organisations for residents to get involved in collective decision making (e.g. RC-led participation in traditional and affordable neighbourhoods, and HOA-led participation in commodity neighbourhoods). Neighbourhood sentiment also manifested differently in different types of neighbourhood: while neighbourhood attachment originated from neighbourly contacts and social ties in traditional neighbourhoods, its source changed to satisfaction with the residential environment in neighbourhoods where services had been privatised (e.g. commodity neighbourhoods and some affordable neighbourhoods). Among these multiple development trajectories, those in commodity housing estates are worth special attention, since the commodity neighbourhood has become a major type of residential organisation in urban China and has gradually replaced other types of neighbourhood in urban regeneration projects (Gui and Huang, 2006). As Guest (2000) commented, commodity neighbourhoods, as 'mediate communit[ies]', do not bring an end to community life, since the decline of neighbourly ties does not imply the inevitable demise of territorially based communities, and the increasing opportunities for civic participation and strengthened forms of neighbourhood attachment all counterbalance the general 'crisis in social cohesion'. It is thus reasonable to infer that the prevalence of commodity neighbourhoods does not inevitably trigger a 'loss of community'. Instead, the social characteristics of commodity neighbourhoods, such as loose neighbourly ties, rights-oriented participation, and environment-oriented community sentiment, shed light on the future development of neighbourhood cohesion in urban China.

It is worth considering the value of the approach used to map the spatial distribution of neighbourhood cohesion in this research. Realising the coexistence of behavioural and cognitive cohesion, I adopted a pluralistic analytical approach to capture the dimensional differences in neighbourhood cohesion in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, where observable characteristics were identified and aggregated coherently to describe the 'collective togetherness' of the residents (Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017). This is a fundamental departure from the method applied widely in existing neighbourhood research in China that focuses only on one dimension of cohesion (Yip, 2012; Wang, Zhang and Wu, 2016, 2017c). These approaches mask the dimensional differences in neighbourhood cohesion and therefore fail to provide conclusive evidence about changing neighbourhoods in the post-reform period (Wu, 2012). These dimensional differences are significant since they represent how neighbourly interactions,

community participation, and neighbourhood sentiment are distributed differently and are associated with covariates in different ways. More importantly, they convey nuanced interpretations of multifaceted neighbourhood life, which can not be simplified into a general trend of 'community liberated' or 'community saved'. For example, the comparison between frequent rights-oriented participation among loosely connected middle-class homeowners in commodity neighbourhoods, and casual participation in welfare-oriented activities among tight-knit residents in affordable neighbourhoods implies that neighbourhood interactions and civic participation do not always evolve in the same direction. The presence of neighbourly ties and neighbourhood-based social networks does not necessarily transform into participatory cohesion, which may break out of the 'virtuous circle' hypothesised by Putnam, Robert and Raffaella (1993), and shed light on new directions of community development.

8.1.2   The diverse arrangements of neighbourhood governance

Apart from the social geography, the political geography of neighbourhoods was also examined in the case of Nanjing. Drawing on interviews, site visits, and participant observations in 32 sampled neighbourhoods in Chapter 6, I addressed the second research question: *what are the major forms of governance arrangement in urban Nanjing?* I took a mid-level view to explore how neighbourhood governance worked out differently in different neighbourhoods. The mid-level view, which is seldom employed by existing research, struck a balance between diversity and generalisation. The focus was on neither national nor city-wide policies—a view from altitude that overlooks diversity on the ground—nor just one or two neighbourhoods or mode(s) of governance—a narrow focus that makes generalisation and theory building difficult. Instead, the mid-level comparison unravelled the diverse and complex ways that neighbourhood governance was worked out 'on the ground' even at the scale of one city (Nanjing), let alone the scale of the nation-state or the globe.

Four modes of neighbourhood governance were identified in Nanjing: neighbourhood partnership, neighbourhood management, neighbourhood empowerment, and neighbourhood government—a comprehensive answer to Research Question 2. To be more specific, an ideal neighbourhood partnership mode favours co-governance between responsible PMCs, active HOAs, cooperative homeowners, and facilitative RCs, stabilised by both the market contract (between the PMC and the HOA) and the social contract (between the HOA and homeowners). The capacities of co-governance, however, varied significantly across the sampled neighbourhoods. Regarding the market contract, the empirical evidence in Nanjing suggested that PMCs tended to respond best when external pressure was applied to them, either by HOAs or local state agencies. While effective coordination and supervision systems were lacking—as in

most sampled neighbourhoods—PMCs often acquired strong power and a good bargaining position in the contractual relationship. This was one fundamental reason why neighbourhood contentious actions were emerging. Regarding the social contract, low participation rates undermined the representativeness of the HOA. Increasing heterogeneities among homeowners further worsened this problem, turning the workings of the HOA into faction politics in the most extreme cases (such as in Neighbourhood YY). As the RC was not involved in both contracts, its role as the 'meta-governor' in the partnership remained limited, even though some high-end neighbourhood witnessed a new 'return' of the state through co-production of neighbourhood services with PMCs.

While neighbourhood partnerships suffered from structural and democratic deficits, the management mode became one popular form of governance in the sampled neighbourhoods. It arose, according to the Nanjing experiences, when HOAs were absent or had become dormant over time. Strong neoliberal characteristics can be found in the management mode, which empowers frontline managers (PMCs) and prioritises effectiveness and efficiency in neighbourhood service delivery. The general criticism of neoliberal development also applies to the neighbourhood level: individuals are not necessarily rational and do not always organise themselves spontaneously with the market (Jessop, 2002). This is particularly the case in the neighbourhood management mode in Nanjing, where the 'rationalities' of homeowners were circumscribed by the numerous roles they were required to perform in the absence of the HOA: from consumer (of services), to negotiator (of contracts), to monitor (of PMC performance). Such 'irrationality' led to varying forms of ineffective management, where both property managers and residents held each other up for various reasons (e.g. poor services and low affordability)—this happened quite often in my sampled neighbourhoods.

Addressing the multiple problems causing holdups, institutional integration was introduced to strengthen neighbourhood governance. In the neighbourhood empowerment mode, the integration happens horizontally between the PMC and the HOA, transferring both decision-making power and service delivery responsibility to the self-governing organisation. The powers and responsibilities devolved to these organisations varied significantly across the sampled neighbourhoods, creating various participatory venues for practising neighbourhood self-governance. These venues could either take the form of state-led DCs as 'invited space' for participation, or the forms of HOAs or SMAs as 'invented space' for participation. Regardless of participation forms, my empirical study in Nanjing revealed that neighbourhood empowerment could hardly be sustained without any help from the local state, particularly in neighbourhoods with relatively low levels of civic capacity. In these neighbourhoods, civic groups compensated for,

rather than counterbalanced, state-centred approaches of neighbourhood governance, which departs from the traditional communitarian approach adopted in capitalist states (Sage, 2012).

Unlike the horizontal integration in the empowerment mode, institutional integration in the neighbourhood government mode happens vertically between the PMCs and SOs, transforming the SOs into the key stakeholders in local governance networks. My observations in Nanjing indicated that the establishment of neighbourhood government in Nanjing would be instead viewed as a local means to fight against the social crisis, since most, if not all, neighbourhoods fitting the neighbourhood government mode of governance suffered from varying levels of economic disadvantage. The observation also revealed the dual characteristics of these 'neighbourhood governments': by providing basic levels of neighbourhood services, the SOs acted in a way similar to the 'responsive government' advocated by devolution reforms in the Western context. By promoting co-production with local volunteers in service delivery while controlling participation in decision making, the SOs and RCs rescaled the state's soft control strategies and ultimately maintained social stability. Taking these together, these neighbourhood governments demonstrate a reorganisation of the local state, which went beyond the traditional understanding of the 'authoritarian state' in urban China (Zhao and Zhang, 1999; Liu, 2005b; Heberer, 2009; Lee and Zhang, 2013).

Apart from showing the multiplicity of neighbourhood governance arrangements on the ground, another contribution made in Chapter 6 was a new typology of neighbourhood governance in urban China—a typology derived from key actions of key stakeholders and their interrelationships (the RC, the PMC and the HOA) in the process of governance. Compared with the actor-based framework, whether led by the state, the market, or the society (Wei, 2003; Zeng, 2007; Ge and Li, 2016; Li, 2017), the action-based framework has a stronger capacity to explain and distinguish diverse neighbourhood governance arrangements 'on the ground'. This is because neighbourhood organisations seldom work in isolation in everyday life-worlds. The overemphasis of dominant actors in the state-society-market paradigm overlooks organisational interactions (as demonstrated by the interaction effects in Chapter 7) and obscures the less 'powerful' but still functioning actors in neighbourhood governance. Recognising these 'ordinary' actors (as opposed to dominant actors) and the embeddedness of key actors in governance networks, I argue that the analysis of key actions of key stakeholders, rather than the 'sovereign' acts of the dominant actor, can better capture the distribution of power in neighbourhood governance and explain its social outcomes. By focusing on specific actions of governance and distinctive roles key actors play in these actions, the action-based framework addresses the process of governance (by crystalising governance into key actions of making collective decisions and organising collective consumptions) and the structure of governance (by capturing key actors and their

interrelationships) simultaneously. The action-based framework is demonstrated to work well in making sense of both general trends and common characteristics, and the diversity and complexity of neighbourhood governance in urban Nanjing.

8.1.3 Three approaches towards the political construction of cohesive neighbourhoods in Nanjing

Drawing on the social and political geographies of the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, this research also discussed how these two geographical processes coexisted and interacted within the territorial boundaries of neighbourhoods. With the help of multiple regression and thematic analyses, in Chapter 7 I explored the potential relationships between diverse arrangements of neighbourhood governance and development of neighbourhood cohesion, and answered Research Question 3: *How are neighbourhood governance arrangements and neighbourhood social cohesion related, particularly in the case of Nanjing, China?*

The three hypothesised approaches towards cohesive neighbourhoods were tested in Chapter 7 with empirical data collected in the city-wide survey in Nanjing. Departing from previous research which focuses only on the dominant actor, this research adopted a holistic framework and included multiple organisations in the analysis simultaneously. The holistic framework had the following advantages: first, it catered to real-life scenarios and avoided the oversimplification of power relations. It acknowledged the complexity of power relations between stakeholders on the ground, which was not only conditioned by the dominant organisation (e.g. the HOA in Fu *et al.*, 2015; He, 2015), but affected by every actor in the governance network. More importantly, the inclusion of multiple neighbourhood organisations enabled me to test the interactions (e.g. moderating effects) between the neighbourhood organisations. Omitting such effects, as most previous studies did, increased the chances of the 'omitted-variable bias' (Gourieroux, 2000). In other words, if we only addressed the lead organisation, the HOA in the partnership mode, for instance, it is highly likely that the results would be inconstant due to the correlations between the performance of the HOA (the independent variable) and other organisations (compressed into the error term).

The multiple regression analyses presented a plurality of governance-cohesion relationships, indicating that building cohesive neighbourhoods in Nanjing was not only a matter of key stakeholders (e.g. local state agencies, neighbourhood civic groups or market institutions), but was also influenced by the power relations between these actors, which were deeply embedded in local institutional environments. Regarding the state-led cohesion-building approach, the Nanjing survey showed that the RCs, as 'pseudo-state' grassroots organisations (Yip and Jiang,

2011), effectively encouraged the growth of strong ties and neighbourly trust across all the sampled neighbourhoods. These state-sponsored organisations also played active roles in organising collective decision making and collective actions when there was no self-governing mechanism working properly in the neighbourhood, as happened in the management and government mode. The positive associations between RCs and neighbourhood cohesion indicate that, although sometimes RCs are 'hidden' in the shadows of market institutions (Deng, 2008; Min, 2009; Wang, Yin and Zhou, 2012; Chang *et al.*, 2019), local state agencies are actively engaged in cultivating tight-knit and trustworthy citizens through their formal identity associated with local government and government-sponsored community activities. These top-down initiatives were found almost in all sampled neighbourhoods, indicating the 'considerable consistency' (Read, 2003, p.47) of the local state. More importantly, stepwise models revealed interaction effects between the RCs and the PMCs (in the management mode), as well as the HOAs (in the empowerment mode). These interaction effects, however, were driven by different mechanisms. In the management mode, a 'control coalition' was discovered between the RC and the PMC where both organisations were united by the common goal of creating 'governable' communities and collaborated in areas relating to neighbourhood services. In the empowerment mode, the RC and the HOA, on the one hand, reinforced each other's efforts in building behavioural cohesion, such as co-organising neighbourhood activities. On the other hand, they competed with each other for an institutional identity that was well-recognised by the citizens.

