



中国发展研究基金会
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Measuring Well-being from the Perspective of Social Relations: Reflections and Proposals Based on China's Recent Social Changes

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Outline

➤ Purpose of this Study:

Based on China's recent social Changes, this study aims at providing some reflections and proposals with respect to how to measure well-being from the perspective of social relations.

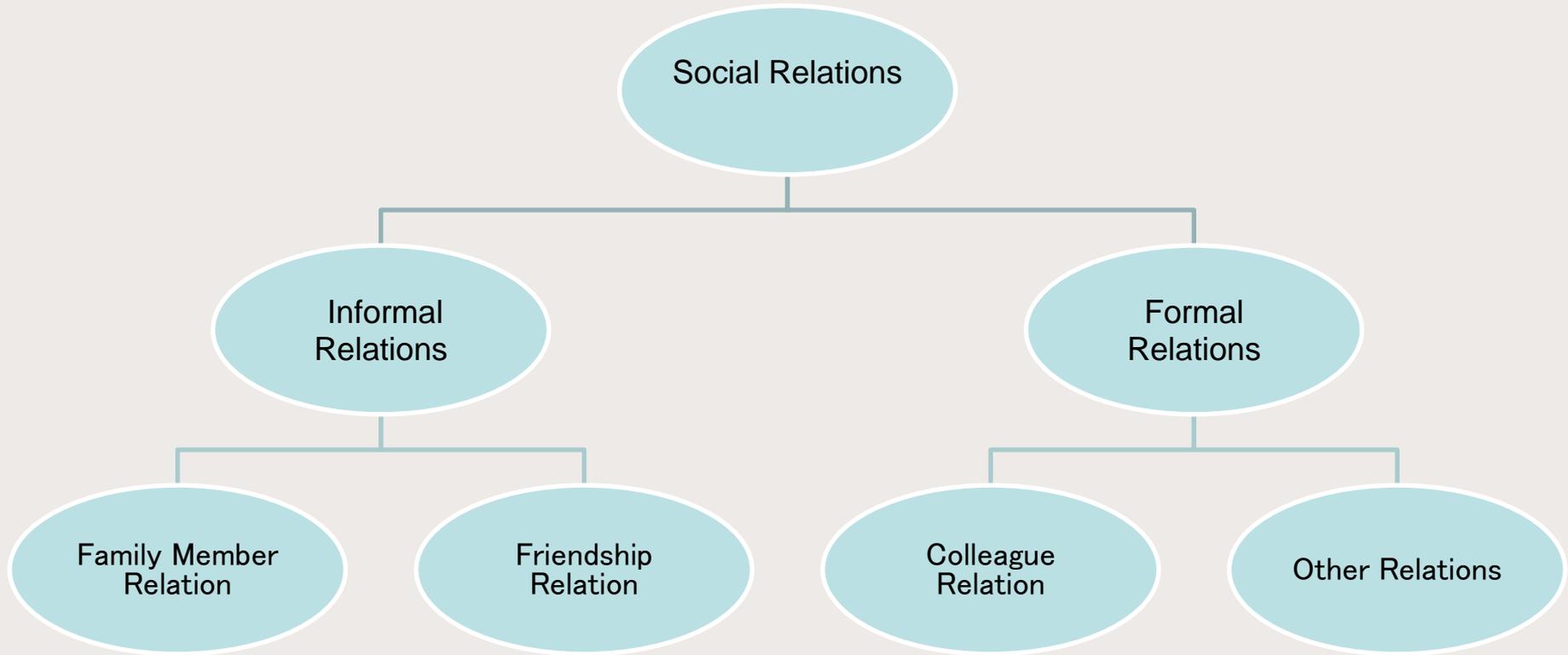
➤ In particular, five issues are to addressed in this study:

- 1) Why measuring well-being from the perspective of social relations is needed?
- 2) China's recent efforts in the field of measuring well-being;
- 3) Findings concerning Chinese people's well-being and social relations;
- 4) Challenges and newly emerged issues resulting from recent social changes;
- 5) Reflections and proposals with respect to how to measure well-being from the perspective of social relations.

Why measuring well-being from the perspective of social relations is needed?

