

Social Capital, Social Solidarity and Volunteer Behavior among Pga K'nyau Youths in Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community, Lamphun, Thailand

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Abstract

This qualitative research aimed to answer the following questions: 1) What are the components of social solidarity of Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom community; and 2) What are the factors supporting the volunteer behavior among Pga K'nyau youths in support of the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony and Kruathan Parade? Data were gathered by conducting in-depth interviews (IDI) and participant observation with 20 Pga K'nyau youth volunteers at the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony and Kruathan Parade. Content analysis was then used to analyze, categorize, and derive conclusions from the collected data. The results identified the following four elements of social solidarity of Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom: 1) Similarity; 2) Social norms; 3) Consistent interactions; and 4) Participation in activities. The study also found that social capital and cultural capital are important factors that promote the social solidarity of the community. These factors support the volunteer behavior of Pga K'nyau youths. The results of this research should be beneficial for other communities with similar cultural contexts that aspire to build social solidarity and encourage the new generation to take part in community development through volunteering.

Keywords Social capital; Social solidarity; Volunteer behavior

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Introduction

Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community is a Pga K' nyau ethnic community located in Na Sai Subdistrict, Li District, Lamphun Province. It consists of 291 households. (Nasai Subdistrict Administrative Organization, 2021) Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom has a simple way of life that is connected to Buddhism. The history of the village stems from the reverence of the Pga K' nyau hill tribe toward Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana or "Kruba Wong." Kruba Wong helped lead a group of villagers in Tak Province, to Mae Hong Son Province, on to Chiang Mai Province, and then to Lamphun Province, where this group of people settlement resides today. This experience eventually led the Pga K' nyau people from those villages to convert to Buddhism. Only when Kruba Wong came to live at the Wat Phra Phutthabat Huay Tom Buddhist monastery did the Pga K' nyau hill tribe people settle in large numbers, forming the Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community network that exists today.

The villagers had strong faith in Kruba Wong when he was still alive. He was an important person who created prosperity for the temple and the community at large. As a result, the villagers were willing to adhere to the Buddhist precepts, practice the Dharma, and adopt a vegetarian diet, which Kruba Wong espoused. The villagers would religiously go to the temple to make merit and offer food to the monks every day. On certain occasions, the villagers would assemble to go to the temple to make merit by offering vegetarian meals to the monks. This is a tradition that the villagers have continued for a long time. Unfortunately, Kruba Wong passed away from a heart attack on May 17, 2000. However, the villagers observed a miracle in that the body of Kruba Wong did not decay, as depicted in Figure 1.



Figure 1 The undecayed body of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana

Source: Geukma Media (2019)

That momentous event gave rise to an important tradition practiced by the Phra Bat Huay Tom Community. This is the "Ceremony of Changing the Robes of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana and the Kruathan Parade" organized by the group of Buddhist believers in Li District, the monastic disciples, and the host villagers. This event is held to summon the body of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana in preparation for the change of the Kruba's robes. There is a special incantation which accompanies the Kruathan procession. This is an important and beautiful tradition that has been passed down by elders of the Pga K' nyau hill tribespeople from year to year. This event is held twice a year: at the end of Buddhist Lent (September/October), and on the anniversary of the death of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana (mid-May), as depicted in Figure 2 and Figure 3.



Figure 2 The Ceremony of Changing the Robes of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana
Source: Geukma Media (2019)



Figure 3 The Kruathan Parade at Wat Phra Phutthabat Huay Tom
Source: Authors

On the morning of the procession, there is a merit-making ceremony. At the end of the ceremony, villagers dress in their beautiful, hand-made tribal costumes to join the parade. Buddhists from all around the community also join the procession of Tung, Flag, Robe of Phra Mahathat, and Kruathan from Wat Phra Phutthabat Huay Tom along the roads around the village, ending at Phra That Chedi Si Wiang Chai (Jariyasombat, 2012), as depicted in Figure 4.