Regarding the market-led cohesion-building approach, the observations in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing confirmed that a PMC-led social bonding mechanism exists (in the management and partnership mode), echoing studies from Zhu, Breitung and Li (2012) and Lu, Zhang and Wu (2018). With this mechanism, PMCs were able to cultivate responsible citizens who were not only deeply attached to their neighbourhood, but had mutual trust with their neighbours and were willing to be devoted to community projects. This finding also expanded on existing studies by pointing out that it was people's perceptions of how privatisation was performed in everyday life, rather than whether privatisation existed or not (c.f. Deng, 2016b; Lu, Zhang and Wu, 2018), that determined their cognitive representations of the neighbourhood—as a satisfactory living environment to feel attached to, as a social group to trust, and as a 'common good' to be devoted to. Drawing on the 'efficient privatisation' argument, one unanticipated finding was that dense neighbourhood networks might be cultivated and maintained by high-performing PMCs in privatised neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode, which was in opposition to the general decrease in neighbourly interactions observed in these communities (Wu and He, 2005; Gui and Huang, 2006; Forrest and Yip, 2007; Wu, 2012; Zhu, Breitung and Li, 2012). The relationships between PMCs and behavioural cohesion (e.g. strong ties in the

partnership mode, weak ties and political participation in the government mode) could be partly explained through PMC-RC collaboration in the partnership mode. Through co-organising community activities and co-producing neighbourhood public goods, the market institution incorporated the local state into its entrepreneurial strategies, which enabled it to construct an engaging neighbourhood and maintain long-term prosperity.

Regarding the society-led cohesion-building approach, the current study did not show any statistically significant changes in either behavioural or cognitive cohesion with an effective HOA, suggesting that the civic group is neither beneficial nor detrimental to neighbourhood cohesiveness. This finding was surprising considering the large number of studies arguing for the potential of the HOA to connect homeowners and develop a collective identity through property-based common interests (e.g. P. Chen, 2009; Breitung, 2014; Huang, 2014). One possible explanation for this might be that either the self-governing organisation or homeowners lack the civic capacity to promote community engagement. My observations in Nanjing indicated that more than half of the sampled HOAs lacked regular participatory venues, and even if these participatory venues were established, a large proportion of survey respondents had no interest in getting involved. Another explanation of the discrepancy is that a large proportion of studies discussing the social effects of the HOA focused primarily on HOA-oriented contentious actions, which, according to my survey, accounted for less than 5% of community social life. For those neighbourhoods without severe housing disputes, neighbourhood self-governing organisations varied considerably in their civic capacities and abilities to mobilise, which prevented me from drawing any strong conclusions statistically about the general relationship between the performance of neighbourhood self-governing organisations and neighbourhood cohesion.

While there was no direct effect, stepwise models revealed some indirect effects of the HOA on neighbourhood cohesion, both in the partnership mode and the empowerment mode. These indirect effects were manifested through the HOA's interactions with both the state agency and the market institution in carrying out neighbourhood tasks. These interactions, demonstrated by the interaction models, could either be cooperative (Fu, 2014)—when RCs and HOAs co-organised community social and political activities and promoted behavioural cohesion—or competitive (Read, 2002)—when RCs and HOAs compete for support, legitimacy, and cognitive cohesion.

8.2   Wider implications

Apart from the main findings, it is also important to reflect back on the literature and enquiries, which informed the development of this research. The following sections will discuss the wider

implications of this research, particularly the contribution of the Nanjing case to China and general urban theories.

8.2.1 Capturing multiplicity: understanding China's neighbourhood governance with the Nanjing case

The research makes empirical claims with implications for the literature on neighbourhood governance in China. The research captured multiplicities, both of neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance arrangements, through intra-city comparisons across 32 systematically selected neighbourhoods in the city of Nanjing, which is a 'prototypical' city (Brenner, 2003) acting as a precursor of the general trends that are likely to happen in urban China. Admitting the limitations of a study which focuses on a single city (e.g. concerns about representativeness and generalisability), the comparative study within Nanjing and the multiplicities captured provide significant insight for the discussion of neighbourhood governance in China.

One the one hand, the diversity of spatial governmentalities in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing moves discussions of neighbourhood governance beyond the debate about whether or not transitional China fits into frameworks of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation (c.f. Lee and Zhu, 2006; Nonini, 2008; Wu, 2010; Zhou, Lin and Zhang, 2019). This is because both neoliberal initiatives (e.g. the management mode focusing on efficiency and effectiveness) and non-neoliberal practices (e.g. controlled participation in the government mode) were observed in the sampled neighbourhoods, indicating that the neoliberal framework, however well developed and variegated, tended to silence or background neighbourhood development beyond the regulation of capitalism, especially development influenced by the interventionist state. Moreover, the mid-level analyses also highlighted multiple possible relationships between governance and cohesion, of which some have neoliberal characteristics (e.g. effective PMCs and increasing neighbourhood attachment), some fit into the discussion on communitarianism and governing through communities (e.g. the HOA in the state-society synergy and cultivates neighbourly ties in the neighbourhood empowerment mode), and others show the strong influence of the party-state (e.g. the RC's role in cultivating neighbourly trust). These 'hybrid socialist-neoliberal form(s) of political rationalit(ies)' (Sigley, 2006, p.504) would be obscured if they were examined only through the neoliberal lens.

On the other hand, the multiplicities of neighbourhood governance found in the sampled neighbourhoods also uncover the limitations of the state-society dichotomy that have been widely used in Chinese studies (Gui, Ma and Muhlhahn, 2009). The empirical study in Nanjing

provides sound evidence showing that the state-society paradigm is sometimes misleading in the discussion of neighbourhood governance, no matter whether the paradigm favours the persistence of the authoritarian state (Fukuyama, 1992; Nathan, 2003; Heberer, 2009; Lee and Zhang, 2013; Chung, 2017), or the rise of a civil society (e.g. Gold, 1998; Xia, 2003; Howell, 2012; Yu and Guo, 2012). This is because the state and the society are not always mutually exclusive. Instead, the Nanjing case has shown multiple possibilities for state-society relations on the neighbourhood level: in some neighbourhoods, local state agencies and civic organisations compete with each other for support and recognition; in some neighbourhoods, local state agencies support the development of civic organisations by providing administrative resources and institutional spaces; and in some neighbourhoods, local state agencies and civic organisations cooperate with and absorb each other (Kang and Han, 2007), as happened in various co-production practices found in the sampled neighbourhoods.

Taken together, these results suggest that neither the neoliberal nor the state-society paradigm is able to provide an adequate explanation for the various political rationalities and practices of urban neighbourhoods even within one city. While the neoliberal paradigm fails to address the existence and influences of the state and social infrastructures adequately, the state-society paradigm overemphasises state authority and overlooks the permeable boundaries between the state and the society (albeit that the permeability varies considerably across neighbourhoods). Even though the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing may not be representative of all urban neighbourhoods in China, they serve as a starting point for understanding China's socio-political development on the grassroots level, which is at least as diverse and complicated as the Nanjing case. Therefore, the development of neighbourhood governance in China cannot be simplified into one unique concept—neither neoliberalism nor authoritarianism. The study of neighbourhood governance in China calls for detailed analysis of governance on the ground, in ways that recognise not only multiple approaches/logics led by different agencies (e.g. PMCs operated under the neoliberal rationale and RCs representing the local state), but also diverse conjunctures of agencies and their situatedness in local power relations.

8.2.2   Plural causalities: situating Nanjing in general urban theory

The empirical claim of neighbouring, neighbourliness and neighbourhood governance in the city of Nanjing also has wider implications for comparative urban studies. First, as a second-tier city, Nanjing is an 'ordinary city' of the kind that is often neglected in the construction of urban theory (Robinson, 2006). The mid-level comparative study conducted in Nanjing revealed the diversity and complexities of neighbourhoods 'on the ground' even at the scale of one city, let alone the scale of the nation-state or the globe. One implication of this is that scholars should be cautious

when attempting to make generalisations about how recent moves towards neighbourhood governance around the world are working out in practice on the ground.

More importantly, the diverse social and political rationales of neighbourhood development presented by the Nanjing case share both similarities and differences with well-researched global cities in Western contexts. The similarities originate mostly from global trends of 'community liberation' (Wellman, 1979, 1996) and neighbourhood development driven by neoliberalism (Wu and Phelps, 2011; Wu and Ning, 2018). The differences can be attributed to the unique characteristics of the 'Chinese governmentalities' (Sigley, 2006, p.487), which produce a mixture of a rescaled 'developmental state' (Jessop, 2012), public-private partnership, and 'actually existing neoliberalism' (Brenner and Theodore, 2012, p. 42) shaped by 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' (Lim, 2014, p.221).

Furthermore, embedded in both similarities and differences, the diverse social and political rationales of neighbourhood development discovered in Nanjing were interpreted with relativist models of causation (Pickvance, 1986, 2005). The relativist models assume that, instead of the universality of underlying causal mechanisms, similar social phenomena (e.g. liberated communities and crises in social cohesion) may occur for different reasons in different places (e.g. China, Western Europe, and North America). These reasons do not necessarily include 'too many' distinct causal variables (e.g. ideologies, local histories, and path dependencies), but we should consider the fact that 'different causally relevant conditions can combine in a variety of ways to produce a given outcome' (Ragin, 1987, p.26). Given the varying levels of neighbourhood cohesion and the multiple approaches towards cohesive neighbourhoods (e.g. the state-led, market-led, and society-led approaches), what matters in understanding neighbourhood phenomena in Nanjing is not only the different approaches led by different actors, but how these approaches are interrelated, embedded in local power relations, and operate on the ground.

To summarise, recognising the existence of plural causalities, this research extends the scope of comparative urban studies and strengthens the value of comparing across cases that are less similar but more different. Comparing across these different cases not only helped me to find variations and complement existing urban theories with the 'add-on' case of Nanjing but enables an interactive 'learning' process. That is to say, rather than focusing only on whether governance in China resembles governance in liberal democracies (e.g. discussions on whether neoliberalism is relevant to China), what actually matters is how the notion of governance is constructed in China and how governance works effectively to cultivate local solidarity—which is as relevant in China as 'elsewhere' (Robinson, 2016, p.3).

8.2.3   Policy implications

Based on the everyday governing process of ordinary neighbourhoods in Nanjing, this research carries far-reaching policy implications. While existing social cohesion and social integration policies in China usually prioritise rights and entitlement to services and benefits for marginalised groups (e.g. Liu, Y. *et al.*, 2012; Wang, Z. *et al.*, 2016; Liu, L. *et al.*, 2017), this research moves beyond this people-based policy framework and recognises the strategic importance of 'neighbourhood' in social cohesion policies.

The neighbourhood-based social cohesion policy making can be understood from three perspectives. First, the Nanjing case teaches us that social cohesion is not distributed homogeneously, which challenges existing people-based policies that shadow geographical variations. Empirical evidence in Nanjing demonstrated that neither did social cohesion equally distribute across different social groups (e.g. rural migrants vs. urban local residents), nor across different geographical locations (e.g. neighbourhoods). It is therefore important to consider both the social and the spatial inequality of cohesion when making social cohesion policies. Such inequality is significant not only for migrants and urban poor, but for different types of neighbourhoods, which include, but are not exclusive to, disadvantaged neighbourhoods where migrants and urban poor tend to concentrate. More importantly, the spatial inequality of neighbourhood cohesion manifest differently for different dimensions of cohesion. For instance, my research in Nanjing showed that some disadvantaged neighbourhoods (e.g. some privatised work units), which are the target of existing cohesion policies that advocate participation, empowerment and co-production (e.g. Gui, 2007, 2008; Liu, 2007a; Guo and Sun, 2014), can be regarded among the most cohesive neighbourhoods when measuring participatory cohesion. On the contrary, some middle-class or high-end neighbourhoods, which used to be considered as free from cohesion-related problems in the people-based policy framework, were found to lack in civic capacities and failed to organise community collective decision making. Therefore, tailor-made social cohesion policy making is needed, emphasising the contextual embeddedness of social cohesion in sofar as it has been (re)produced within lcoal and community contexts defined by, for instance, inherited insitutional framework (e.g. for privatised work units) and regulatory practices (e.g. for resettlement neighbourhoods).

Second, neighbourhood organisations consitute one of the most salient parts of neighbourhood-based policy making. Differentiated neighbourhood policy making should take into account distinctive natures and operating mechanisms of neighbourhood governance. Beyond the general claim about complexity, diversity and plurality of neighbourhood govenance, it is still possible for

us to identify three distinctive approaches towards cohesive neighbourhoods that worked out on the ground in urban Nanjing. Each approach is led by a key neighbourhood organisation.

Regarding neighbourhood market insitutions, such as PMCs, neighbourhood cohesion, particularly cognitive cohesion, can be cultivated through their effective provision of community collective goods (e.g. well-maintained lawns and facilities). This market-led social bonding mechanism corresponds, at least partly, to the neoliberal approach, through which success in the property management market (e.g. high-quality community service) comes in tandem with the cultivation of a sense of emotional belongingness to local communities. More importantly, empical evidence in Nanjing revealed that such emotional belongingness was conditioned by people's perception of how the market contract was carried out in everyday life, rather than whether privatisation/marketisation existed or not (c.f. Deng, 2016; Lu *et al.*, 2018).

