

The Use of Social Capital in Organizing the Frog Festival of Baying Village in the Context of Cultural Tourism Development¹

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Abstract

This article deals with the use of social capital in organizing the Frog Festival in a Zhuang ethnic village in China amidst the expansion of cultural tourism. The data used were drawn from qualitative research in Baying Village, Donglan District, Hechi City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China. Key informant interviews as well as participant and non-participant observations were the main data collection techniques employed in the field research. The study found that there are three forms of social capital-namely, networks, norms, and trust-employed in the organization of the Frog Festival, which has become a part of China's cultural tourism development. Social capital in the form of networks includes bonding networks among relatives, bridging networks between Baying residents and Zhuang outside the village, and linking networks between Baying villagers and the state as well as agencies from outside. Of the three forms of network, bonding is the most important because it connects not only those who have genealogical relationships, but also Zhuang dwellers from nearby villages to actively take part in organizing the festival. The research also indicates key roles of the other two categories of social capital-norms and trust-used in the organization of the Frog Festival which have allowed for its success in Baying and generated strong social networks.

Keywords: Zhuang, Frog Festival, social capital, cultural tourism

¹ This article is a part of a master's thesis entitled, "Social Capital in the Frog Festival of the Zhuang in Baying Village amidst the Expansion of Cultural Tourism," Mekong Studies Program, Department of Area Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University. The thesis was funded by the Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong Region (CERP), Khon Kaen University.

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการใช้ทุนทางสังคมในการจัดงานเทศกาลกบในหมู่บ้านปาลิงภายใต้กระแสรองท้องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม ข้อมูลที่ใช้ในบทความนี้ได้มาจากการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพซึ่งมีวิธีการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลที่ประกอบด้วยการทบทวนวรรณกรรมและการเก็บข้อมูลภาคสนามที่หมู่บ้านปาลิง อำเภอตงหลาน เมืองเหอหนอ เขตปกครองตนเองกว่างซีจ้วง สาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน วิธีการที่ใช้เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลภาคสนาม ได้แก่ การสัมภาษณ์ผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลักอย่างเป็นทางการและไม่เป็นทางการ รวมทั้งการสังเกตอย่างมีส่วนร่วม และไม่มีส่วนร่วม ผลการวิจัยชี้ว่า ทุนทางสังคมที่ถูกนำมาใช้ในการจัดงานเทศกาลกบในหมู่บ้านปาลิงมี 3 รูปแบบ ได้แก่ เครือข่าย บรรทัดฐาน และความไว้วางใจ นั้นถูกนำมาใช้จัดงานเทศกาลกบซึ่งได้กลายเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมโดยรัฐ ทุนทางสังคมในรูปแบบเครือข่ายซึ่งมีทั้งที่เป็นแบบการร้อยรัดกลุ่มเครือญาติ การประสานระหว่างคนในและนอกหมู่บ้าน และการเชื่อมโยงระหว่างชาวบ้านกับภาครัฐ นั้นพบว่า เครือข่ายแบบการร้อยรัดมีความสำคัญมากที่สุดเพราะไม่เพียงเป็นการยึดโยงผู้ที่มีความสัมพันธ์ทางสายเลือดในหมู่บ้านปาลิงเท่านั้น แต่ยังรวมเอาผู้คนจากหมู่บ้านใกล้เคียงที่มีสำนึกของ “ความเป็นจ้วง” ให้เข้ามามีส่วนร่วมในการจัดงานเทศกาลกบอย่างแข็งขัน นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่า ทุนทางสังคมอีก 2 ประเภทคือ บรรทัดฐานและความไว้วางใจก็มีบทบาทสำคัญในการจัดเทศกาลกบจนนำมาซึ่งความสำเร็จในการจัดงานและเครือข่ายทางสังคมที่เข้มแข็ง

คำสำคัญ: จ้วง เทศกาลกบ ทุนทางสังคม การท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม

Introduction

The People's Republic of China (PRC) — widely known as China — is inhabited by a wide range of ethnic groups. Among the population of diverse ethnic backgrounds, the Han is the predominant group while the Zhuang represents China's largest ethnic minority. According to the 6th National Population Census of PRC, conducted in 2010, the number of people officially registered as Zhuang was 16,926,381 (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). In the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which is the Zhuang main area of settlement, the population of the Zhuang was 14.21 million in 2000. This number comprises 87.81 percent

of all people of Zhuang origin in China. In the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, most Zhuang are found in the cities of Nanning, Chongzuo, Baise, Hechi, Liuzhou, Laibin, and Guigang (Government of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

The Hongshui River Basin has been occupied by the Zhuang since ancient times. As the main artery of the area, the Hongshui River has nourished Zhuang communities and shaped their cultural ways for centuries. This ecological context has allowed for the creation of a unique cultivation. Despite the fertile soil in the area, the most important factor affecting agricultural productivity is rain, which has been highly valued over time. Through past experiences, the Zhuang have observed a connection between rain and frogs. That is to say, frogs always make sounds before and after the rain and the Zhuang believe that rainfall is caused by the sound made by frogs. The Zhuang, therefore, have traditionally regarded frogs as supernatural beings that have power over rain and they have invented a ritual of making offerings during dry spells or droughts to the frog god, who could provide them with bountiful rains in return (Qin, 1999). This ritual occupies a special place in Zhuang culture, and it has developed from a small village tradition in the past to a famous community festival today. Most frog worship ceremonies and frog festivals² are found in districts such as Donglan, Tian'e, Nandan, all of which are situated in the Hongshui River Basin (Liao, 2014a: 3).

The frog festival is called by various names in the different localities. While the Zhuang in Bayin village in Donglan District — call it *Ya gui* [ja⁶k^we³]³, those in Nadong-a village in Tian'e District — call it *Gan gui* [kam²k^we³]⁴, *Mo gui* [mok⁷k^we³]⁵ or *Sen gui* [cam²k^we³]⁶ (Liao, 2014a: 3). In Chinese academia, the frog festival is known as *Maguai*

² During the festival, the local people not only take part in several frog-related ceremonies, which are organized during the daytime on different days according to the lunar calendar, but they also actively participate in nighttime activities such as singing contests, parades and traditional performances.

³ *Ya gui* comprises two words: *ya* and *gui*. *Ya* means elderly mother while *gui* means frog. Thus, *Ya gui* refers to the daughter of Thunder God, who controls rainfall.

⁴ *Gan gui* means to bury a frog.

⁵ *Mo gui* also means to bury a frog.

⁶ *Sen gui* means to act like a frog.

(frogs) or *Wapo*. This community activity has been passed down from generation to generation. Meanings embedded in the festival, in which a frog-worship ceremony plays a vital role as the central component, have encompassed exclusive ethno-cultural identities. Traditionally and ideally, this annual ceremony — regarded as a large funeral — requires participation of most, if not all, village or community residents. These people collectively perform the ceremony asking the frog god to grant them seasonal rain, growth of crops and productivity (Liao, 2014b: 24).

Donglan District, lying in the northwestern region of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is a watershed area of the Hongshui River, which runs through the district in a north-to-south direction. This region has been populated by the Zhuang since former times. The Zhuang represent the major ethnic group whose population accounts for 86.3 percent of all people living in Donglan (Qin, 1999). Apart from being an important area of Zhuang, Donglan is well known for its frog festivals, which are found here more than in any other region. Historical evidence suggests that the frog festivals found in 167 villages in Donglan have been maintained from the distant past to the present (Tan, 2006).

Tourism in China has developed in parallel with the history of the country for a long period of time and particularly since the declaration of the economic reforms implementing the Open Door Policy by the Deng Xiaoping government from 1978 onwards. This economic-oriented policy has allowed for China's rapid economic growth and social development. As a consequence, tourism has become a crucial industry that brings a great deal of income to the country, and, for this reason, it has gained considerable attention from the Chinese government. Initially, local cultures were placed at the margin of state development. However, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2003, has resulted in a trend to preserve intangible cultural heritage worldwide, and the Chinese government has embraced this trend and emphasized the importance of ICH. The reaction of the Chinese government towards the UNESCO policy on ICH can be exemplified through the declaration of ICH