- The ultimate aim of economic and social development is to improve personal and social well-being;
- What we measure influences how we act;
- Drawbacks of GDP as a measurement of social development;
- How to understand the concept of “well-being”?
- Why measuring well-being from the perspective of social relations is needed?

Operationalization of Social Relations

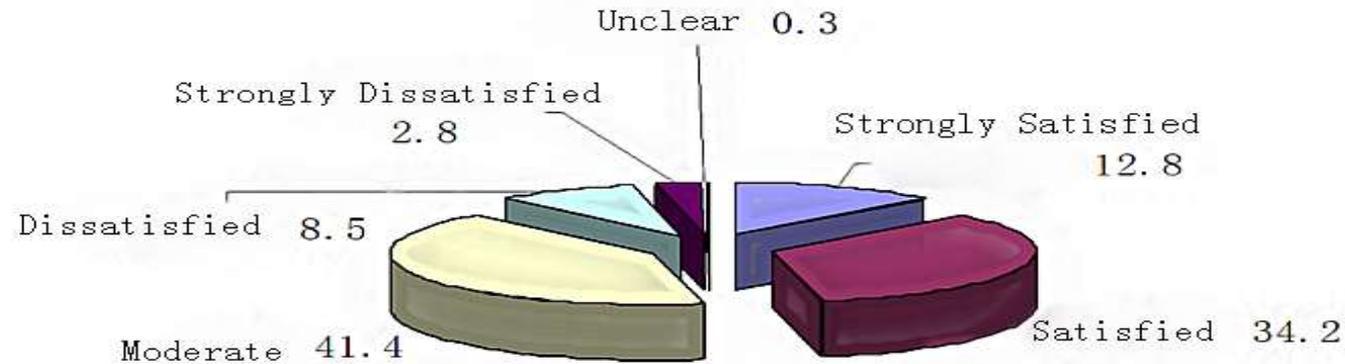


China's Recent Efforts in Constructing Better Measuring Systems

- Recently, China has realized the shortcomings of GDP as the measurement of social development. During the past three decades, the mentality of “GDP first” results in inconsistency between economic growth and social progress in China. Currently, Chinese government begins to consider establishing an integrated performance evaluation system to promote coordinated and comprehensive social development.
- In the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, to pursue the comprehensive development of social well-being has become one important policy goal for Chinese government. The Outline of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan explicitly states that China will “safeguard and improve people's livelihood as the starting point and objectives for accelerating the transformation of economic growth pattern”.
- Efforts at local level:
Currently, local governments in 8 provinces have taken initiatives to construct their own measuring systems: Helongjiang, Hebei, Henan, Anhui, Hubei, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong.
- Efforts at national level:
Pilot Project of Constructing China's Livelihood Index (Aiming at establishing an index system to reflect the social progress in various Chinese regions in an all-around way)

Findings Concerning Chinese People's Well-being: Current Life Satisfaction

Life Satisfaction Distribution Of Chinese Residents (%)



Findings Concerning Chinese People's Well-being: Current Life Satisfaction By Family Size



Note: Life satisfaction score ranges from 1 to 5.