Regarding local state agencies, effective RCs have the potential to foster both behavioural and cognitive cohesion, particularly neighbourly trust and neighbourhood strong ties. Although some RCs nowadays have become marginalised and even 'hidden' in the shadows of market institutions, their active engagement in local social and political activities contributes to the growth of tight-knit and trustworthy citizens through their formal identity associated with local government and government-sponsored community activities. These top-down initiatives were found widely across sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, indicating the 'considerable consistency' (Read, 2003, p.47) of state-mediated neighbourhood governance and the effectiveness of state-led cohesion-building. These initiatives complement social capital theories originated from Western democracies, in ways that trusting relations and dense social networks are not necessarily results of horizontal collaborations – instead, they can also be produced out of vertical relations in non-democratic regimes.

Regarding neighbourhood civic organisations, such as HOAs, their capacities to encourage, mobilise, organise and institutionalise neighbourhood participation have been demonstrated by a few right-defending cases in Nanjing. However, their roles in participatory, as well as other dimensions of, neighbourhood cohesion were less obvious in everyday governing activities. The Nanjing case suggested two ways through which the civic organisation could improve its governance effectiveness and fulfil its role as a social mobilisation organisation in urban China. First, HOAs and other self-governing organisations should establish and maintain open and stable channels between the organisation and its constituents, either through formal meetings (e.g. Homeowners' Assembly and ad hoc meetings) or informal channels of information exchange (e.g. online forums and bulletin boards). These channels should not only face neighbourhood activists, but are accessible to ordinary residents as well. Second, neighbourhood civic organisations can

organise various community social activities and civic education programmes to cultivate responsible and engaging residents.

Third, flexibility in neighbourhood-based policy making should also consider interrelationships between neighbourhood organisations, which can either be beneficial or detrimental to neighbourhood cohesion. This relational account, which is seldom considered by previous studies that focus only on one organisation (e.g. Fu, 2015; He, 2015), is significant to neighbourhood-based policy making, since no cohesion-building approach works in isolation in the everyday remaking of urban neighbourhoods. Their lead organisations are deeply embedded in local governance networks, and affect, as well as being affected by, other organisations in the network. For instance, the Nanjing case showed that effective HOAs had the potential to compensate for the retreat of the state, mollify state-society relations and assist the formation of RC's neighbourhood activist networks in some neighbourhoods, which ultimately strengthened RC's capacity in building cognitively cohesive neighbourhoods. In these neighbourhoods, accountable RCs also provided fiscal, administrative, and policy support for HOAs and contributed to HOAs' efforts to recruit members and foster participatory cohesion. However, empirical evidence also pointed out, RC-HOA relationships could be reciprocally inhibiting as well. In some neighbourhoods, the two organisations competed for a legitimacy political identity to represent the community and the competition weakened their efforts to build behavioural cohesion. Given both the mutual reinforcement and reciprocal inhibition, neighbourhood policy makers should not only focus on improving cohesion-building capacities of each neighbourhood organisation (e.g. through increasing their governance effectiveness), but seek for better ways to optimise trade-offs between competing organisations and different rationales of cohesion, as well as maximise collaborations between organisations that mutually reinforce each other's cohesion building effort.

To summarise, this research explored the social and institutional geography of social cohesion on the neighbourhood scale and detailed some specific approaches through which public actions could help to cultivate and sustain neighbourhood cohesion. Each approach corresponds to a distinctive rationale of social cohesion and calls for tailor-made neighbourhood policy making that recognises differences in neighbourhoods and neighbourhood organisations, rather than an over reliance on 'one-size-fits-all'. These approaches contribute to a place-based cohesion policy making and complements and reinforces people-based social cohesion policies in urban China.

8.3   Limitations and further research

A venue for further research can be derived both from general critiques of the neighbourhood research, and specific critiques of the sampling strategy and the analytical approach. First, this research focuses on territory-based cohesion in urban neighbourhoods, while social networks, participatory behaviours, and social solidarities outside residential spaces are not taken into consideration. However, a thorough understanding of neighbourhood cohesion, as Hazelzet and Wissink (2012) comment, should study neighbourhood-oriented social ties 'within the context of overall social networks' (p.206). This 'overall' social cohesion includes not only cohesive behaviours and perceptions oriented around neighbourhood-scale localities, but also those originating from other localities (e.g. workspaces), and which are not territory-based (e.g. internet-based social networks). It is through comparison between neighbourhood-oriented cohesion and overall levels of social cohesion that we can obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role the neighbourhood plays in the spatial distribution of social ties and social solidarity. If the debate on the geographical puzzle of the neighbourhood is to be moved forward, a better understanding of the social geographies of the neighbourhood needs to be developed from such a comparative perspective.

Meanwhile, while much attention has been paid to the facilitative roles of the neighbourhood in normalising social relations and developing citizenship (Foldvary, 1994; Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Fyfe, 2005), we should be aware of the dark sides of territory-based cohesion as well. First, neighbourhood social ties and community engagement are not necessarily equally distributed across social groups within the neighbourhood. The spatial distributions of neighbourhood cohesion depend on a variety of individual factors, including homeownership (given that tenants are not provided with equal opportunities to participate in self-governing organisations), hukou status (given that rural migrants may be excluded from some community services), and civic capacity (given that active citizens are usually more locally engaged). The uneven distributions of cohesive behaviours and perceptions within a neighbourhood may cause social differentiation between residents. They may also exaggerate existing civic divides and transform community building into 'a game played within a small group of people' (Interview with a resident of Neighbourhood Y, January 6, 2018). Second, high levels of neighbourhood cohesion do not inevitably bring good social outcomes. Instead, internal cohesion may translate into insularity and social exclusion (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Slater and Anderson, 2012). As happened in some sampled affordable neighbourhoods, the dense neighbourhood networks were exclusive to native residents. Tenants and outsiders 'find it hard to get involved in the community issues in these *xiaoqu*s'. (Interview with the vice RC director of Neighbourhood BS, March 22, 2017.) Further

work is required to explore these dark sides of neighbourhood cohesion and investigate the circumstances under which high levels of internal cohesion can produce good external results.

Moreover, there are also limitations with the case selection and sampling strategies adopted in this research. First of all, this research provided a systematic analysis of the social and political geographies in the sampled neighbourhoods in Nanjing, which is both an 'ordinary city' (Robinson, 2006) and a 'prototypical city' (Brenner, 2003). Further studies need to be carried out to validate whether the governance-cohesion relationships derived from the Nanjing experiences apply to other large cities in China, such as Shanghai, where neighbourhood civic organisations are under the tighter control of the local government (Gui, Ma and Muhlhahn, 2009), and Shenyang, where there is a stronger culture of the work unit (Tomba, 2014). Second, as discussed in Chapter 4.6, high-end neighbourhoods and upper-class residents were underrepresented in the survey due to accessibility issues that have often been encountered in neighbourhood research in urban China (e.g. Wang, 2005; Yip, 2012). Compared with disadvantaged neighbourhoods, high-end neighbourhoods are more likely to be managed by professional PMCs and to fit into the management or the partnership mode of governance. Therefore, this research tends to be biased towards neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment or the government mode of governance. Third, the 'formal identity' I acquired from local RCs to guarantee my access to the sampled neighbourhoods is also a potential source of bias. My fieldwork experiences indicated that the formal identity was read by some local community workers as a link to local authorities, and made them self-censor and talk about what they assumed to be appropriate. Moreover, my 'formal identity' associated with local RCs prevented me from establishing trust and rapport with NGOs, leading to limited access to HOAs and PMCs. Being limited in terms of number of interviews with members of HOAs and employees of PMCs, this study fails to validate adequately the data collected from interviews with RC members and residents. Triangulation might be important for neighbourhood research in China, since respondents from different organisations may have different and even contradictory opinions of the same issue—known as the Rashomon effect (Roth and Mehta, 2002). Taking all these points together, while I need to be cautious about the potential bias caused by the formal identity, I have to admit that a large proportion of data collection would not have been possible without it. Its Janus-faced nature should not only be regarded as an ethical dilemma or methodological issue, in the sense of issues with data validation and triangulation, but also as part of the research subject. In future investigations, it might be possible to use a different sampling method to address the ethical and methodological biases, such as a hybrid method involving sampling through the RC and the HOA at the same time.

A final line of further research is to analyse the interrelations between multiple neighbourhood organisations in the cohesion-building process. This is a natural progression of the work in

Chapter 7.6, which explored the RC-HOA relationships in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode. In the future investigation, other types of inter-organisational relationship, such as those between the RC and the PMC, and between the PMC and the HOA, would be included in the analysis, which would provide a holistic landscape of how neighbourhoods are politically constructed in urban China from a comparative perspective. Further research should also be undertaken to explore the causal relationships between neighbourhood governance and neighbourhood cohesion. Path analysis and structural equation modelling would be helpful to disentangle the causal relationships involved in the structural relationships between multiple dimensions of neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood governance efficacy simultaneously.

Appendix A   **List of interviews**

Interviewee(s)	Theme	Date
Government officers		
Two officers from the Nanjing Civil Affairs Bureau (NJCAB)	The development of community building and neighbourhood governance reform in Nanjing	09/03/2017
One officer from the Community-building Office in NJCAB	New trends in community policies in Nanjing	15/10/2017
One officer from Street Office M	Neighbourhood governance in an affordable housing estate	12/03/2017
One officer from Street Office DS	How to promote participation and self-governance through the professionalization of community services	11/04/2017
RC members		
The RC director of Neighbourhood GT	Neighbourhood governance in old urban districts with a strong RC	20/03/2017
The RC director of Neighbourhood WT	An experiment of participatory governance	20/03/2017
The vice RC director of Neighbourhood N	Incorporating kinship networks into the governance network in an affordable housing estate	22/03/2017
The vice RC director of Neighbourhood BS	Neighbourhood governance in an affordable housing estate in the poorest urban area in Nanjing	22/03/2017
The vice director of Neighbourhood X	A highly institutionalised Deliberative Council	23/03/2017
The party secretary of Neighbourhood G	A highly institutionalised Deliberative Council maintained by the strong RC	23/03/2017
The party secretary of Neighbourhood A	A highly institutionalised Deliberative Council with active participation	27/03/2017
The director of Neighbourhood B	A platform for four-party talks of neighbourhood governance	28/03/2017
A community worker in Neighbourhood D	The failure of a self-governance programme run by a social organisation in old urban districts	06/04/2017
The RC director of Neighbourhood YX	The difference of neighbourhood governance in the urban suburb	11/04/2017
The RC director of Neighbourhood DS	Social and voluntary activities in a traditional neighbourhood	01/11/2017
The party secretary of Neighbourhood S	The incorporation of property management into community administration	02/11/2017
The party secretary of Neighbourhood R	A 'neighbourhood of strangers' in a high-end residential community	07/11/2017
The RC director of Neighbourhood SD	Social and voluntary activities in a commodity neighbourhood	07/11/2017
The RC director of Neighbourhood QX	Social integration in an affordable housing estate, where the PMC is supported by the local government	10/11/2017

Interviewee(s)	Theme	Date
The RC director of Neighbourhood YY	The eight-year confliction among PMC, HOA and residents	15/11/2017
The RC director of Neighbourhood C	Why the self-governing model succeed in some residential compounds but fail in others	16/11/2017
The RC director of Neighbourhood Z	The involvement of the PMC and HOA in the neighbourhood governance	17/11/2017
The party secretary of Neighbourhood H	The internal differentiated HOA in a commodity housing estate	23/11/2017
The vice party secretary of Neighbourhood J	The intervention of the CPC in community services	23/11/2017
The RC director of Neighbourhood SY	The dense social networks in a traditional neighbourhood and the RC as neighbourhood government	27/11/2017
A community worker in Neighbourhood W	How neighbourhood civic groups assist the RC work	20/12/2017
Workers and volunteers from community-based organisations		
Three volunteers from neighbourhood organisations in Neighbourhood AT	How neighbourhood organisations work in a commodity housing estate	21/03/2017
Social workers in XP social organisation in Neighbourhood L	How the social service station operates and its relationship with the RC and higher-level government	28/03/2017
Social workers in Neighbourhood DF	The relationship among social organisations, the RC and residents	30/03/2017
Social workers in Neighbourhood DN	An experiment of self-governance at the building level	11/04/2017
Social workers in Neighbourhood YS	The policy background of professional social organisation in a resettlement neighbourhood	21/11/2017
Five volunteers from Neighbourhood W	The growth of the neighbourhood group	20/12/2017
Neighbourhood activists in Neighbourhood W	The growth of an indigenous neighbourhood organisation	22/01/2018
Employees of Property Management Companies		
The manager of the property management company in Street Office M	How the RC cooperates with the property management company run by the street office	22/03/2017
The manager of the property management company in Neighbourhood Q	The PMC's money issues	05/01/2018
Members of Homeowners' Associations		
An HOA member in Neighbourhood SD	The HOA's attempts to dismiss the PMC	07/11/2017
A former HOA member in Neighbourhood T	The confliction between the HOA and the PMC and right protection movement	14/10/2017