conservation policy in 2006. The policy was presented in the “sixteen letter sentence.” “保护为主，抢救第一，合理利用，继承发展” (Baohuweizhu Qiangjiudiyi Heliliyong Jichengfazhan), which literally means “Mainly protection, rescue first, rational use, and inheritance and development.” This policy enabled the Frog Festival of the Zhuang to be listed as one of the national ICH of China, and it has given rise to official conservation of the festival. As a result of ICH promotion by the Chinese state as well as a recent trend in various parts of the world, cultural tourism has become China’s major tourism development policy. Therefore, encouragement of the preservation of local culture in order to stimulate the national tourism industry has been developed rapidly. Baying, which is regarded as the origin of the Zhuang Frog Festival, was officially promoted and developed as a cultural tourist attraction in 2015. Since then, the government sector has played a role in the management of the festival as an activity that focuses on preserving Zhuang culture and attracts tourists from other areas, contributing to an increase in the village’s household income.

The data collected in the field site shows that in the past, particularly prior to the recent expansion of cultural tourism to Baying, the frog used in a worship ceremony was regarded as a sacred entity that was held in respect by the villagers. Most activities of the festival took place in rice fields, and those who managed all of the activities were solely Baying residents, although, interestingly, a frog burial day attracted a great large number of Zhuang people to Baying from other villages. Developments in the 21st century, however, have brought a modern worldview to the people in China, and the Zhuang in Baying are no exception. It is evident that Zhuang dwellers of Baying, and elsewhere in the country, no longer strictly rely on their agricultural life through a frog-worship ceremony as did their predecessors. The reason they still have this annual festival is to maintain the traditions created by their ancestors.

Unlike the frog festival in the past, nowadays the festival has been changed in many respects since the start of tourism promotion by the Chinese state in 2015. Examples include construction of new

infrastructure in the village, monitoring of the festival by state representatives and their roles in the festival, standardization and management of security, an increase of performances on the frog burial day, elimination of certain traditional performances, use of modern equipment in the festival, and assigning students to participate. In addition, there are more visitors coming to Baying during the festival. Consequently, tourism promotional activities have been added, such as a local products sale and bronze drumming competition. Furthermore, new accommodations and places of entertainment are available for tourists. For this reason, the authors were interested in exploring this phenomenon in order to understand how the Zhuang in Baying have employed social capital in the organization of the Frog Festival against the backdrop of cultural tourism promotion by the Chinese state.

To explain the studied phenomenon, the concept of social capital proposed by Robert Putnam was applied in order to show how social capital allows for successful organization of the Frog Festival in Baying. Putnam defines social capital as “a pattern of social management such as networks, trust and norms that could yield more effective working of society due to a concordance of activities in the society.” (Chiengthong, 2006: 163). Putnam classifies a network into three types: bonding, bridging and linking (Thongyou, 2004). A bonding network refers to a tightly-knit network of relations in the village that ties family members, relatives, and close neighbors. In this article, the meaning of “family” is not limited to relations by blood, but it encapsulates a broader sense of kinship through an ethnic consciousness of being “Zhuang” among the Zhuang residents of Baying and those in nearby villages. This type of network is a connection between members who share the same culture. It is also constructed as a sense of shared duty as well as a feeling of safety among members (Tongsong, 2009). Meanwhile, a bridging network demonstrates relationships between the Zhuang in Baying and other organizations or members of other ethnic groups outside their village. It is a type of social capital that allows for a union of people from various backgrounds to cooperate in organizing the festival. Finally, a linking network denotes vertical relationships,

which bring together individuals from different economic and socio-political levels. Relationships created within this network are more likely to be those between the state and villages.

The data used in this article were drawn from relevant literature as well as from fieldwork in Baying, the main research site. During the three-month fieldwork period (January-April, 2017), key informants from the two groups, experts on the frog festival (e.g., ritualists and individuals in charge of organizing the festival) as well as state representatives were interviewed. Participant and non-participant observations were also important data-collection techniques that were employed in every stage of the frog-worship ceremony and various activities during the festival.