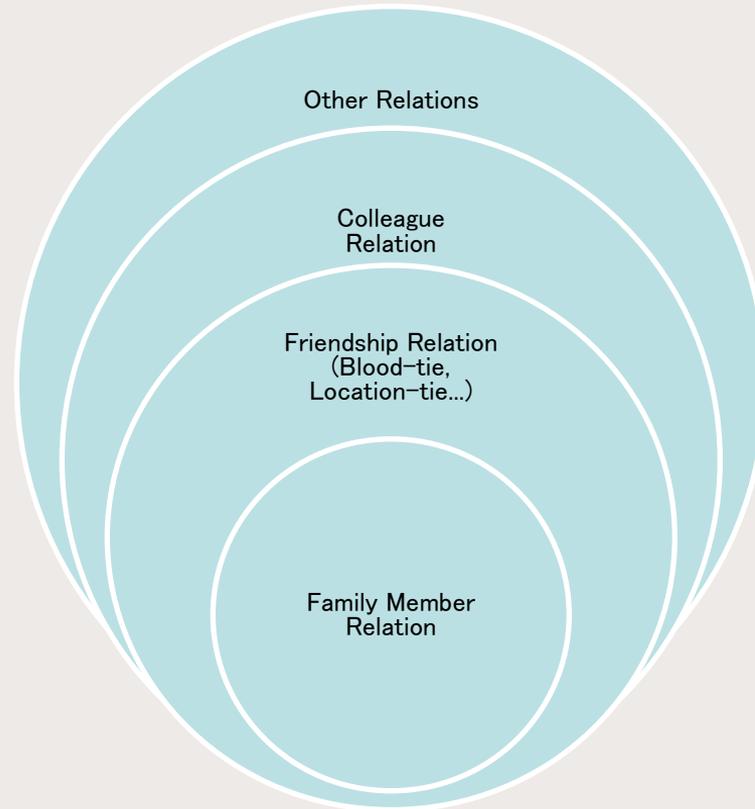
Findings Concerning Chinese People's Well-being: What are important things to Happiness?

What is important to your happiness (well-being)?

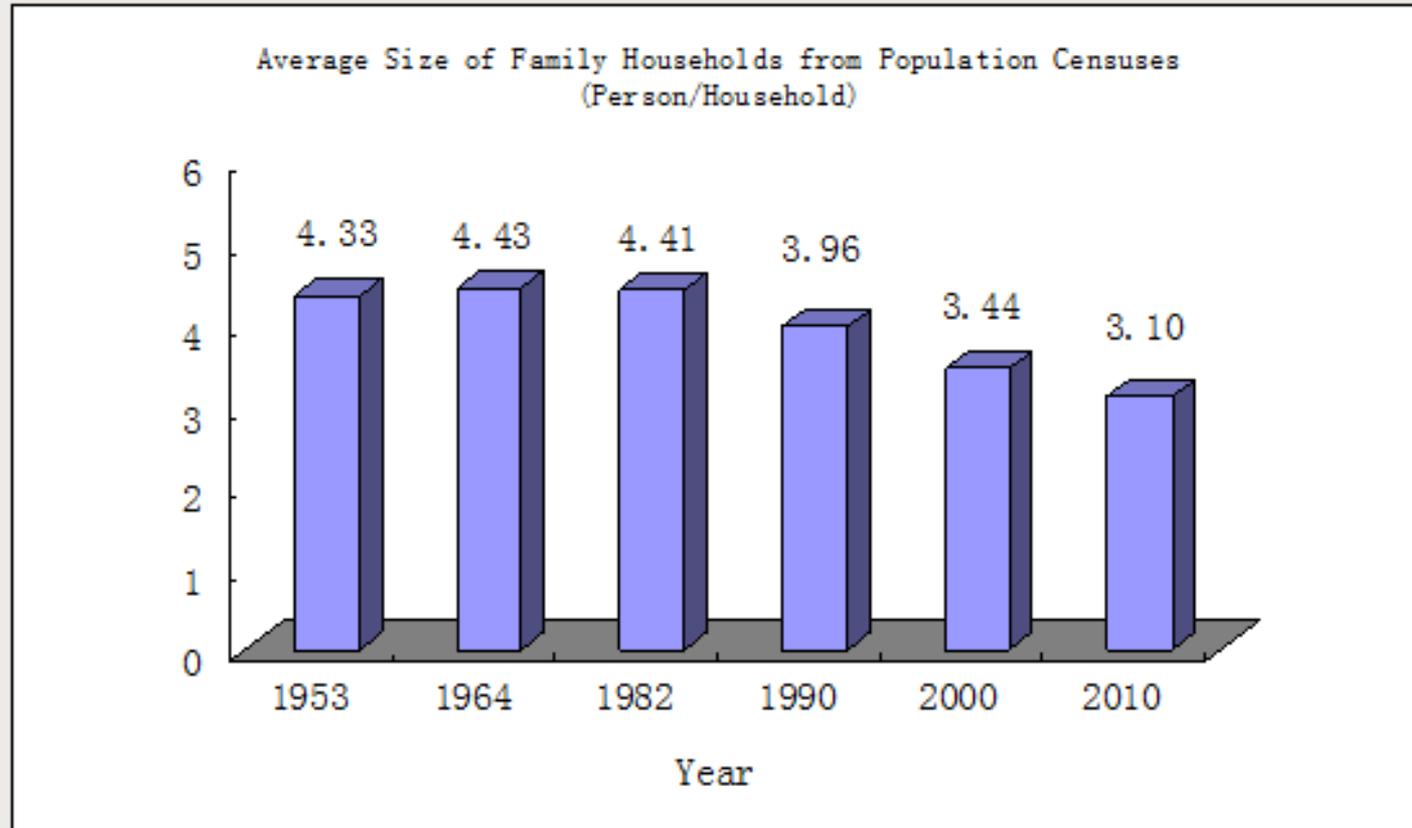
Item	Importance Score	Distribution (%)				
		Very Important	Comparatively Important	Don't know	Not So Important	Not Important
Family Harmony	93.6	74.9	20.7	2.8	1.2	0.5
Health	93.2	74.0	20.3	4.1	1.2	0.5
Children's Education	90.4	65.5	26.5	4.7	2.3	1
Life Safety	89.9	62.3	29	5.7	2.4	0.6
Medical Service	89.2	58	34.4	4.8	2.1	0.6
Family Economic Conditions	88.2	53.5	37.7	6	2.3	0.5
Environment Quality	87.2	54	34.2	7.7	3.0	1.1
Respect	87.1	52.7	36.4	6.6	3.3	1.0
Social Insurance	85.9	50.4	36	8.4	4.2	1.1
Living Conditions	84.1	43.2	44.5	5.4	5.2	1.8
Work	83.8	44.1	38.7	11.4	4.7	1.1
Prices	83.6	43.6	38.8	11.7	4.9	1.1
Public Facilities	82.7	41.5	38.9	13.7	4.6	1.3
Traffic	82.1	37.4	45.9	9.3	6.1	1.3
Judiciary	80.0	38.4	34.5	19.5	5.7	2.0
Income Inequality and Social Justice	79.2	35.8	36.2	20.3	5.6	2.2
Social Contact	77.8	30.4	43.7	15.0	8.5	2.4
Government Administration	77.0	34.0	33.9	21.9	6.8	3.4
Participation of Social Management	73.2	25.9	37.8	20.4	12.1	3.9