Figure 4 The villagers wear their hand-made tribal costumes to join the Ceremony of Changing the Robes of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana and the Kruathan Parade
Source: Authors

We had the opportunity to conduct participatory observation on the day of the ceremony of the Changing of the Robes of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana, and the Kruathan parade at the Wat Phra Phutthabat Huay Tom, Na Sai Sub-district, Li District, Lamphun Province. This ceremony is the embodiment of the important traditions of the community which are being passed down to the new generation based on the faith of the villagers. As evidence of this, there is the phenomenon of more than 100 Pga K'nyau villagers, aged 18-24 years, who actively help manage components of the ceremony at various points, such as moving structures into place, preparing food containers, assisting with the service of food for the monks, and managing drinking water dispensers for guests attending the event. These youth conduct these activities starting in the early morning and continuing until evening. This involvement of various generations is a reflection of the community's values of helping one another through volunteering, which is a noteworthy reflection of solidarity that is a rare sight in other Thai Buddhist communities today. Thus, it is important to study the factors behind the social solidarity of the Pga K'nyau ethnic community, especially its younger generation.

Social solidarity is the context of the bond or relationship between individuals in a society that is mutually available to one another, also known as harmony. In sociology, Durkheim (1893) divided solidarity into two social manifestations: 1) mechanical solidarity refers to the solidarity that is the image of society as tangible linkages of elements together. In that way, society will be able to survive as long as those elements are not separated from each other. This includes having a system of values, beliefs, a common sense of purpose, and norms that form the common ground of society. This society subordinates the role of the individual. Usually, a society with mechanical solidarity is a society with a unified lifestyle, education, and religion, which is evident in tribal society and kinship relationships of extended family networks. 2) organic solidarity refers to the complexity of the individual elements of a community due to the increasing number of members who retain a common ethos or belief. Nevertheless, the individual members will have different, specific roles which will rely on, and are exchanged, through various connections with each other.

Homans (1950) explained social solidarity as a fundamental element of human behavior within a society, which consists of 1) Activities, which members of society do together; 2) Interactions, in which members of society participate in an activity and communicate through conversation or using symbols; and 3) Sentiment of satisfaction, generosity, or having a mutually positive attitude toward people in society. In this sense, society has a holistic nature that functions for the common good. As the frequency of social interactions increases, the sentiments of liking, satisfaction, and compassion also tend to increase. The similarity which people reciprocate in activities organized in each society becomes the norm of that society. Accordingly, adherence of the members of a society to social norms will make the society cohesive through mutual attachment. Members of such a society are sympathetic to one another so that they can work together for the common good (Homans, 1958).

Social solidarity is strongly associated with the concept of social capital. However, scholars have defined social capital quite differently. For example, Coleman (1994) argued that social capital is a series of interpersonal relationships characterized by common expectations, trust, and norms. Coleman suggested that the diversity of social capital arises from the different functions of individual communities, groups, and networks. The social capital of each community supports the social structure by tying the network of groups and communities together as a force for cooperation, mutual benefit, and trust (reciprocity and trust), as well as establishing common social norms. Later, Putnam (2002) broadened the concept of social capital through an integrated theories approach. Putnam explains that social capital arises from constructing norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement based on trust in one another and in society (i.e., 'social trust').

Knack & Keefer (1997) proposed a method of measuring social capital that reflects on trust and social norms. This method requires the definition of indicators of social capital that reflect the dependence of people in general society (generalized reciprocity). These include the level of

voluntarism, informal social gatherings, being a member of a political group, or otherwise having a social consciousness. This public-spiritedness is consistent with the observations of Putnam (2000) who proposed a “Social Capital Index” based on five elements: Organization of the community; social activities; community volunteerism; informal social competence; and trust in society.

During a dynamic society that is evolving with changes in the society, and a concurrent erosion of the traditional way of life, villagers in many communities around Thailand today have become more individualistic. The historic cultural assimilation that bound the traditions of the community together between generations has diminished. However, the Pga K'nyau ethnic community in Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom, is an anomaly in that regard. This community appears to have retained the closeness of social capital and lifestyle of the people as it was practiced in the previous generation. This is reflected through the norms and practices of helping each other through volunteerism of Pga K'nyau youths in the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony and Kruathan Parade which, as noted, are pre-eminent cultural ceremonies of this community.