Baying Village: The Ethno-Cultural Setting

Despite the fact that the frog festival can be found in many places in Donglan District, Baying was selected because of its unique ethno-cultural context. This village, which is divided into 16 communities, is located in the northeastern part of the district. There are 1,723 people from 403 households living in Baying. Of all the communities, 13 consist of more than 20 households. All residents of Baying identify themselves as Zhuang. The village's main clan name is "Liao" (廖), while "Deng" (邓) is also found, but at present only two persons use Deng as their clan name. Based on the village's historical record, members of both clans share the same ancestors. That is to say, a person who is regarded as the legendary "grandfather" migrated from Henan Province, and his clan name was "Deng." Meanwhile, a person who is regarded as the legendary "grandmother" was a native of Baying, and her clan name was Liao. For this reason, the residents of Baying believe that they are all relatives who are closely tied through blood since former times (Xifu [Pseudonym], 2017).

Following the establishment of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in 1965, the implementation of the Reform and Open Door Policy in late 1978, and especially the start of the China

Western Development Policy in 2000, the social and economic life of the Zhuang people has been affected by rapid modern development. The Zhuang residents of Baying benefit from the aforementioned policies, which brought about the construction of infrastructure in their village, including roads, electricity, public health facilities and modern communications. At the same time, however, these developments have impelled many people to leave their family and village to work in urban areas to increase their income. Unlike formerly, when their economic life consisted mainly of farming, nowadays, to have an adequate standard of living, Baying inhabitants not only practice agriculture, but also have a variety of jobs.

The Baying River, seen as the artery of the village, has nourished the land and has shaped the culture of the Zhuang in Baying for centuries. The Zhuang in this village have created unique cultural activities, including the Ghost Festival, the Ancestor Spirit Worship Day and the spirit retrieving ceremony for buffalos, to name a few. Like many subgroups of Tai-speaking people found in the Greater Mekong subregion, the Zhuang believe in spirits. In their view, everything — animals, plants, and objects — has a spirit, or “*mi hon*” in their language. The two principal religious practices of these people are ancestor worship and nature worship. Because rice cultivation has been practiced since ancient times and has been one of the Zhuang’s important cultural and economic aspects of life, the people created the frog-worship ceremony, which is performed every year to ensure productivity. To the Zhuang, frogs are daughters of the Thunder God, whose duty is to control rainfall. The Zhuang of Baying, thus, have placed importance on frogs, and have sustained frog-related traditions, the Frog Festival in particular, since ancient times (Liao, 2014b).

The Frog Festival is generally divided into three periods. The first the “pre-festival” is for preparation. The second period, known as “during the festival,” starts on the second day of the first month and ends on the second day of the second lunar month. The main steps in this period consist of searching for frogs, a frog procession, a frog-flagpole installation and a frog burial. Nighttime activities are

also included in this period. The final period or “post-festival” is for cleaning up and putting things back in place (Kebo [Pseudonym], 2017). The Zhuang residents of Baying who consider themselves people of the same kinship group play key roles in the management of all the tasks during the three periods. Due to the expansion of state-promoted cultural tourism to Baying, however, the organization of the Frog Festival requires not only the social capital already available in the village, but it also needs social capital from outside the village. Thus, Putnam’s concept of social capital will be applied to explain this phenomenon by looking at three interconnected forms of social capital, namely, networks, norms and trust.



Figure 1 The frog procession during the 2017 Frog Festival in Baying

Social Capital in the Frog Festival

Social capital in the Frog Festival exists in three forms or three types of network relations: bonding, bridging, and linking.

Bonding Networks

This category of network refers to relationships established between relatives in the village and the Zhuang who have migrated to live or work in other places. As was mentioned earlier, all the residents of Baying are of Zhuang origin, and they belong to the same clans (the

Liao and the Deng). In their eyes, all residents of Baying are “insiders.” Because of the belief in common ancestors, they look at themselves as “brothers and sisters.” This belief can be seen in certain words in their language, which literally mean “our people,” “our relatives,” and “our neighbors,” used when referring to people in their village. Kinship-based relationships among Baying residents have been passed down from generation to generation. For this reason, all village members help each other in personal, family and village affairs, and they expect nothing in return.