Interviewee(s)	Theme	Date
Residents		
A resident in Neighbourhood N	Kinship networks in the resettlement housing estate	22/03/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood A	How residents' representatives work and their relationship with local residents	08/04/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood B	The attitude towards the HOA	17/04/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood B	Whether there are any effective means to hold the HOA accountable	17/04/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood G	Neighbouring in a privatised work unit	16/09/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood D	Studentification and the cultivation of social networks based on children	29/09/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood T	The confliction between the PMC and residents and the right protection movement	14/10/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood X	The self-governing practices in a privatised work unit	21/10/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood WT	The development of the neighbourhood in 30 years	22/10/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood DS (A)	Why participate in voluntary activities in the neighbourhood?	04/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood DS (B)	The preparation of the establishment of the HOA	04/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood DS (M)	20-years' experiences of being a member of the neighbourhood security patrol	04/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood F	Attitudes towards the RC	05/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood S	Why no HOA in this high-end commodity housing estate?	05/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood R	Why homeowners hesitate in firing the current PMC	07/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood QX	The formation of social networks in a newly built affordable neighbourhood	11/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood SD	The intervention of the PMC in the establishment of HOA	25/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood H	Complaints about the poorly performed PMC	25/11/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood JM	Property management committee supported by the RC	02/12/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood Z	The success and failure of collective actions in a commodity housing estate	03/12/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood SY	Social support and neighbourhood watch in a traditional neighbourhood	16/12/2017
A resident in Neighbourhood YS	The negative influences of kinship networks in neighbourhood governance	17/12/2017

Interviewee(s)	Theme	Date
A resident in Neighbourhood Y	The operation of the HOA	06/01/ 2018

Appendix B   **Neighbourhood organisation interview guide**

Main question: What is the governance structure/network in this neighbourhood and how does this structure/network operate?

Preamble

Ask about being taped.

As a part of the research project 'Social Cohesion and Neighbourhood Governance in Contemporary Urban China', I am looking at neighbourhood governance arrangement- that is organisations and bodies interacting with other stakeholders and residents in making collective decisions and collective actions in the neighbourhood. The interview will be organised around the following questions: what are these organisations involved in neighbourhood governance in this neighbourhood? What are their aims, objectives and operational mechanisms? How do they interact with each other, and with the residents? What are the socio-political influences of these interactions?

About the neighbourhood

1. Can you briefly describe the neighbourhood you are serving (size, history, population, migrants, social status of residents)?
2. What is the general governance structure in this neighbourhood? What are the numbers and names of social organisations and neighbourhood groups in this neighbourhood (such as homeowners' associations, property management companies, professional social organisations, neighbourhood interest groups and voluntary teams)? Which subcommittees and small groups have been formed? Is there a hierarchy?
3. Who are involved in the decision-making process of community public affairs? How are they involved? Can you give an example of this?
4. Can you describe the division of labour between your organisation and its partners (the neighbourhood organisations mentioned before)? And why the labour is divided in such ways? Who/which organisation is actually responsible for such decisions?

5. As far as you know, what is the general relationship between other neighbourhood agencies in this neighbourhood? Are there any conflictions? If yes, has it been solved and how? Are there any formal/informal cooperative and problem-solving platforms?

About the organisation

1. When was this organisation established and how?

2. How many committee members/board members/paid workers are there in the organisation? What is the average age, levels of education and years of work experience of committee members? Are they paid workers (who pay for them?) or volunteers? Full-time or part-time? How do you recruit community members?

3. What is the annual budget of your organisation? Where does this money come from (major funding sources)? How does this organisation work in this neighbourhood? What are your major tasks and responsibilities in daily operation? How do you accomplish these tasks?

4. Can you explain when and how this organisation works with other neighbourhood agencies in community public affairs (e.g. public sector agencies, other neighbourhood organisations, property management companies)? What are the general relationships between this organisation and other agencies in this neighbourhood?

5. Can you explain when and how this organisation works with residents (including activists) in community public affairs? How you do involve residents in neighbourhood governance? To what extent are they active participants, considering age groups and dependence on state welfare? Are there any neighbourhood activists?

6. Are there any forms of the collective decision–making body in this neighbourhood? If yes, does it work on a regular basis? How to determine the topics for discussion? How are collective decisions made and implemented?

7. Can you explain when and how this organisation works with higher levels of government? What are the general relationships and power relations between this organisation and higher levels of government?

Problems/Obstacles

1. Is there anything that has been a problem for your organisation?

2. Is there anything that has been an obstacle to the initiatives mentioned above?

3. Can you provide any suggestion for such a problem/obstacle?

About you

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself (age, education, occupation and income)?

2. How you came to be involved in this organisation? How long you have been involved (years of work experience in the current position)?

3. Can you talk about your general experience as working in this organisation?

<u>Finally</u>

1. Would you like to recommend any contacts?

2. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

3. Do you have any questions about the research and how the materials will be used?

Thank you!

Appendix C   **Survey questionnaire**

<div align="right">

No.☐☐☐☐

District Serial No. ☐☐

Zip Code: ☐☐☐☐☐

</div>

Date of Interview: ☐☐/☐☐/201☐ (dd/mm/yy)

Address:_____district_____sub-district_____community *xiaoqu*

Type of interviewee's residential community:

Interviewer: (Signature)

Checker: (Signature)

Coder: (Signature)

Please answer questions by ticking the box or filling the blanks next to the answer.

A. Residence

A1. Year of moving into the current residence: _____ year.

A2. Year of build:

☐1. Before 1949   ☐2. 1950-1969   ☐3. 1970-1989   ☐4.1990-2000
☐5. 2000-2010   ☐6. After 2010, year _____   ☐7. Unknown

A3. Do you have the ownership of the housing?   ☐1. Yes (go to A3a)   ☐2. No (go to A3b)

A3a. What's its current value by your estimation? _____ yuan/m^2 *_____ m^2

A3b. Monthly rental _____ yuan/month (_____ m^2)

A4. Which institution is responsible for managing the housing?

☐1. Property management company   ☐2. Street Office/Residents' Committee   ☐3. Work unit

☐4. Committee City housing bureau   ☐5. Homeowners' Association (or other self-governing organisation)

☐6. Private house (self-maintenance)

A5. The average housing management fee _____yuan/month (_____yuan/ m^2)

A6. Is there a Homeowners' Association in your community?   ☐1. Yes   ☐2. No

A7. Satisfaction with current residence and the community

	1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neutral	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
1. Residential space	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Public space	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Public facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Overall satisfaction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. Social Network

B1. How many neighbours do you know in the neighbourhood (say hello to him/her)? _____ .

B2. How many neighbours are you familiar with (home visit and socialising)? _____ .

B3. What is your relationship with the residents' representatives in your neighbourhood?

☐1. Never heard of   ☐Not familiar   ☐Not very familiar   ☐Familiar to some extent   ☐Very familiar

B4. What is your relationship with the representatives in your Homeowners' Association?

☐1. Never heard of   ☐Not familiar   ☐Not very familiar   ☐Familiar to some extent   ☐Very familiar

B5. What is your relationship with the leaders of interest groups in your neighbourhood?

☐1. Never heard of   ☐Not familiar   ☐Not very familiar   ☐Familiar to some extent   ☐Very familiar

B6. How often do you participate in the following activities?

	1 Never	2 Once a year or less	3 Several times a year	4 Once a month	5 Several times a month	6 Several times a week	7 Almost every day
1. Saying hello/chatting with your neighbours when meeting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Visiting your neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Doing favours for your neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Doing sports or having dinner together with your neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Discussing personal issues with your neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Discussing public issues with your neighbours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Participating in community activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. QQ/Wechat or online neighbourhood forums	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C. Community Participation

C1. <u>In the past year</u>, how many neighbourhood social activities did you take part in?

☐None (go to C3)   ☐1-2   ☐3-5   ☐6-10   ☐more than 10

C2. <u>In the past year</u>, did you participate in the following neighbourhood activities?

☐1. Interest groups   ☐2. Cultural/ sports activities   ☐3. Volunteer post   ☐4. Charity drives
☐5. Educational activities   ☐6. Other public activities, please specify_____.

C3. <u>In the past year</u>, how many neighbourhood interest groups did you take part in?

☐None (go to C6)   ☐1   ☐2-3   ☐4 and more

C4. What is the name of your interest group? _____.

C5. Did your interest group receive any forms of support from the Residents' Committee in the past year (e.g. venues, funding etc.)?   ☐1. Yes   ☐2. No

C6. Why do you participate in neighbourhood activities (multiple choices)?

☐1. For a sense of homeownership   ☐2. For self-fulfilment
☐3. For a sense of collective   ☐4. For socialising with others
☐5. For exercising and/or learning new skills   ☐6. For fun
☐7. For conformity   ☐8. For material incentives
☐9. Forced participation   ☐10. Other reasons, please specify_____.

C7. <u>In the past year</u>, how many neighbourhood political activities did you take part in?

☐None (go to D)   ☐1-2   ☐3-5   ☐6-10   ☐more than 10

C8. <u>In the past year</u>, did you participate in the following neighbourhood activities organised by the Residents' Committee?

☐1. Voting for the RC members   ☐2. Being a member of Residents' Representatives
☐3. Getting involved in the RC work   ☐4. Participating discussions concerning community issues
☐5. Giving opinions to the RC

C9. <u>In the past year</u>, did you participate in the following neighbourhood activities organised by the Homeowners' Association?

☐1. Voting for HOA members   ☐2. Attending in the homeowners' assembly
☐3. Getting involved in HOA work   ☐4. Giving opinions to HOA
☐5. Giving opinions via online tools

C10. Why do you participate in the neighbourhood public affairs (multiple choices)?

☐1. For a sense of homeownership   ☐2. For self-fulfilment
☐3. For a sense of collectivity and an   ☐4. For an organisational identity
☐5. For exercising and/or learning new skills   ☐6. For conformity
☐7. For fun   ☐8. For material incentives
☐9. Forced participation   ☐10. Other reasons, please specify_____.

Appendix C

Please indicate your levels of agreement with each of these statements.

Notes: 1=Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Undecided; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree;

D. Community Attachment

☐ D1. As a living space, I like my neighbourhood and I belong here.

☐ D2. I feel attached to the community.

☐ D3. People in the neighbourhood get along with each other.

☐ D4. People in this neighbourhood are willing to help each other.

☐ D5. People can act together and solve a neighbourhood problem collectively.

☐ D6. Even without direct benefit, I am willing to devote time in neighbourhood public projects.

☐ D7. Even without direct benefit, I am willing to spend money on neighbourhood public projects.

E. Trust and Reciprocity

☐ E1. Generally speaking, most people in this society can be trusted.

☐ E2. Most people in this neighbourhood can be trusted.

☐ E3. If I am away from home, I can count on my neighbours to collect parcels and newspapers.

☐ E4. It is easy to borrow things in the neighbourhood.

☐ E5. I don't mind sharing public facilities with people who do not live in my neighbourhood.

F. Governance Efficacy

F1. To what extent are you satisfied with the overall level of governance and management of the neighbourhood?

☐1. Very dissatisfied   ☐2. Dissatisfied   ☐3. Neutral   ☐4. Satisfied   ☐Very satisfied

Please indicate your levels of agreement with each of these statements.

Notes: 0= Do not know; 1= Very dissatisfied; 2= Dissatisfied; 3=Neutral; 4=Satisfied; 5=Very satisfied;

	RC	HOA	PMC	Social organisations
F2. Responsiveness：I would likely get a quick response if called the organisation with a complaint.	☐	☐	☐	☐
F3. Satisfaction：to what extent are you satisfied with the social services the organisation provides?	☐	☐	☐	☐
F4. Accountablity：To what extent do you think the organisation represents homeowners' interests?	☐	☐	☐	☐

F5. To your knowledge, what is the major governance entity in your neighbourhood? _____.

Which kind of organisation does it belong to?_____.

G. Demographic information

G1. Your sex:
☐1. Male ☐2. Female ☐3. Prefer not to say

G2. Your age:
☐1. 18-29 ☐2. 30-39 ☐3. 40-49 ☐4. 50-59 ☐5. Above 60 ☐6. Prefer not to say

G3. Your marital status:
☐1. Single ☐2. Married ☐3. Divorced ☐4. Widowed ☐5. Prefer not to say

G4. Your current household registration status: ☐1. Urban ☐2. Rural

G5. Do you have a ☐1. Yes ☐2. No **local *hukou*?**

G6. The number of family members in your household _____, and_____of them are under 16 years old.