In addition, past studies of related research have found research gaps in social capital and social solidarity related to volunteering behavior among Pga K'nyau youths. Therefore, this research aims to study the components of social solidarity of Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community and explore the factors contributing to the volunteerism of youths in Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community, in the context of the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony. The results of this research should be of interest to other communities with similar cultural contexts that aspire to build social solidarity and encourage the new generation to take part in self-development and community development through volunteerism.

Research methodology

This research project was considered an exemption review from requesting ethics in human research from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Thammasat University. Qualitative research based on descriptive phenomenology was conducted to study the components of social solidarity and explore the factors contributing to the volunteerism of youths in Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community. Data were collected by using in-depth interviews (IDI) with 20 Pga K'nyau youths aged between 18-24 who volunteered to help with the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony. Data were also collected by participant observation. We purposively selected 20 key informants, considering diversity in terms of gender, age, educational level, and willingness to provide in-depth information. Details of key informants are in the following table.

Table 1 Details of key informants

Volunteer works	Male	Female	Total
Volunteers who helped to arrange physical structures for the event.	4	1	5
Volunteers who cleaned food containers.	1	4	5
Volunteers who prepared the food for presentation to the monks.	3	2	5
Volunteers who distributed water to the participants of the event.	2	3	5
Total	10	10	20

The IDI were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide with questions about social capital, social solidarity, and supporting factors for volunteering. For example, how did you get started in volunteering? and why did you volunteer to help with the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony? The interviews were flexible, with adjustable wording suitable for each key informant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The data were collected on 1 May to 30 June 2019. Before every

interview, we asked for permission from the key informants to audio-record the interview to allow verbatim transcription and to verify the accuracy of the responses.

Participant observation was employed to collect data by observing volunteers' behavior. We took part in volunteer activities at the food container cleaning station and the food preparation station. We also joined with Pga K'nyau youth volunteers at the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony to observe their behavior, participate in discussions and exchange of opinions based on the research objectives.

Content analysis of the IDI was used to find common findings of field data. These data were then synthesized with data from secondary sources to identify patterns, themes, consistencies, and core meaning in the studied phenomena. We checked the reliability of the data by triangulation to confirm that the information obtained was credible and accurate. Then, the data were analyzed in the form of a description, with verbal expressions of key informants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Research results

The key informants who volunteered for the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony were all ethnic Pga K'nyau youths, with a mean age of 19.6 years. The majority (50%) are studying for an advanced vocational certificate, 35% are studying in the 6th year of high school, and 15% are studying for a bachelor's degree. Most lived in an extended- household (95%) with an average of six members. The key informants had an average experience of twelve times in volunteering for the Robe Changing Ceremony of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana. Details of the key informants' characteristics are in the following table.

Table 2 Details of the key informants

Characteristics of Pga K'nyau youths		Number	Percentage
Mean age		19.6 years	-
Education			
Final (6 th) year of high school	7	35	
Advanced vocational certificate	10	50	
Bachelor's degree	3	15	
Total	20	100	
Type of family structure			
Extended family	19	95	
Nuclear family	1	5	
Total	20	100	
Average household size	6.2 members	-	
Average experience in volunteering for the Robe Changing Ceremony of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana	12 times	-	

Social capital and the building of community solidarity

The social capital of Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom is based on the fact that people in the community share ideas and beliefs, have mutual trust, and benefit from a social network that serves to create a connection of cultural ties. These are reinforced by socialization of the family institution, social norms, religious institutions, faith in community leader, and community cultural capital. The details are as follows.