The Frog Festival is large, and as Baying’s most important event, it requires a great deal of attention from the villagers, who actively organize and manage every single task not only during the festival celebrations, but also during the pre-and-post-festival activities. The villagers have diverse responsibilities, but they always help each other under the supervision and guidance of the festival organizing committee and village seniors in numerous issues ranging from liaison and decision making to take care of the details of the event. The data gained from the fieldwork suggests that the kinship system is a type of social capital found in the organization of the Frog Festival during all three stages. It is the most crucial force that bonds Baying villagers to work together for a common goal — the success of the festival. During the pre-festival time, they prepare equipment, construct the two gates — locally called “Longmen” — at both village entrances to welcome visitors, carry out traditional performances, and clean ceremonial venues as well as other places within the festival compound. On the festival days, they deal with all stages of the frog-worship ceremony, and in the post-festival period, they take care of all of the tasks and activities (Jiapi [Pseudonym], 2017). Interestingly, during the three periods or phases, Baying residents regardless of gender can participate in any activities or tasks that they wish. However, the key persons in most activities are senior males who are specialized in festival ceremonies, while middle-aged women are more likely to take part in dance rehearsals and to support different activities upon request.

As the old genealogy record of the Zhuang in Baying says, the forebears of the people in this village emigrated from the province of

Henan. When they arrived in Guangxi, they chose to settle in various areas in what are now the cities of Guilin, Liuzhou, Hechi, and Baise. Until the present time, the Zhuang in this region and particularly those in Baying who belong to the clans of Liao and Deng, and share the same ancestors from Henan, consider themselves relatives. They still retain relationships among themselves even though they live in different places. Their close ties can be seen in certain examples. The Zhuang of the two clans in many areas of Guangxi donated money to build the Deng-Liao Shrine in Baying in 2015. Shortly before that, in 2013, the Zhuang residents of Baying performed the Deng Dechong and Liao Lizhen Worship Ceremony. Deng Dechong was one of the younger generations of Deng Wenmao — the male ancestor of the Deng Clan who lived during the Ming Dynasty and married Liao Lizhen, a local Zhuang woman in Baying. Moreover, a great number of people who moved to other areas frequently visit Baying to help out during the Frog Festival financially and in several other ways. For example, they donated money to construct the Deng-Liao Shrine and made a group chat for consultation and moral support among themselves (Xiquan [Pseudonym], 2017).

Bridging Networks

Bridging networks have been established through relationships with villages as well as social groups and organizations beyond the boundary of Baying. The relationships emerged clearly since the initiation and promotion of cultural tourism activities in Baying. In the 2017 Frog Festival, 88 bronze drums from nearby villages were collected to be part of a drumming show. The drummers in the show were paid by the subdistrict government. Moreover that year, Zhuang singers from other villages, such as Lanyang, Changjiang, Bandeng, Changle, and Nadong participated in the festival. These villages have their own frog festivals, which take place during different times of the year. There were also great many visitors and traders from outside Baying during the festival. Some people came from other subdistricts or districts and a headman from each village within Bachou Subdistrict joined the Baying Village Committee to coordinate and facilitate various issues. This

suggests that the Zhuang from outside the village play a key role as an important complementary force in the organization of the Frog Festival in Baying, and they are part of a crucial network essential to the festival's success. Data from the fieldwork indicates that most bridging networks were established and have been maintained by the Zhuang residents of nearby villages. A sense of solidarity, coordination, and interdependence felt by those neighbors rests upon the fact that they share the same ethnic and cultural background with the residents of Baying. They see the Frog Festival in Baying as their own festival, in which they are pleased to participate or lend their labor as much as they can. Conversely, because the organization of the festival requires a considerable amount of resources, the Zhuang in Baying feel comfortable in asking for help from their fellows in other nearby villages. One of the authors, who is of Zhuang origin and conducted fieldwork in Baying, received permission from local people to take part in various ceremonies during the festival despite the lack of blood relationship with any resident in Baying. From the above situations, it can be seen that bridging networks are tightly woven through the sense of what it means to be "Zhuang" even though the people live in different localities and their genealogical connection does not really exist.