Note: Score is given as follows: Very Important=1; Comparatively Important=0.8; Don't Know=0.6; Not So Important=0.4; Not Important=0.2; Importance Score is calculated as follows: Importance Score=1*P (Very Important) +0.8*P (Comparatively Important) +0.6*P (Don't Know) +0.4*P (Not So Important) +0.2*P (Not Important) .

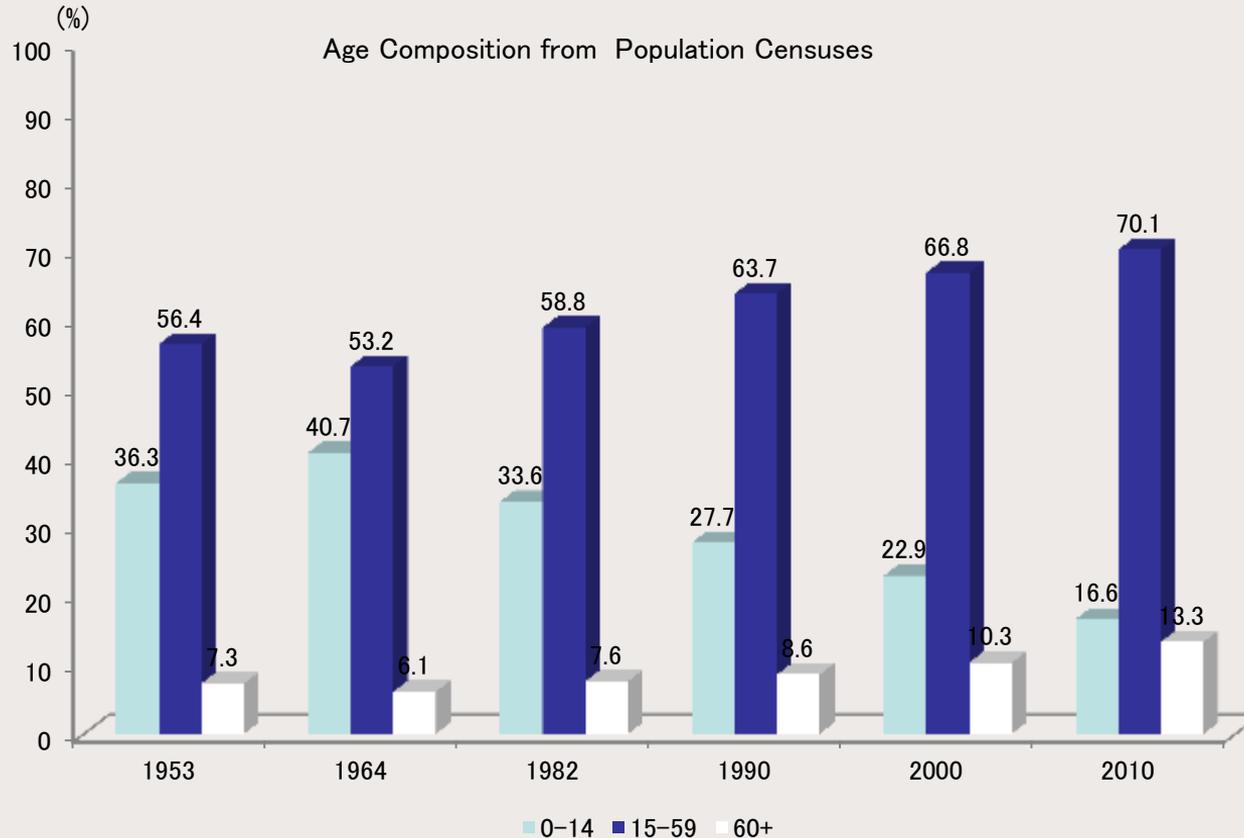
How did Chinese People establish their social relations?
– The Important Role of Informal Relations in Chinese People's life



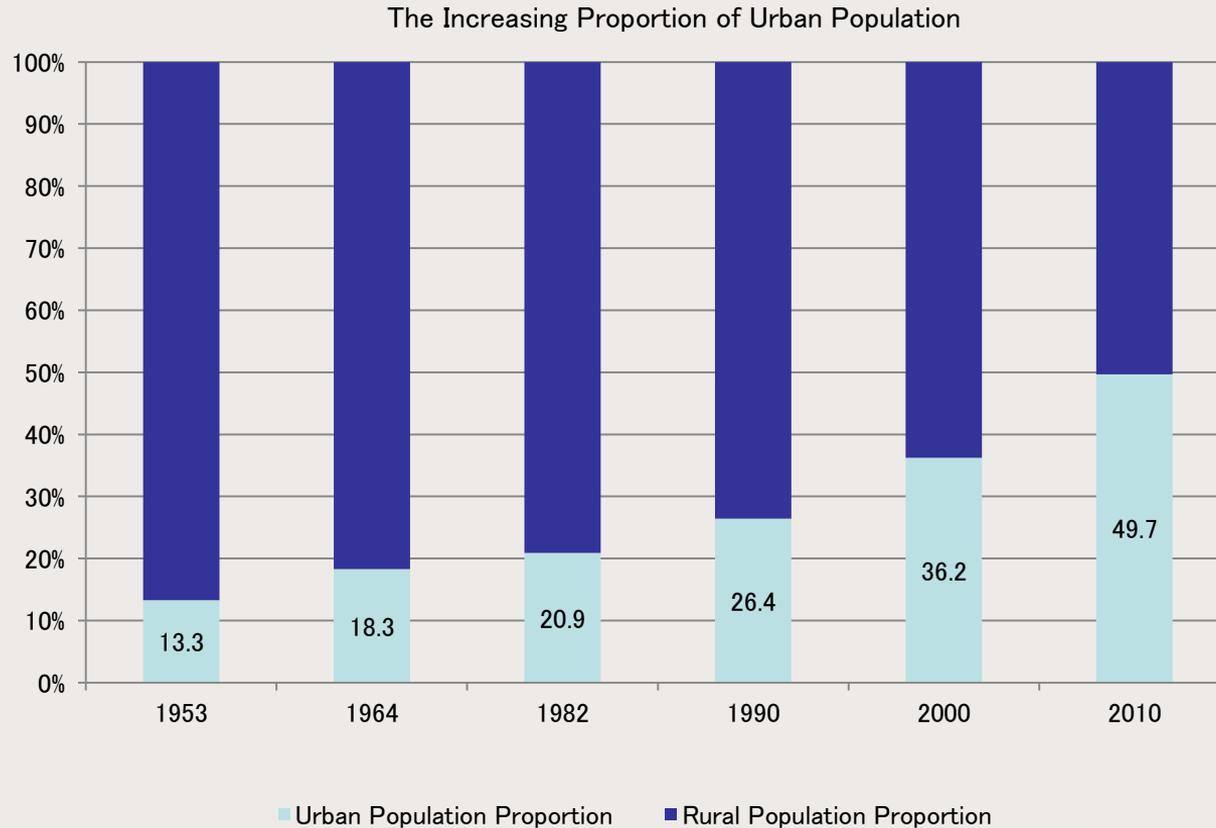
Challenges and Newly Emerged Issues Resulting From Recent Social Changes: The Shrinking Family Size in China