G7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
☐1. Primary school and below ☐2. Middle school ☐3. High school ☐4. College
☐5. Postgraduate and above

G8. Which of the following categories best describes your primary area of employment (regardless of your actual position)?
☐1. Administrative ☐2. Professional ☐3. Managerial ☐4. Retail and service
☐5. Manufacturing ☐6. Self-employed ☐7. Homemaker ☐8. Unemployed
☐9. Retired ☐10. Student ☐11. Other, please specify_____.

G9. What is your current household income in 2016 (after-tax)? _____yuan.

G10. What is your subjective perception of socioeconomic status?
☐1. Lower class ☐2. Working-class ☐3. Middle Class ☐4. Upper class

G11. Are you a member of the Communist Party of China? ☐1. Yes ☐2. No

G12. Do you have a pet? ☐1. Yes ☐2. No

G13. How long do you spend online every day (e.g. via phone, laptop and other forms of equipment)?

☐less than 1 hour ☐1-2hours ☐2-3hours ☐3-4hours ☐4-5hours ☐5-6 hours ☐6hours and more

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer our questions.

Appendix D **Correlation test results**

Table D.1 Pairwise correlation coefficients for neighbourhood cohesion measures

	Neighbourly ties		Participation		Neighbourhood sentiment		
	WT	ST	SP	PP	ATT	CG	TR
WT	1.0000						
ST	0.6453	1.0000					
	(0.0000)						
SP	-0.222	-0.0258	1.0000				
	(0.5318)	(0.4679)					
PP	-0.0482	-0.0718	0.3492	1.0000			
	(0.1691)	(0.0409)	(0.0000)				
TR	0.1154	0.1372	0.0016	0.0260	1.0000		
	(0.0010)	(0.0001)	(0.9648)	(0.4613)			
CG	0.0399	0.0449	-0.0644	0.0139	0.5029	1.0000	
	(0.2558)	(0.2010)	(0.0707)	(0.6935)	(0.0000)		1.0000
ATT	0.1818	0.1612	-0.0168	-0.0016	0.5189	0.5254	
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.6371)	(0.9635)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	

Note:

1. Measures of cohesion: WT=weak ties; ST=strong ties; SP=social participation; PP= political participation; TR=neighbourly trust; CG= Orientation towards collective goals; ATT=neighbourhood attachment.

2. Correlation coefficients of relationships between cohesion measures from different dimensions (i.e. neighbourly ties, neighbourhood participation and neighbourhood sentiment) are shaded grey.

3. Significance values in parenthesis.

Appendix D

Table D.2 Pairwise Spearman's correlation coefficients for socioeconomic indicators

	Sex	Hukou	Ownership	Length of residence	Kid	Years of schooling	Income	Residential satisfaction
Sex	1							
Hukou	0.0556	1						
	(0.1659)							
Ownership	0.1254	0.3564	1					
	(0.017)	(0.0000)						
Length of residence	0.0316	0.4031	0.2646	1				
	(0.4311)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)					
Kid	0.0264	0.0673	0.0487	-0.1603	1			
	(0.5104)	(0.0933)	(0.2250)	(0.0001)				
Years of schooling	-0.1208	0.1201	-0.1113	-0.2313	0.174	1		
	(0.0025)	(0.0027)	(0.0054)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)			
Income	-0.0616	0.1403	-0.0405	-0.1845	0.3303	0.5193	1	
	(0.1248)	(0.0004)	(0.3132)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)		
Residential satisfaction	0.0359	-0.0279	0.0336	-0.2521	0.0644	0.1668	0.1519	1
	(0.3705)	(0.4866)	(0.4025)	(0.0000)	(0.1084)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	

Note: Significance values in parenthesis.

Appendix E   **Stepwise regression models predicting neighbourhood cohesion**

Table E.1 Negative binomial models predicting weak and strong neighbourly ties with perceived performances of RCs, PMCs and HOAs in neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode (n=126)

Variables	Weak ties				Strong ties			
	Model 1 RC-only	Model 2 HOA-only	Model 3 PMC-only	Model 4	Model 5 RC-only	Model 6 HOA-only	Model 7 PMC-only	Model 8
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances								
RC	-0.111			-0.093	0.349			0.389
	(0.131)			(0.139)	(0.204)			(0.211)
HOA		-0.230*		-0.166		-0.173		-0.273
		(0.116)		(0.137)		(0.145)		(0.177)
PMC			-0.030	0.067			0.350*	0.362
			(0.151)	(0.163)			(0.174)	(0.196)
Individual factors								
Sex (ref=female)	-0.010	0.147	-0.135	0.112	0.186	0.436	0.305	0.401
	(0.213)	(0.198)	(0.209)	(0.219)	(0.305)	(0.280)	(0.270)	(0.290)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)								
Urban, non-local	-0.904	-0.419	0.646	-0.812	-0.828	-0.708	0.244	-0.345
	(1.149)	(1.069)	(0.940)	(1.119)	(1.487)	(1.394)	(1.164)	(1.427)
Rural local	0.305	0.445	1.469	0.324	0.015	-0.142	0.745	0.265
	(1.069)	(1.014)	(0.893)	(1.036)	(1.375)	(1.330)	(1.102)	(1.313)
Urban local	-0.776	-0.757	0.759	-0.797	0.120	-0.049	1.129	0.224
	(1.008)	(0.957)	(0.774)	(0.987)	(1.276)	(1.234)	(0.959)	(1.214)
Homeownership	0.391	0.367	0.008	0.396	0.691†	0.404	0.410	0.799*

	(0.266)	(0.242)	(0.254)	(0.261)	(0.358)	(0.322)	(0.311)	(0.348)
Length of residence	0.107***	0.102***	0.072**	0.109***	0.123***	0.108***	0.114***	0.129***
	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.033)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.030)
No. of kids	0.174	0.120	0.416	0.095	0.628*	0.525	0.402	0.395
	(0.222)	(0.210)	(0.234)	(0.222)	(0.301)	(0.284)	(0.291)	(0.305)
Years of schooling	-0.035	-0.058	-0.126**	-0.031	-0.023	-0.032	-0.024	0.016
	(0.049)	(0.041)	(0.044)	(0.048)	(0.059)	(0.052)	(0.050)	(0.057)
Household income (ln)	0.388*	0.468*	0.162	0.432*	-0.143	-0.141	-0.192	-0.059
	(0.197)	(0.182)	(0.198)	(0.192)	(0.226)	(0.217)	(0.209)	(0.209)
Neighbourhood factors								
Residential satisfaction	0.260	0.257*	0.193	0.260	0.108	0.364*	0.148	0.106
	(0.137)	(0.126)	(0.145)	(0.145)	(0.176)	(0.147)	(0.156)	(0.176)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)								
Commodity neighbourhoods	-0.851**	-0.619*	-0.859**	-0.655	-0.616	-0.006	-0.492	-0.658
	(0.325)	(0.309)	(0.314)	(0.349)	(0.395)	(0.375)	(0.368)	(0.457)
Constant	2.151	2.465	3.277**	2.044	-0.227	0.643	-0.937	-1.783
	(1.402)	(1.277)	(1.204)	(1.441)	(1.781)	(1.616)	(1.472)	(1.834)
Pseudo R^2	0.0441	0.0487	0.0324	0.0482	0.0642	0.0641	0.0634	0.0749

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table E.2 Logistic models predicting social and political participation with perceived performances of RCs, PMCs and HOAs in neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode (n=126)

Variables	Social participation				Political participation			
	Model 9 RC-only	Model 10 HOA-only	Model 11 PMC-only	Model 12	Model 13 RC-only	Model 14 HOA-only	Model 15 PMC-only	Model 16
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
Organisational performances								
RC	1.037			1.027	2.461**			1.742
	(0.351)			(0.415)	(1.082)			(0.886)
HOA		0.780		0.889		1.546		1.190
		(0.228)		(0.330)		(0.553)		(0.506)
PMC			1.087	1.036			2.787**	1.230
			(0.337)	(0.414)			(1.213)	(0.662)
Individual factors								
Sex (ref=female)	1.340	1.252	1.481	1.502	0.924	1.283	2.469	1.210
	(0.719)	(0.679)	(0.717)	(0.847)	(0.622)	(0.920)	(1.590)	(0.941)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)								
Urban, non-local	0.171	0.0676*	1.043	0.174	-	-	-	-
	(0.241)	(0.0990)	(2.007)	(0.252)				
Rural local	0.254	0.171	1.807	0.270	2.703	1.989	2.539	1.883
	(0.378)	(0.251)	(3.508)	(0.406)	(4.419)	(3.296)	(6.071)	(3.190)
Urban local	-	-	9.697	-	-	-	1.272	-
			(15.68)				(2.675)	
Homeownership	1.945	1.317	1.711	1.891	1.258	1.229	1.783	1.406
	(1.251)	(0.814)	(1.023)	(1.242)	(0.958)	(0.906)	(1.286)	(1.095)
Length of residence	0.927	0.927	0.940	0.930	1.441***	1.429***	1.424***	1.437***
	(0.0598)	(0.0560)	(0.0510)	(0.0608)	(0.153)	(0.154)	(0.134)	(0.156)
No. of kids	8.992***	6.656***	4.686***	7.962***	3.636*	3.033	2.227	2.850
	(6.203)	(4.207)	(2.662)	(5.683)	(2.613)	(2.211)	(1.604)	(2.154)

Years of schooling	0.697**	0.837	0.951	0.710*	1.122	1.118	1.242*	1.141
	(0.122)	(0.105)	(0.0945)	(0.125)	(0.131)	(0.140)	(0.158)	(0.145)
Household income (ln)	0.360**	0.308**	0.400**	0.381*	0.901	0.928	1.020	0.917
	(0.187)	(0.156)	(0.185)	(0.199)	(0.532)	(0.546)	(0.567)	(0.547)
Neighbourhood factors								
Residential satisfaction	1.327	1.472	1.162	1.362	0.738	0.904	0.658	0.725
	(0.455)	(0.509)	(0.375)	(0.494)	(0.349)	(0.435)	(0.361)	(0.389)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)								
Commodity neighbourhoods	0.424	1.289	1.068	0.538	3.279	4.775	4.164*	3.748
	(0.350)	(0.992)	(0.688)	(0.496)	(2.834)	(4.618)	(3.321)	(3.781)
Constant	1,563**	148.1*	0.715	1,055*	0.00219**	0.00446*	0.000144**	0.00158*
	(5,469)	(397.8)	(1.778)	(3,869)	(0.00672)	(0.0144)	(0.000500)	(0.00530)
Pseudo R^2	0.0749	0.1927	0.1504	0.1998	0.3269	0.3341	0.3369	0.3400

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table E.3 OLS models predicting neighbourhood sentiment with perceived performances of RCs, PMCs and HOAs in neighbourhoods fitting the partnership mode (n=126)

Variables	Neighbourhood attachment				Orientation towards collective goals				Trust			
	Model 17 RC-only	Model 18 HOA-only		Model 20	Model 21 RC-only	Model 22 HOA-only	Model 23 PMC-only	Model 24	Model 25 RC-only	Model 26 HOA-only	Model 27 PMC-only	Model 28
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances												
RC	0.124			0.109	0.064			0.053	0.212***			0.249***
	(0.079)			(0.093)	(0.079)			(0.094)	(0.055)			(0.064)
HOA		0.054		-0.049		0.000		-0.060		0.009		-0.080
		(0.074)		(0.085)		(0.068)		(0.086)		(0.050)		(0.058)
PMC			0.189*	0.198*			0.131	0.119			0.065	-0.071
			(0.084)	(0.094)			(0.077)	(0.095)			(0.062)	(0.065)
Individual factors												
Sex (ref=female)	-0.071	-0.129	-0.018	-0.028	-0.032	-0.004	0.023	0.025	-0.027	0.070	0.090	0.013
	(0.127)	(0.138)	(0.127)	(0.133)	(0.127)	(0.127)	(0.116)	(0.135)	(0.089)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.091)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)												
Urban, non-local	0.074	-0.545	0.659	0.255	-1.439*	-1.614*	-0.627	-1.333*	-1.132*	-1.310**	-0.373	-1.165*
	(0.660)	(0.677)	(0.530)	(0.660)	(0.658)	(0.625)	(0.485)	(0.668)	(0.459)	(0.460)	(0.391)	(0.453)
Rural local	-0.090	-0.269	0.860	0.007	-0.726	-0.797	0.121	-0.667	-0.794	-0.956*	-0.050	-0.790
	(0.627)	(0.664)	(0.531)	(0.625)	(0.626)	(0.613)	(0.485)	(0.632)	(0.437)	(0.450)	(0.392)	(0.429)
Urban local	-0.413	-0.482	0.650	-0.277	-1.428*	-1.491*	-0.513	-1.354*	-0.793	-0.934*	-0.063	-0.855*
	(0.590)	(0.623)	(0.453)	(0.588)	(0.589)	(0.575)	(0.414)	(0.595)	(0.411)	(0.423)	(0.334)	(0.404)
Homeownership	-0.048	-0.073	-0.020	0.023	-0.001	-0.014	0.001	0.028	0.041	-0.035	-0.036	-0.017
	(0.153)	(0.158)	(0.155)	(0.157)	(0.153)	(0.145)	(0.142)	(0.159)	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.115)	(0.108)
Length of residence	-0.004	-0.002	0.007	-0.001	-0.011	-0.010	-0.005	-0.009	-0.010	-0.014	-0.008	-0.009
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
No. of kids	-0.140	-0.120	-0.233	-0.194	-0.005	-0.022	-0.075	-0.058	-0.110	-0.114	-0.141	-0.119
	(0.130)	(0.136)	(0.138)	(0.133)	(0.129)	(0.126)	(0.126)	(0.134)	(0.090)	(0.092)	(0.102)	(0.091)