Linking Networks

Apart from the two types of network described above, linking networks also played a crucial part in the organization of the 2017 Frog Festival within the cultural tourism context. These networks generated relationships between Baying and the Chinese state, specifically the district of Donglan. Baying has been financially supported by Donglan District in order to develop the village as a tourist attraction under the "Project of Cultural Tourism Attraction Construction for the Frog Festival in Baying Village, Donglan District." In this regard, various kinds of infrastructure were built in the village particularly for use in the festival and in response to the expansion of cultural tourism. These infrastructures include the adjustment of landscape specifically for the Frog Festival as well as the construction of activity zones, a tourist service center, parking areas, accommodations and restaurants.

As a key agency in organizing the Frog Festival, the Donglan Subdistrict Administrative Organization (DSAO) was responsible for event planning by working with local people and public relations. Besides DSAO, other state agencies also sent their representatives to take part in the festival. These agencies are the Department of Sports and Culture Media of Donglan District, Donglan Tourism Development Committee, and Bachou Subdistrict Administrative Organization, whose duties covered a wide range of responsibilities such as stage construction, preparing for the welcoming of visitors, and security management. Other local organizations that played a role in the festival include the Donglan Cultural Center, the Donglan Intangible Cultural Heritage Conservation Center, the Communist Party branch at Baying, and the Baying Village Committee. Representatives were sent by these local state agencies to check traditional activities and performance rehearsals by villagers, take care of security, and train and send performers — in addition to performances and shows by Baying residents — in the festival. In addition, both local and central media, including the following television stations — Donglan, Hechi, Guangxi, and China Central Television (CCTV) — were responsible for public relations (Shenghua [Pseudonym], 2017).

Norms

1. Traditional Beliefs, Values, Regulations and Prohibitions of the Village.

The Frog Festival in Baying, particularly the one organized in 2017, reflects Baying's traditional beliefs, values, regulations, and prohibition as follows.

1) Respecting elders as well as respecting and following Zhuang customs and traditions. As an expert in Zhuang traditions, the frog-worship ceremonial leader is a person who controls activities in the Frog Festival. He is the most important and privileged senior, who receives considerable respect from Baying villagers. Liao Xifu, a male in his early sixties, is the current frog-worship ceremonial leader. Villagers tend to recommend those who want to know the details of the festival to ask Liao Xifu. His opinions and suggestions are required

before making a decision about any activities, and villagers follow his command strictly when it comes to the Frog Festival. Villagers also follow traditional beliefs about the festival. For example, they must not search for a frog on the first day of the first month, a frog procession must pass all of the households in the village, the frog-flagpole installation must be done on the fifteenth day of the first month, and the frog-burial day must take place on the second day of the second month. Moreover, there are prohibitions regarding behavior, dress and food. Finally, every step of the festival organization process must be done in accordance with the original traditions of the village (Xifu [Pseudonym], 2017).

2) Forbidding the destruction of trees in the watershed forest or the village forest, and forbidding the harming of animals. The Zhuang people in this village believe that each tree is inhabited by a spirit. Therefore, there is a prohibition against tree cutting, particularly trees around the village because the spirits in the trees are believed to safeguard the security of the village and bring prosperity. For this reason, before the frog-worship ceremonial leader cuts a tree which will be used as a frog flagpole, offerings as well as joss sticks and candles are placed under the tree and prayer is performed to ask permission from the spirit. Interestingly enough, when a frog is caught on the second day of the first month, it will be put in a coffin while it is still alive. This practice differs from that in another village, where a frog is killed before being placed in a coffin. The reason behind this practice is that villagers see the frog as a creature and a sacred deity which cannot be harmed.

3) Imposing penalties on individuals who violate the customs. Penalties include fines, public confessions, lashing or torturing, and expulsion from the village. There is a group of people called *luk sai*, who are assigned to protect security. The group is composed of 21 men who punish or expel from the village those who cause chaos or violate traditions. This type of social control was conducted strictly in the past. At present, the *luk sai* group still does its job although it is unlikely that visitors or participants from Baying or other villages would behave improperly or commit bad deeds.