The family institution and social norms

The Pga K'nyau people who live at Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom form a tribal group with a unique way of life. What is evident is their strong faith in Buddhism, and that faith is being successfully transmitted across generations, up to the present day. The Pga K'nyau elders of Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom have instilled common values and behavioral norms at different levels in their society, starting at the family level. These norms include recognizing the importance of rice, acknowledging the need to make merit, being generous, not encroaching on animals (i.e., refraining from eating meat), being able to cope with hardship, volunteering for public benefits, sacrificing for the common good, and protecting the natural resource base. By virtue of these norms that have been cultivated and passed down from generation to generation, the Pga K'nyau people in Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community have created a system of family relationships and a social life that requires trust and mutual support, both inside the household and outside. The home or family is the basic institution that instills values, systems of thought, beliefs, and the transmission of norms to members. Indeed, the families of the Pga K'nyau people in Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom live together as an extended family. The roles of women and men are clearly divided. Women are responsible for household chores such as cooking meals, harvesting vegetables, collecting firewood, and weaving, among other chores. Most of the men are responsible for working outside the home, in physically demanding work such as crop cultivation, livestock rearing, house construction, labor-intensive paid work, etc. Additionally, the men will do any odd job in the home or community that is beneficial to others. Supporting evidence was given in the words of the following key informants:

Family teaches us to help others. We behave as if we are all relatives and need to help each other. Whenever a neighbor has a job to do, or there is communal work in the community that needs a helping hand, we are eager to help (PY01).

I saw my parents preparing for the event. I saw how they help with communal work at the temple during the Kruba Wong Robe Exchange Ceremony every year. The parents have learned this since childhood, and then they pass it on to the next generation. There is no question that the new generation will carry on the tradition (PY07).

Another interesting phenomenon of this community is the vegetarian dietary practices. This is part and parcel of making merit and keeping the Buddhist precepts. At the time of this study, about 80% of the villagers were vegetarians. That is another social norm that has been passed down through family tradition, with the parents and elders establishing the norm for children at an early age. The older persons show the younger generation how to go to the temple to make merit, practice the Dharma, eat vegetarian food, and chip in to help with important ceremonies of Wat Phra Bat Huay Tom. As a result, younger family members have absorbed the customs, and continue to inherit the teachings and wisdom from their parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents.

The current generation of Pga K'nyau parents wants their children to study beyond high school in order to have a stable career. In addition, Pga K'nyau teenagers are interested in careers other than farming, such as teacher, police officer, soldier, doctor, nurse, entrepreneur, tour guide, company employee, working for a charity, or even ordaining as a monk. Thus, the average Pga K'nyau family is paying more attention to higher education for the youths in the household. This is another emerging social norm that is prompting parents to support their child(ren) to attain the highest education they can.

In summary, socialization from family institutions and social norms with regard to Buddhism precepts, such as eating a vegetarian diet, and emulating examples of participation in important community events or ceremonies by older family members are important factors that have reinforced the solidarity of this community.

Religious institutions and faith in community leader

The Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community still believes in spirits, and there are animistic traditions and rituals that persist to the present day. The “ghosts” that the Pga K’nyau people respect are classified into good spirits and bad spirits. The good ghosts are believed to be responsible for watching over and taking care of the village, and these are the ancestral spirits, such as the ghosts of grandparents who are protecting their descendants. Interestingly, the Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community has also been honored as the first village in Thailand to practice the five Buddhist precepts completely. What makes this community different from others is that its history stems from the community's devotion to Kruba Wong, and belief in the teachings of Kruba Wong that emphasize giving alms, strictly observing the five Buddhist precepts, performing the prayers on a regular basis, promoting peaceful co-existence, encouraging everyone to go to the temple to make merit, listening to Buddhist sermons every day, living a simple life, observing the sufficiency economy principles, loving and caring for family, conserving the tribal culture and crafts (e.g., weaving), dressing in the tribal costumes, and speaking in the ethnic dialect when appropriate. As a result of adhering to these guidelines, the community is strengthened, and there is more unity. This solidarity is passed down from generation to generation and continuously promoted until it becomes a social norm that people in the community have adopted as a way of their daily life.