Years of schooling	-0.026	-0.002	0.029	-0.017	0.001	0.004	0.022	0.008	-0.002	-0.011	0.006	-0.001
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Household income (ln)	0.077	0.001	0.040	0.081	0.146	0.145	0.149	0.160	-0.056	-0.037	-0.024	-0.033
	(0.106)	(0.111)	(0.108)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.103)	(0.099)	(0.108)	(0.074)	(0.075)	(0.080)	(0.073)
Neighbourhood factors												
Residential satisfaction	0.112	0.171*	0.104	0.066	0.099	0.124	0.058	0.079	0.090	0.149**	0.111	0.121*
	(0.079)	(0.081)	(0.083)	(0.081)	(0.079)	(0.075)	(0.076)	(0.082)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.061)	(0.056)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)												
Commodity neighbourhoods	-0.220	-0.154	-0.187	-0.320	-0.580**	-0.513**	-0.574***	-0.575**	-0.428***	-0.211	-0.245	-0.260
	(0.176)	(0.191)	(0.172)	(0.200)	(0.175)	(0.176)	(0.157)	(0.203)	(0.122)	(0.130)	(0.127)	(0.137)
Constant	4.119***	4.020***	1.993**	3.560***	4.592***	4.683***	3.234***	4.240***	4.302***	4.888***	3.623***	4.432***
	(0.787)	(0.790)	(0.661)	(0.825)	(0.785)	(0.729)	(0.604)	(0.834)	(0.548)	(0.536)	(0.487)	(0.566)
R^2	0.1386	0.1163	0.1731	0.1869	0.3060	0.3053	0.2969	0.3141	0.3758	0.2739	0.1839	0.3993

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table E.4 Negative binomial models predicting weak and strong neighbourly ties with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the management mode (n=234)

	Weak ties			Strong ties		
Variables	Model 1 RC-only	Model 2 PMC-only	Model 3	Model 4 RC-only	Model 5 PMC-only	Model 6
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances						
RC	0.114		0.140	0.488***		0.506***
	(0.100)		(0.109)	(0.132)		(0.141)
PMC		0.030	-0.064		0.203	-0.113
		(0.095)	(0.117)		(0.128)	(0.150)
Individual factors						
Sex (ref=female)	-0.324	0.032	-0.331	-0.072	0.070	-0.088
	(0.203)	(0.180)	(0.205)	(0.277)	(0.241)	(0.263)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)						
Urban, non-local		0.394			0.032	
		(0.926)			(1.342)	
Rural local	1.355	2.012		1.010	-17.158	
	(0.953)	(1.319)		(1.241)	(3,001.676)	
Urban local	0.952**	0.711	0.884*	1.282**	0.145	1.104*
	(0.350)	(0.895)	(0.365)	(0.492)	(1.274)	(0.488)
Homeownership	-0.109	0.097	0.026	0.078	0.732*	0.559
	(0.309)	(0.223)	(0.308)	(0.383)	(0.324)	(0.384)
Length of residence	0.009	0.058**	0.009	-0.025	0.042	-0.015
	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.027)
No. of kids	-0.118	-0.272	-0.135	0.341	-0.074	0.316
	(0.221)	(0.202)	(0.221)	(0.283)	(0.261)	(0.271)
Years of schooling	-0.154***	-0.065*	-0.143***	-0.179***	-0.071	-0.156**
	(0.038)	(0.031)	(0.038)	(0.050)	(0.042)	(0.048)
Household income (ln)	0.149	-0.034	0.103	0.070	-0.195	-0.023

	(0.146)	(0.131)	(0.146)	(0.192)	(0.182)	(0.183)
Neighbourhood factors						
Residential satisfaction	-0.286**	-0.186*	-0.323**	-0.246	-0.188	-0.301*
	(0.099)	(0.087)	(0.106)	(0.127)	(0.116)	(0.128)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)						
Privatised work units	1.324*	1.674**	1.279*	0.834	1.583*	1.129
	(0.524)	(0.565)	(0.527)	(0.684)	(0.757)	(0.653)
Commodity neighbourhoods	0.986*	0.882*	1.065**	0.017	0.510	0.597
	(0.407)	(0.390)	(0.407)	(0.492)	(0.524)	(0.498)
Constant	4.509***	3.230**	4.652***	2.969*	2.622	2.592*
	(0.887)	(1.038)	(0.902)	(1.189)	(1.464)	(1.210)
Pseudo R^2	0.0754	0.0558	0.0785	0.0728	0.0560	0.0831

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.

Table E.5 Logistic models predicting social and political participation with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the management mode (n=234)

Variables	Social participation			Political participation		
	Model 7 RC-only	Model 8 PMC-only	Model 9	Model 10 RC-only	Model 11 PMC-only	Model 12
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
Organisational performances						
RC	1.288		1.059	1.356		3.003
	(0.407)		(0.389)	(0.895)		(3.810)
PMC		1.819	1.673		0.920	0.555
		(0.532)	(0.701)		(0.241)	(0.557)
Individual factors						
Sex (ref=female)	0.260*	0.507	0.244*	0.365	1.077	0.0945
	(0.193)	(0.273)	(0.196)	(0.474)	(0.576)	(0.200)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)						
Urban, non-local		1.515			1.754	
		(1.215)			(1.504)	
Rural local	0.629	5.452		-	-	-
	(1.244)	(9.979)				
Urban local	0.724	-	0.798	38.35*		4.182
	(0.785)	-	(0.902)	(78.51)		(10.50)
Homeownership	0.366	1.415	0.240	25.27**	9.627***	72.25*
	(0.324)	(0.843)	(0.253)	(35.10)	(6.181)	(158.0)
Length of residence	0.941	0.979	0.922	0.816	1.005	0.714
	(0.0565)	(0.0447)	(0.0597)	(0.108)	(0.0592)	(0.158)
No. of kids	2.942	1.515	5.424**	1.074	0.793	3.980
	(2.191)	(0.869)	(4.638)	(1.587)	(0.456)	(9.578)
Years of schooling	0.792*	1.012	0.782	0.593*	1.115	0.337
	(0.112)	(0.0899)	(0.121)	(0.179)	(0.102)	(0.227)
Household income (ln)	0.357**	0.307***	0.256**	0.740	0.509*	0.888

	(0.170)	(0.127)	(0.140)	(0.642)	(0.187)	(1.077)
Neighbourhood factors						
Residential satisfaction	2.672***	1.930**	2.263**	1.678	1.890**	2.317
	(0.998)	(0.545)	(0.902)	(0.894)	(0.510)	(1.895)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)						
Privatised work units	0.202	0.390	0.0554	-	-	-
	(0.326)	(0.541)	(0.105)			
Commodity neighbourhoods	2.270	2.534	3.260		0.259	
	(2.529)	(2.567)	(4.081)		(0.316)	
Constant	37.95	0.194	76.88	118.4	0.243	1.549e†06
	(111.2)	(0.373)	(247.8)	(809.4)	(0.529)	(1.663e†07)
Pseudo R^2	0.2694	0.2474	0.3091	0.4507	0.2378	0.5906

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.

Table E.6 OLS models predicting neighbourhood sentiment with perceived performances of RC and PMC in neighbourhoods fitting the management mode (n=234)

Variables	Neighbourhood attachment			Orientation towards collective goals			Trust		
	Model 13 RC-only	Model 14 PMC-only	Model 15	Model 16 RC-only	Model 17 PMC-only	Model 18	Model 19 RC-only	Model 20 PMC-only	Model 21
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances									
RC	0.177		0.122	0.457**		0.316*	0.400***		0.299**
	(0.093)		(0.098)	(0.134)		(0.141)	(0.086)		(0.090)
PMC		0.268***	0.193		0.373***	0.375*		0.286***	0.291**
		(0.074)	(0.103)		(0.107)	(0.149)		(0.081)	(0.095)
Individual factors									
Sex (ref=female)	-0.218	-0.121	-0.188	0.130	-0.038	0.156	-0.033	-0.070	-0.037
	(0.184)	(0.129)	(0.183)	(0.265)	(0.187)	(0.265)	(0.170)	(0.142)	(0.169)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)									
Urban, non-local		-0.828			-0.730			-0.235	
		(0.695)			(1.011)			(0.768)	
Rural local	-0.187	-1.168	0.181	-0.400	0.041	1.096	-0.853	0.040	-0.050
	(0.634)	(0.845)	(0.841)	(0.914)	(1.229)	(1.217)	(0.588)	(0.933)	(0.775)
Urban local	0.285	-0.866	0.414	-0.274	-0.916	-0.232	0.150	-0.145	0.179
	(0.316)	(0.677)	(0.327)	(0.455)	(0.984)	(0.472)	(0.292)	(0.747)	(0.301)
Homeownership	0.200	-0.118	-0.058	-0.482	-0.525*	-0.786*	-0.358	-0.364*	-0.493*
	(0.248)	(0.160)	(0.267)	(0.358)	(0.233)	(0.386)	(0.230)	(0.177)	(0.246)
Length of residence	0.006	0.003	-0.001	0.047	0.028	0.038	-0.017	-0.014	-0.024
	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.024)	(0.018)	(0.024)	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.015)
No. of kids	0.210	0.086	0.232	0.053	-0.150	0.070	0.124	-0.192	0.101
	(0.194)	(0.142)	(0.196)	(0.279)	(0.206)	(0.283)	(0.180)	(0.156)	(0.180)
Years of schooling	-0.068	-0.025	-0.075*	0.053	0.046	0.043	-0.023	0.006	-0.028
	(0.035)	(0.022)	(0.034)	(0.050)	(0.031)	(0.050)	(0.032)	(0.024)	(0.032)

Household income (ln)	-0.083	-0.047	-0.053	-0.072	-0.008	-0.030	-0.279*	-0.249*	-0.260*
	(0.119)	(0.091)	(0.119)	(0.171)	(0.133)	(0.172)	(0.110)	(0.101)	(0.110)
Neighbourhood factors									
Residential satisfaction	0.189*	0.189**	0.166	0.184	0.049	0.128	0.015	-0.062	-0.063
	(0.092)	(0.070)	(0.102)	(0.133)	(0.102)	(0.147)	(0.085)	(0.077)	(0.094)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)									
Privatised work units	0.118	-0.028	-0.074	0.679	0.283	0.275	0.928*	0.478	0.749
	(0.429)	(0.366)	(0.450)	(0.617)	(0.532)	(0.652)	(0.397)	(0.404)	(0.415)
Commodity neighbourhoods	0.815*	0.385	0.589	0.275	0.230	0.089	-0.054	-0.223	-0.081
	(0.321)	(0.268)	(0.347)	(0.462)	(0.389)	(0.502)	(0.297)	(0.295)	(0.319)
Constant	2.849***	3.671***	2.847**	0.616	2.556*	0.566	3.744***	4.619***	3.640***
	(0.820)	(0.765)	(0.835)	(1.181)	(1.113)	(1.208)	(0.759)	(0.845)	(0.769)
R^2	0.3467	0.3359	0.3329	0.2298	0.2272	0.2974	0.4037	0.2790	0.4692

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table E.7 Negative binomial models predicting weak and strong neighbourly ties with perceived performances of RC and HOA in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode (n=127)