4) Making a good impression for the reputation of the village. The Zhuang like to welcome and host guests. For this reason, on the frog-burial day, Baying villagers are pleased to see and welcome both old and new friends, and even unknown visitors. In their eyes, the more guests who attend a welcome party at their house, the more good networks and friends they will have. The participation of many people in their party ensures their reputation. By contrast, a host will be looked down or gossiped about as being stingy if no one visits his or her house or attends his or her party. A house without guests is called *Shuaihu* or *Lenghu*, literally meaning “an unlucky house” and “a cold house,” respectively. Therefore, villagers love to see a great number of visitors during festivals in Baying because they believe that visitors would bring fame to their village.

2. Agreements Among Village Residents

According to the data from key informant interviews, there are three agreements that affect the organization of the Frog Festival. First, all performers need to be punctual. They are not supposed to show up late at a performance rehearsal. Prior to the festival time, performers would be selected, and rehearsals would be scheduled. Due to the great number of performers, those in charge of each performance would make an agreement that performers must arrive at rehearsals on time. Additionally, each performer’s name and identification card number must be recorded in a book every time. Those who show up late or do not put enough effort in practice could be cut from the show, and replaced by another performer. This agreement applies to both general villagers and students from Baying Primary School. Second, villagers are encouraged to talk politely to visitors as well as to provide good service to them. Having courtesy is a crucial component as it helps promote successful tourist activities, and it is an important condition that allows for the sustainable development of cultural tourism. The villagers realize the importance of courteous behavior, and make an agreement to follow it in a strict and consistent manner. Third, the performers in traditional ceremonies must be natives of Baying and must be wearing Zhuang dress only.



Figure 2 A Zhuang boy with a frog in his hand among the Zhuang residents of Baying

3. Regulations by the State

Regulations were introduced to Baying when the state started to participate in the festival. Based on fieldwork, it appears that there are two state-determined rules related to the Frog Festival. First and foremost is security, which should meet high standards. In this regard, the government at the district level appointed police to take care of security at the festival venues. There were also officers in charge of emergency medical care and those who were responsible for food safety. Moreover, regulations for orderliness during the festival were determined and implemented. These regulations were enforced by the subdistrict government, which had worked in cooperation with other organizations within the village. They kept their eyes on traffic discipline as well as on general tidiness in different venues for the festival. Second, during the festival, traders were required to sell only affordable and high-quality local products. The frog-burial day, which is one of the most important days of the festival, attracted a great number of visitors, who not only had a chance to see exotic traditions and performances, but also enjoyed purchasing a variety of good products.

Trust

The data from key informant interviews and observations shows that Baying residents have a high level of trust in each other. Their

ancestors settled down in this village long ago and the succeeding generations have continued to live there. This is the reason why they consider the people in Baying “insiders” or “neighbors,” whose familiarity has generated close relationships and a sense of community. Such connections have allowed for mutual trust among the local people. For this reason, they can ask neighbors to do such things as help with housework during times in need, look after their children or animals when they are busy or take care of members of their family if they are sick. Regardless of the festival time or other occasions, the villagers tend to rely on and pay attention to each other. It is common for them to borrow appliances from neighbors. Interestingly, they can go into any house to take things for temporary use, and the owners of these objects do not fear that the borrowed item could get broken or lost. Some people keep a door open to let neighbors in and take things to use. They are also pleased to give their belongings to people in need. Aside from that, local people feel safe about leaving things in front of their house during the night and some even keep a door open at night, and find nothing stolen in the next morning.

Besides the trust among the villagers, there is the trust that visitors have in the residents of Baying. That is to say, in the context of tourism, visitors believe in the security and services available in Baying. Visitors can come to Baying alone without being worried about dangers or inconveniences. During the festival, if they do not have enough money or cannot find accommodations, they can ask for help from the local people at any time. Moreover, there is still another type of trust that has been built between the villagers and government organizations. The villagers and state representatives always make decisions together and when there is a disagreement between the two parties, they have a meeting to find solutions together.