After Kruba Wong's death, and the miracle of the self-preservation of Kruba Wong's body, the community has instituted several important traditions that are held every year. The pre-eminent ceremony is the Changing the Robes of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana, and the accompanying Kruathan Parade. This is organized to honor Kruba Wong's contributions as an important person who contributed to the prosperity of the monastery and community, and to reinforce the faith in Buddhism by practicing the ceremony. This tradition has expanded to other communities surrounding Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom and is joined in by the brotherhood of Buddhist monks from neighboring monasteries. This tradition has been formally practiced since 2001 and is repeated semi-annually up to the present day. The atmosphere at the event is quite lively, with various religious ceremonies, offering of food to monks, Martika chanting, praying for Kruba Wong, listening to sermons, and general merit-making throughout the day. There is also a parade of the new robes which have been prepared to replace those on Kruba Wong. The procession extends around Phra Mahathat Chedi Sri Wiang Chai. The atmosphere in the event is a reverberating sound that spreads throughout the area. When it came time for the actual changing of the robes, many Buddhists from outside the community came to pay homage to Kruba's immortal body. The body is humbly enshrined in a glass coffin that shows respect for Kruba Wong, with the current abbot of Wat Phra Phutthabat Huay Tom presiding over the ceremony. The following are some reflections from the IDIs:

We respect and believe in the teachings of Kruba Wong, so this annual event is auspicious. All of us in the community come together to remember Kruba Wong, the founder of prosperity in our community (PY01).

At home, everyone eats vegetarian food because they believe in Kruba Wong's teachings. He talked about animal abuse as it relates to a meat-based diet. The abbot said that, when the community was founded, Kruba Wong set rules for abstaining from eating meat, and not bringing meat into the community. Kruba Wong insisted that everyone in the community must eat a vegetarian diet. He also decreed that there must be no drinking or selling of intoxicants in the community. These teachings had a positive impact on the community. One effect was that households focused on planting kitchen gardens for household consumption and sharing with neighbors (PY11).

Kruba Wong emphasized strictly on observing the five precepts. He said that these precepts will keep our body and speech in harmony and contribute to a peaceful coexistence. This led to unity and cooperation to work together successfully (PY04).

Capital of the community culture

Under the changing circumstances and contexts of community modernization, Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom is experiencing the cultural evolution of the ethnic group and gradual modernization. The Pga K'nyau youths in the community are adapting to the situation through social interactions in which they are involved. For example, they are exposed to modern communication technology as part of their formal education, and that naturally spills over into the use of social media and the Internet. More youth are choosing to dress in modern fashion and speak central Thai language instead of the ethnic Pga K'nyau dialect. Still, these youth are able to straddle both the traditional and modern styles and customs. This is evident in the active youth participation in the Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana Robe Changing Ceremony and the Kruathan Parade. This semi-annual event serves to preserve the Pga K'nyau culture in the new generation, and the indoctrination of Kruba Wong's teachings.

When participating in the Robe Changing Ceremony of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana and the Kruathan parade, the male Pga K'nyau teenagers usually wear red shirts as a symbol of masculinity because red represents endurance and strength in their culture. The shirt is loose-fitting, with a V-shaped neckline, and the hem of the shirt has a tassel hanging down. By contrast, the unmarried female Pga K'nyau youths wear a hand-woven sheath dress. This body-length shirt is a white sackcloth that extends to the feet to show purity. After a woman is married, she can wear colorful, cotton blouses. In terms of communication, if communicating within a peer group or within a family, the locals use the original Pga K'nyau dialect, which is similar to Burmese language. However, the younger generation who attend standard Thai curriculum schools are fluent in Thai and are fully bilingual in the ethnic dialect and central Thai. Thus, the inheritance and preservation of the traditions of the Pga K'nyau people are largely through carrying out customs, dress codes, and language in dealing with different contexts and special events. Still, they need to retain faith in the current and historical community leader and play an active role in reinforcing the social bonds. Thus, even despite the outside influence of the modern world, the community of Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom remains culturally united, as reflected in the words of the following key informants:

"We still use Pga K'nyau dialect to communicate with family, relatives, and friends ...but sometimes with friends or outsiders, we will switch to central Thai." (PY02)

"Everyone at the event is dressed in tribal attire because it is an expression of unity and presenting our culture to tourists." (PY12)

Social capital, social solidarity, and volunteer behavior among Pga K'nyau youths in the Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom community

The volunteer work of the Pga K'nyau youths in the Robe Changing Ceremony of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana and the Kruathan Parade can be divided into four components: moving structures to get things into the proper place, cleaning food containers, preparing food for monks, and handing out water to the guests attending the event. The nature of such volunteer work is classified as events-based volunteering, which is characterized by having many people help complete a set of defined activities. This is patterned on the concept of volunteerism as articulated by Ellis & Noyes (1990). In this case study, the work of the Pga K'nyau youth is a voluntary contribution to community activities and Wat Phrabat Huay Tom as a whole, as depicted in Figure 5.