Variables	Weak ties			Strong ties		
	Model 1 RC-only	Model 2 HOA-only	Model 3	Model 4 RC-only	Model 5 HOA-only	Model 6
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances						
RC	0.733***		0.427	0.426***		0.660
	(0.113)		(0.270)	(0.123)		(0.369)
HOA		-0.013	-0.180		0.393	0.003
		(0.194)	(0.235)		(0.213)	(0.295)
Individual factors						
Sex (ref=female)	0.234	-0.639*	-0.314	-0.093	-0.840*	-0.570
	(0.208)	(0.291)	(0.258)	(0.245)	(0.375)	(0.357)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)						
Urban, non-local	-0.082	0.528	0.794	-0.141	0.617	20.802
	(0.804)	(0.906)	(0.976)	(0.941)	(1.157)	(5,612.375)
Rural local	-0.475	2.533	1.864	-0.057	1.000	18.322
	(0.601)	(1.328)	(1.305)	(0.747)	(1.944)	(5,612.376)
Urban local	0.620	3.233***	3.430***	0.486	1.287	19.649
	(0.544)	(0.957)	(0.925)	(0.652)	(1.375)	(5,612.375)
Homeownership	-0.478	-1.872*	-1.999**	0.037	0.191	0.624
	(0.380)	(0.781)	(0.763)	(0.455)	(1.165)	(1.112)
Length of residence	0.066***	0.012	0.021	0.023	-0.014	0.010
	(0.012)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.020)
No. of kids	0.007	0.485	0.426	0.275	0.289	0.111
	(0.222)	(0.334)	(0.289)	(0.235)	(0.463)	(0.415)
Years of schooling	-0.017	-0.157*	-0.142*	-0.047	-0.022	0.017
	(0.034)	(0.063)	(0.056)	(0.043)	(0.078)	(0.069)
Household income (ln)	0.142	0.306	0.350	-0.139	-0.144	0.274

	(0.197)	(0.307)	(0.338)	(0.226)	(0.409)	(0.429)
Neighbourhood factors						
Residential satisfaction	-0.041	0.200	0.238	-0.004	-0.348	-0.242
	(0.056)	(0.184)	(0.175)	(0.068)	(0.219)	(0.216)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)						
Privatised work units	-1.078***	0.281	0.064	-0.454	0.399	0.033
	(0.225)	(0.294)	(0.285)	(0.254)	(0.346)	(0.347)
Commodity neighbourhoods	0.017	0.166	-1.433*	-0.485	-0.671	-0.880
	(0.366)	(0.489)	(0.653)	(0.432)	(0.593)	(0.839)
Constant	0.622	2.944**	1.338	1.639	1.753	-20.141
	(0.735)	(1.029)	(1.392)	(0.912)	(1.277)	(5,612.376)
Pseudo R^2	0.0785	0.0572	0.0844	0.0367	0.0704	0.1106

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table E.8 Logistic models predicting social and political participation with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode (n=127)

Variables	Social participation				Political participation	
	Model 7 RC-only	Model 8 HOA-only	Model 9	Model 10 RC-only	Model 11 HOA-only	Model 12
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
Organisational performances						
RC	3.057***		3.130	1.670**		1.385
	(0.977)		(3.625)	(0.428)		(1.758)
HOA		3.642*	1.963		0.877	0.780
		(2.484)	(1.645)		(0.604)	(0.649)
Individual factors						
Sex (ref=female)	1.006	0.851	1.230	0.887	5.182	5.890
	(0.526)	(0.877)	(1.379)	(0.448)	(6.288)	(7.743)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)						
Urban, non-local	1.678	683,008		1.186		
	(2.809)	(2.461e†09)		(2.092)		
Rural local	0.329			0.868		
	(0.416)			(1.313)		
Urban local		3.716e†14		3.789		
		(1.905e†18)		(4.404)		
Homeownership	0.419	0		0.357		
	(0.388)	(7.40e-11)		(0.265)		
Length of residence	0.995	1.001	1.055	1.003	1.151*	1.159
	(0.0281)	(0.0527)	(0.0657)	(0.0287)	(0.0981)	(0.105)
No. of kids	1.408	3.136	1.730	1.418	1.622	1.508
	(0.793)	(3.798)	(2.104)	(0.792)	(2.460)	(2.314)
Years of schooling	0.876	0.608**	0.727	0.988	1.102	1.111
	(0.0847)	(0.131)	(0.156)	(0.0858)	(0.257)	(0.256)
Household income (ln)	1.101	1.508	3.388	0.536	3.186	3.849

	(0.550)	(1.868)	(4.622)	(0.276)	(4.537)	(6.156)
Neighbourhood factors						
Residential satisfaction	1.672*	0.697	0.778	1.306	2.244	2.115
	(0.484)	(0.435)	(0.542)	(0.282)	(1.565)	(1.558)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)						
Privatised work units	1.402	0.112**	0.0375**	1.555	0.359	0.303
	(0.805)	(0.124)	(0.0592)	(0.879)	(0.444)	(0.433)
Commodity neighbourhoods	0.749	4.402	1.509	3.312		
	(0.778)	(9.542)	(4.907)	(3.960)		
Constant	0.0484	6.716	0.0475	0.730	0.000749	0.000235
	(0.0951)	(30.24)	(0.286)	(1.274)	(0.00408)	(0.00170)
Pseudo R^2	0.2741	0.3339	0.3158	0.1611	0.1972	0.1990

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table E.9 OLS models predicting neighbourhood sentiment with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the empowerment mode (n=127)

Variables	Neighbourhood attachment			Orientation towards collective goals			Trust		
	Model 13 RC-only	Model 14 HOA-only	Model 15	Model 16 RC-only	Model 17 HOA-only	Model 18	Model 19 RC-only	Model 20 HOA-only	Model 21
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances									
RC	0.167*		-0.133	0.258**		0.163	0.277***		0.377*
	(0.077)		(0.214)	(0.092)		(0.282)	(0.063)		(0.175)
HOA		0.124	0.100		0.074	-0.095		0.335*	0.077
		(0.147)	(0.196)		(0.191)	(0.258)		(0.127)	(0.160)
Individual factors									
Sex (ref=female)	0.111	0.005	-0.066	0.040	0.006	0.021	-0.067	0.088	0.089
	(0.154)	(0.238)	(0.248)	(0.184)	(0.310)	(0.327)	(0.125)	(0.205)	(0.203)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)									
Urban, non-local	0.178	1.151	1.754	0.742	0.190	0.660	0.688	0.408	1.298
	(0.577)	(0.754)	(0.964)	(0.685)	(0.980)	(1.271)	(0.467)	(0.649)	(0.789)
Rural local	0.348	3.018*	2.606	1.196*	4.059*	4.466*	0.682	0.896	0.637
	(0.481)	(1.195)	(1.291)	(0.570)	(1.553)	(1.701)	(0.389)	(1.030)	(1.056)
Urban local	0.457	1.232	0.755	1.026*	1.469	1.967	0.924**	0.750	0.671
	(0.363)	(0.825)	(0.916)	(0.430)	(1.072)	(1.207)	(0.293)	(0.711)	(0.749)
Homeownership	-0.639**	-0.337	0.131	-0.931**	-0.334	-0.389	-0.565**	-0.139	0.067
	(0.242)	(0.698)	(0.758)	(0.287)	(0.907)	(1.000)	(0.196)	(0.601)	(0.621)
Length of residence	-0.006	-0.035**	-0.030*	0.002	-0.024	-0.023	0.007	0.001	0.007
	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.011)
No. of kids	-0.025	-0.452	-0.536	0.004	-0.215	-0.285	0.097	0.259	0.140
	(0.161)	(0.294)	(0.308)	(0.195)	(0.382)	(0.405)	(0.130)	(0.253)	(0.252)
Years of schooling	-0.030	-0.024	-0.011	0.003	0.025	0.047	-0.026	-0.065	-0.033
	(0.026)	(0.048)	(0.052)	(0.031)	(0.062)	(0.068)	(0.021)	(0.041)	(0.042)
Household income (ln)	-0.153	-0.278	-0.190	0.068	-0.092	-0.158	0.050	-0.012	0.136
	(0.143)	(0.250)	(0.288)	(0.172)	(0.325)	(0.380)	(0.116)	(0.216)	(0.236)

Neighbourhood factors

Residential satisfaction	0.012 (0.055)	0.246 (0.146)	0.372* (0.164)	-0.002 (0.066)	0.100 (0.190)	0.108 (0.216)	0.016 (0.045)	0.269* (0.126)	0.242 (0.134)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)									
Privatised work units	0.112 (0.178)	0.351 (0.252)	0.407 (0.269)	-0.035 (0.212)	-0.010 (0.327)	-0.078 (0.355)	-0.053 (0.144)	-0.047 (0.217)	-0.126 (0.221)
Commodity neighbourhoods	-0.076 (0.269)	0.387 (0.403)	0.059 (0.553)	0.114 (0.329)	0.582 (0.524)	0.020 (0.728)	0.037 (0.218)	-0.287 (0.347)	-0.178 (0.452)
Constant	3.904*** (0.541)	2.943** (0.919)	2.703* (1.278)	2.063** (0.655)	1.901 (1.195)	1.332 (1.684)	2.616*** (0.437)	2.103* (0.792)	0.815 (1.046)
R^2	0.1381	0.5787	0.5999	0.1737	0.4315	0.4425	0.2861	0.5945	0.6537

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table E.10 Negative binomial models predicting weak and strong neighbourly ties with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the government mode (n=270)

Variables	Weak ties			Strong ties		
	Model 1 RC-only	Model 2 PMC-only	Model 3	Model 4 RC-only	Model 5 PMC-only	Model 6
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances						
RC	0.083		-0.062	0.227**		0.272*
	(0.088)		(0.154)	(0.080)		(0.136)
PMC		0.305*	0.339*		0.040	0.115
		(0.131)	(0.136)		(0.130)	(0.130)
Individual factors						
Sex (ref=female)	0.108	0.283	0.470	0.114	0.468*	0.324
	(0.213)	(0.220)	(0.262)	(0.197)	(0.227)	(0.249)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)						
Urban, non-local	0.144	0.960	2.336	0.210	0.330	2.209
	(0.922)	(0.559)	(1.538)	(0.827)	(0.607)	(1.363)
Rural local	0.799	1.487**	2.279**	1.681**	2.033***	2.865***
	(0.567)	(0.492)	(0.753)	(0.543)	(0.507)	(0.738)
Urban local	0.890	1.220**	2.415**	1.349**	1.768***	2.655***
	(0.539)	(0.466)	(0.763)	(0.499)	(0.467)	(0.720)
Homeownership	0.393	-0.201	-0.760	0.193	-0.424	-0.749
	(0.311)	(0.309)	(0.436)	(0.284)	(0.327)	(0.422)
Length of residence	0.054***	0.062***	0.068***	0.022*	0.039*	0.033
	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.011)	(0.020)	(0.019)
No. of kids	0.067	0.203	0.045	0.087	0.113	0.139
	(0.223)	(0.243)	(0.279)	(0.206)	(0.256)	(0.274)
Years of schooling	-0.117**	-0.137**	-0.164**	-0.063	-0.091	-0.076
	(0.039)	(0.045)	(0.058)	(0.037)	(0.050)	(0.053)
Household income (ln)	-0.085	-0.305	-0.280	-0.062	-0.025	-0.124

	(0.183)	(0.244)	(0.273)	(0.174)	(0.257)	(0.266)
Neighbourhood factors						
Residential satisfaction	0.355**	0.379*	0.528*	0.361**	0.488***	0.378
	(0.122)	(0.150)	(0.229)	(0.112)	(0.144)	(0.198)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)						
Privatised work units	-0.536	-1.268*	-1.138*	-0.175	-0.733	-0.564
	(0.333)	(0.500)	(0.515)	(0.299)	(0.518)	(0.499)
Commodity neighbourhoods	-0.051	-0.856	-1.136	-0.274	-0.137	-1.382
	(0.507)	(0.845)	(1.528)	(0.452)	(0.920)	(1.364)
Affordable neighbourhoods	1.428***	0.989**	1.278**	1.004***	0.825*	0.959*
	(0.292)	(0.365)	(0.423)	(0.275)	(0.391)	(0.412)
Constant	2.541***	2.527**	1.526	0.211	0.290	-0.863
	(0.736)	(0.942)	(1.276)	(0.694)	(0.894)	(1.206)
Pseudo R^2	0.0421	0.0439	0.0587	0.0532	0.0490	0.0710

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table E.11 Logistic models predicting social and political participation with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the government mode (n=270)