Conclusion and Discussion

This article has explored how social capital is employed in the organization of the Frog Festival in the village of Baying amidst cultural tourism development by the Chinese state. The phenomenon was

explained through Putnam's concept of social capital, which focuses on networks, norms and trust. These three forms of social capital play a crucial role in organizing the Frog Festival. As the most important form of social capital, social networks on different levels have bonded family members, relatives and neighbors in Baying, connected Zhuang residents of Baying to Zhuang people in other places, and linked Baying villagers with government agencies and other organizations outside the village. Strong social networks, particularly the networks based on shared kinship and ethnic background, have led to interdependence among the Zhuang from generation to generation. This interconnection emerges not only in the Frog Festival, but in other contexts as well. Apart from the networks, two other forms of powerful social capital have been utilized in organizing the Frog Festival. These are norms, which include values, beliefs, prohibitions, and regulations held by the local people, as well as a high level of trust. Social capital, thus, is a crucial factor that helps to empower the community (Ammar, 1999 cited in Prugratok, 2012). The phenomenon that emerged at the research site conforms to Putnam's concept of social capital, indicating that social capital is the glue that holds together family members, relatives and close neighbors who live in the same environment with those who have similar identities (Tongsong, 2009).

The current organization of the Frog Festival in Baying, which has been considerably influenced by the state's cultural tourism promotion, has paved the way for different groups of people outside the village to play a greater role in the festival. In the eyes of Baying residents, these people are "outsiders," but this status does not obstruct trust between the two sides. Since the implementation of Baying cultural tourist attraction promotion projects in 2015, the Frog Festival has been promoted as a district-level activity in which the district-level government has started to play a role. Relationships between local government representatives and villagers have allowed Baying to have more resources, particularly funding, which was used in various activities during the festival. Although financial support by the state was used for organizing the festival and paying performers and related

persons, it transformed the villagers, who previously had organized the festival in their own way, to be personnel or staff hired to do activities for the local government. This change could lessen the enthusiasm of the villagers. Some people might participate in the festival to get paid. What happened in Baying corresponds to Putnam's view that social capital could be used in inappropriate ways to achieve goals. Although social capital could easily result in cooperation among diverse people, it is difficult to conclude whether cooperation would yield positive or negative outcomes (Watanasin, 2006).

Maniemaï Thongyou (2004) points out that there are more bonding and bridging networks than linking networks in rural societies in the northeastern region of Thailand. What has been found in the Baying Frog Festival, however, shows that there are more bonding and linking networks than bridging networks because of the co-working between villagers as the owners of the tradition and the local government as an agency that actively promotes the festival as part of cultural tourism development. Meanwhile, Nipaporn Maleelai (2017) suggests that social capital plays a vital role in the revival of local traditions in a multi-ethnic community in Northeast Thailand. This social capital is employed by local people in contestation with a money-oriented religious movement on the basis of their original belief system. The present article, however, presents a different point of view. That is to say, social capital is not employed as an instrument of the community in a negotiation or a contestation with any kind of power. Rather, it is used as a force in driving the organization of the Frog Festival in a transitional context. This social capital has created strong networks, interdependence and trust among the Zhuang in Baying under traditional norms of the village and new rules determined by the state.

However, several activities in the festival appear somewhat slipshod because Baying villagers no longer organize the Frog Festival by themselves, but through coordination with state agencies. The villagers may dislike some activities, but to carry on their tradition, they need to accept certain changes and choose to participate in them. They must also allow what is new to their tradition to be a part of the festival.

People may become confused and may not be able to tell the younger generations what the original tradition was like. Nevertheless, the changes are not overwhelming and the festival is not a revival of one that was discontinued by the local community nor is it a newly constructed tradition. In fact, the Frog Festival in Baying has been passed down for generations by adhering as much as possible to the principle of original tradition conservation. This standpoint is in accord with the conservation of intangible cultural heritage and the cultural tourism development policy of China. This situation can be compared to one in parts of Northeast Thailand, where the rocket festival has been transformed in several respects according to context and time (Srisupun, 2011). The pattern of the rocket festival is now determined or constructed by both local government agencies and the local community, which remains the owner of the tradition.

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