Challenges and Newly Emerged Issues Resulting From Recent Social Changes: China's Aging Population



Challenges and Newly Emerged Issues Resulting From Recent Social Changes: Rapid Urbanization and Enormous Domestic Migrants



Challenges and Newly Emerged Issues Resulting From Recent Social Changes: The Weakening Informal Relations and The Shortage of Formal Relations

Caretaker of the Elderly in Daily Life

	Yunnan		Hainan		Hunan		Inner Mongolia	
	N (Person)	Percentage (%)	N (Person)	Percentage (%)	N (Person)	Percentage (%)	N (Person)	Percentage (%)
Spouse	90	29.9	112	37.0	154	49.5	167	55.5
Son/Daughter-in-law	162	53.8	159	52.5	119	38.3	50	16.6
Daughter/Son-in-law	29	9.6	8	2.6	21	6.8	46	15.3
Grandchildren	7	2.3	2	0.7	3	1.0	0	0.0
Neighbors	0	0.0	3	1.0	3	1.0	1	0.3
Other Relatives	1	0.3	8	2.6	1	0.3	4	1.3
Community	0	0.0	1	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Government	9	3.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	1	0.3	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.3
None	2	0.7	9	3.0	10	3.2	32	10.6
Total	301	100.0	303	100.0	311	100.0	301	100.0

Source: Survey of Life Quality of the Elderly in Yunnan, Hainan, Hunan and Inner Mongolia.

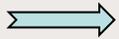
Challenges and Newly Emerged Issues Resulting From Recent Social Changes: The Rapidly Increasing Internet Usage and Changing Friend-making Way

- By the end of September 2011, China's mobile users had reached 952 millions, among them 3G users had reached 102 millions;

⇒ more convenient to contact each other and share information

- By the end of June 2011, internet users in China had reached 485 millions; among them people accessing to internet through mobile phones had reached 318 millions;

emergence of a new type friend: “network friend”



- Blog has been a new media to make friends and exchange views. By the end of 2010, blog users were just 63.1 millions; in contrast, by the end of June 2011, blog users had exceeded 195 millions in China, an increased by 208.9%

What changes would blog bring out to social relations?



Reflections and Proposals based on China's Recent Social Changes:
What measures/actions should a transitional society take to measure well-being
from the perspective of social relations in the future?

- The changing roles within social relations: the weakening of informal relations and the need to establish formal relations in the society;
- How to measure these newly established formal relations? (Social workers and the measurement of their functioning in a society···)
- How to define friends in the future? (to explore the possible impacts of new types of friends and suitable ways to measure them···)
- The need to explore potential influences of information technology on social relations and well-being (both in developing countries and in developed countries)

Thank you for your attention!

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