Variables	Social participation			Political participation		
	Model 7 RC-only	Model 8 PMC-only	Model 9	Model 10 RC-only	Model 11 PMC-only	Model 12
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
Organisational performances						
RC	1.588***		1.417	1.684***		2.125**
	(0.279)		(0.404)	(0.315)		(0.711)
PMC		1.340	1.023		0.654*	0.494**
		(0.333)	(0.314)		(0.163)	(0.176)
Individual factors						
Sex (ref=female)	1.235	1.407	1.329	1.101	2.528**	1.069
	(0.470)	(0.690)	(0.802)	(0.441)	(1.187)	(0.657)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)						
Urban, non-local	-	-	-	0.164		
				(0.247)		
Rural local	0.410	0.883	0.379	0.626	2.464	0.299
	(0.469)	(0.938)	(0.616)	(0.670)	(2.303)	(0.504)
Urban local	1.691	2.105	0.612	1.559	6.954**	0.805
	(1.673)	(1.998)	(0.944)	(1.568)	(6.242)	(1.343)
Homeownership	2.701*	4.917**	3.620	2.694*	1.327	1.104
	(1.553)	(3.804)	(3.465)	(1.396)	(0.783)	(0.898)
Length of residence	0.976	1.040	1.013	0.984	0.988	1.008
	(0.0200)	(0.0436)	(0.0488)	(0.0210)	(0.0392)	(0.0535)
No. of kids	0.425**	0.282***	0.247**	0.510	0.514	0.213**
	(0.167)	(0.138)	(0.143)	(0.210)	(0.236)	(0.136)
Years of schooling	0.986	1.060	1.017	1.000	1.137*	1.074
	(0.0627)	(0.0868)	(0.103)	(0.0672)	(0.0888)	(0.113)
Household income (ln)	1.191	0.839	1.246	1.016	0.770	0.939

	(0.375)	(0.357)	(0.614)	(0.333)	(0.301)	(0.467)
Neighbourhood factors						
Residential satisfaction	1.532*	1.612	1.674	1.220	2.426***	1.854
	(0.393)	(0.487)	(0.641)	(0.294)	(0.734)	(0.719)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)						
Privatised work units	2.042	8.474*	5.752	2.447	2.362	2.062
	(1.155)	(10.51)	(7.323)	(1.664)	(2.891)	(2.738)
Commodity neighbourhoods	-	-	-	0.178**		
				(0.153)		
Affordable neighbourhoods	0.541	0.807	0.586	0.938	0.390	0.665
	(0.270)	(0.523)	(0.444)	(0.491)	(0.247)	(0.549)
Constant	0.0358**	0.0111**	0.0441	0.198	0.0359**	0.592
	(0.0519)	(0.0199)	(0.100)	(0.280)	(0.0583)	(1.487)
Pseudo R^2	0.1722	0.2362	0.2443	0.1866	0.1771	0.2315

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.

Table E.12 OLS models predicting neighbourhood sentiment with perceived performances of RCs and PMCs in neighbourhoods fitting the government mode (n=270)

Variables	Neighbourhood attachment			Orientation towards collective goals			Trust		
	Model 13 RC-only	Model 14 PMC-only	Model 15	Model 16 RC-only	Model 17 PMC-only	Model 18	Model 19 RC-only	Model 20 PMC-only	Model 21
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Organisational performances									
RC	0.088		0.149	0.084		0.203*	0.158***		0.161*
	(0.048)		(0.075)	(0.058)		(0.094)	(0.045)		(0.078)
PMC		0.018	-0.038		0.063	-0.092		0.017	-0.076
		(0.061)	(0.078)		(0.074)	(0.097)		(0.062)	(0.081)
Individual factors									
Sex (ref=female)	0.183	0.220	0.131	0.195	0.150	0.204	0.211*	0.226	0.381*
	(0.107)	(0.118)	(0.146)	(0.128)	(0.143)	(0.182)	(0.099)	(0.122)	(0.152)
Hukou status (ref=rural, non-local)									
Urban, non-local	0.251	-0.459	-0.028	0.573	-0.082	0.245	0.440	-0.549*	0.202
	(0.371)	(0.269)	(0.435)	(0.444)	(0.325)	(0.543)	(0.342)	(0.276)	(0.452)
Rural local	0.358	0.214	0.223	0.863*	0.406	0.599	0.019	-0.259	-0.031
	(0.302)	(0.249)	(0.387)	(0.361)	(0.302)	(0.483)	(0.279)	(0.257)	(0.402)
Urban local	0.425	0.143	0.284	0.884**	0.553	0.629	0.212	-0.245	-0.052
	(0.275)	(0.233)	(0.368)	(0.328)	(0.282)	(0.459)	(0.253)	(0.239)	(0.382)
Homeownership	-0.557***	-0.443**	-0.649**	-0.614***	-0.285	-0.302	-0.450**	-0.309	-0.203
	(0.150)	(0.154)	(0.203)	(0.180)	(0.187)	(0.254)	(0.139)	(0.159)	(0.211)
Length of residence	0.001	0.011	0.005	-0.011	-0.017	-0.019	0.001	0.004	-0.002
	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.011)
No. of kids	-0.180	-0.115	-0.171	-0.261*	-0.099	-0.138	0.052	0.037	-0.004
	(0.110)	(0.117)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.142)	(0.181)	(0.101)	(0.120)	(0.151)
Years of schooling	0.016	0.007	-0.015	0.040	0.037	0.048	-0.020	-0.008	-0.022
	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.026)
Household income (ln)	0.029	0.055	0.170	-0.058	-0.063	-0.078	0.123	0.106	0.123
	(0.088)	(0.104)	(0.124)	(0.105)	(0.127)	(0.154)	(0.081)	(0.107)	(0.129)

Neighbourhood factors

Residential satisfaction	0.416***	0.400***	0.323***	0.213**	0.188*	0.149	0.146*	0.095	0.126
	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.093)	(0.080)	(0.089)	(0.116)	(0.062)	(0.075)	(0.097)
Neighbourhood type (ref = traditional neighbourhoods)									
Privatised work units	0.141	0.118	0.148	0.362	0.406	0.395	-0.002	0.040	0.066
	(0.164)	(0.252)	(0.267)	(0.196)	(0.306)	(0.333)	(0.152)	(0.259)	(0.278)
Commodity neighbourhoods	-0.493*	0.408	0.250	-0.220	0.847	0.595	-0.058	0.448	0.258
	(0.241)	(0.369)	(0.474)	(0.288)	(0.447)	(0.591)	(0.222)	(0.379)	(0.493)
Affordable neighbourhoods	-0.023	0.120	0.123	0.075	0.331	0.362	0.243	0.281	0.254
	(0.145)	(0.167)	(0.197)	(0.173)	(0.202)	(0.246)	(0.133)	(0.172)	(0.205)
Constant	1.831***	2.041***	2.162***	1.827***	1.824***	1.610*	2.573***	3.253***	2.777***
	(0.392)	(0.415)	(0.568)	(0.468)	(0.503)	(0.709)	(0.361)	(0.427)	(0.590)
R^2	0.4057	0.3588	0.4067	0.2414	0.2058	0.2671	0.2879	0.1500	0.2356

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Glossary of Chinese Terms

Chinese	Chinese Pinyin	English translation
12345 市长热线	*12345 shizhang rexian*	Literately translated as 'mayor's hotline'. It is a way to report non-emergent issues and complaints to the government, and the number is 12345.
党建引领社区服务	*dangjian yinling shequ fuwu*	Providing neighbourhood services through community-level party building
党委书记	*dangwei shuji*	Literately translated as 'Party secretary' or 'secretary of Party Committee', the leader of the Communist Party of China at any organisational levels, usually the *de facto* highest political leader of that area
等靠要	*deng, kao, yao*	Waiting for, depending on, and asking for (others to do things for them, instead of doing things by themselves)
父母官	*fumuguan*	Literately translated as 'father-mother official', describing paternalistic leaders who treat constituents like children
管理委员会（管委会）	*guanli weiyuan hui (Guanweihui)*	Literately translated as Self-Management Association (SMA). It is a neighbourhood civic group for organising community collective consumption. It is established with the help of the local government's housing department when legal requirements for establishing an HOA or recruiting HOA members failed to be satisfied. Its board members usually include representatives of homeowners and members of local police and the RC (as the director).
和谐社区建设	*hexie shequ jianshe*	Literately translated as ''harmonious community building''. It is part of the national 'harmonious society' project
户口	*hukou*	Literately translated as 'household registration system'. It shows the city in which the resident is registered, commonly capturing birthplace, and when criteria for a change of hukou location are met, the workplace. Differences in hukou shape differences in entitlements to social services and collective properties, such as placement rights, access to affordable housing and the state pension.
老旧小区	*laojiu xiaoqu*	Literately translated as 'old and dilapidated neighbourhood'. It generally refers to a neighbourhood built before the 1990s, often with outdoor and shared facilities, and hardly any green spaces
街道	*jiedao*	Street Office (SO). It is the lowest level of government in urban China, usually comprising several Residents' Committees
积极分子	*jiji fenzi*	Neighbourhood activist
居民代表大会	*jumin daibiao dahui*	Assembly of Residential Representatives (ARR). It is the legal decision-making body of the neighbourhood which is attended by representatives of residents in the neighbourhood. The RC is required to report its work and annual budget to the ARR.

Chinese	Chinese Pinyin	English translation
楼长	*louzhang*	Literately translated as 'building head', the representative of residents living in the same building
全国社区管理和服务创新试验区	*quanguo shequ guanli he fuwu chuangxin shiyanqu*	Experimental zones for Community Governance and Service Innovation
全国社区建设试验区	*quanguo shequ jianshe shiyanqu*	Pilot cities for the community building reform selected by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China
社会凝聚力	*shehui ningjuli*	A force that binds society together
社会治理发展协会	*shehui zhili fazhan xiehui*	Neighbourhood Governance and Development Association (NGDA)
生产队	*shengchan dui*	The production team, the basic farm production unit in China from 1958-1984
社区	*shequ*	Literately translated as 'residential community'. In the Chinese context, the official use of *shequ* does not equate with 'community' in the Western context. Rather than pointing to the natural gathering of residents, *shequ* is the name given to the administrative territory of Residents' Committees at the grassroots level of the government system.
社区建设	*shequ jianshe*	Literately translated as 'community building'. It is a national project led by the Ministry of Civil Affairs 'to promote social development, to raise living standards, to expand grassroots democracy and to maintain urban stability' (Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2000).
社区居民委员会（居委会）	*shequ jumin weiyuanhui (juweihui)*	Literately translated as 'Residents' Committee'. According to the Organic Law of Urban Residents' Committees, the committee is not part of the state apparatus, but an 'autonomous mass organisation' through which citizens manage community affairs, educate themselves and serve their own needs (Article 2). It is the only legitimate neighbourhood self-governance organisation aiming at serving and representing its residents and promoting 'local socialist democracy, urban socialist materials and spiritual civilisation' (Article 1). Its director is called *juweihui zhuren*.
社区议事会（议事会）	*shequ yishi hui (yishi hui)*	Literately translated as 'Deliberative Council'. A part of the RC that performs the deliberative function.
四方平台	*sifang pingtai*	A platform for four-party talks on which agencies from local government, the PMC, the HOA and neighbourhood organisations can sit down and discuss common issues every month
素质	*suzhi*	The manner and civic capacity
网格	*wangge*	Literately translated as 'management grid', a segment of the new management system adopted by Chinese local governments, which is monitored by a designated person

Chinese	Chinese Pinyin	English translation
网格员	*wanggeyuan*	The designated person that monitors a '*wangge*'. He/she is expected to collected and submit local information to local authorities in a timely manner.
维权	*weiquan*	Right-defending activities
物业管家	*wuye guanjia*	Literately translated as 'butler', an employee of the property management company who is responsible for all issues of designated households in the neighbourhood
物业管理公司	*wuye guanli gongsi*	Property Management Company. Either private companies (some of which are affiliated to developers) or sponsored by local government, these companies provide professional services regarding property management and maintenance under a market contract with homeowners.
小区	*xiaoqu*	Literally translated as micro-district, it is a housing estate equipped with a complete set of living facilities (e.g. water and gas systems, green spaces, public activity centres, kindergartens, and shops) and a management system (e.g. PMCs and HOAs).
业主大会	*yezhu dahui*	Literately translated as 'Homeowners' Assembly' (HA). Composed of all homeowners within the property management area, it is an assembly that makes decisions concerning the collective interests of the entire neighbourhood under the guidance of the local housing department. In neighbourhoods with a large number of homeowners, such assembly is often organised among representatives of homeowners and is thus called 'Assembly of Homeowners' Representatives' (AHR).
业主护卫队	*yezhu huweidui*	Literately translated as 'guardians of homeowners'. It is a group of armed neighbourhood activists in Neighbourhood T that fought with the AT PMC
业主委员会（业委会）	*yezhu weiyuan hui (yeweihui)*	Homeowners' Association (HOA). It is a neighbourhood civic group that 'elected by a homeowners' assembly, enjoys the rights and assumes the obligations authorized by a homeowners' assembly, executes decisions made by the homeowners' assembly and is supervised by homeowners' (Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, 2009, Article 3).
议行合一	*yixing heyi*	The fusion of deliberative and executive powers
组织意图	*zuzhi yitu*	Intentions of the RC and/or local governments

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