Figure 5 The volunteer works of Pga K'nyau youths in the ceremony of changing the robes of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana and the Kruathan Parade

Source: Authors

The youth do not expect any compensation for their volunteer work, and that mindset is consistent with the 4 values including 1) Choosing to do the job that one is good at or satisfied with; 2) Being socially responsible by demonstrating helping and caring for each other in the community; 3) Serving without monetary compensation or expecting praise or material reward; and 4) Assisting wherever needed, even beyond the assigned role and obligation; not viewing the work as a burden or part of one's occupation

The context of helping one another through volunteer work among Pga K'nyau youths is a manifestation of the social solidarity and shared beliefs of the Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom community members. These beliefs can be traced to the teachings of Kruba Wong and his emphasis on the five Buddhist precepts, making merit, giving alms, refraining from harming animals, and spreading love and unity among neighbors. Based on this case study, the researchers have distilled the essence of the social solidarity of the Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community into four elements:

1) The similar outlook of the members of the community is derived from a tribal identity with unique cultural characteristics. This similarity makes it easier and more straightforward to define and adhere to cultural traditions. Moreover, most people in the community are descended from the same group of ancestors. As a result, people in the community have a feeling of shared kinship, and this motivates them to embrace mutual assistance, trust, and dependence on one another.

2) The community members have a common set of social norms. For example, they are unified in recognizing the importance of making merit, practicing a spirit of generosity, not encroaching on animals, refraining from killing animals for food, coping with hardship, volunteering for the public benefit, sacrificing for the public good, and protecting the natural resource base.

3) There is consistently positive interaction among family members, relatives, with neighbors, as well as interacting with others at community events and religious ceremonies.

4) There is active participation in community activities; the residents of Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom place great importance on community activities, especially community development projects and religious activities.

In addition, the study also found that the “social capital factor” of the community consists of institutional capital, comprising family and religious institutions. Yet, cultural capital is also crucial as the glue that holds the social solidarity of the Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community together.

The institution of the family is a critical component of social capital that serves to nurture members through training and exemplary practice. The family is the institution that is closest to the household members. Wherever the heads of the household have adopted the doctrine of Kruba Wong, then those principles will be used as a guideline for daily living, and the children of the household will naturally absorb the doctrine this way. At the same time, people in the community have religious institutions and respect for Kruba Wong as the rudder that continues to steer the direction of the community, as well as being an anchor that refines the mind. As a result, people in the community have congruent ideas and beliefs. The people join in following the teachings of the religion. They gladly observe the five Buddhist precepts, refrain from encroaching on animals, and embrace mutual support and participation in community activities. In addition, the community has the strength of cultural capital. The tribe expresses its identity and maintains this identity through the continuation of traditions, the dress code, and the use of the Pga K’nyau language as a social norm that fuses ideas, beliefs, and the practices of the community members as one.

As this study attempted to identify the factors that motivate the Pga K’nyau youths to volunteer in service to the Robe Changing Ceremony of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana, and the Kruathan Parade, the analysis result suggests that there is a correlation between youth volunteerism and the elements of social capital, such as upbringing, the role of the family, the example set by the behavior of parents, the inherent faith in Kruba Wong, the purity of the religious teachings, as well as the importance of maintaining an ethnic identity with a distinctive culture. These elements fuse the thoughts and beliefs of the young Pga K’nyau to love the community and bond. Whenever there are community activities that require volunteers – not just the semi-annual ceremonies – these youth seem ready and willing to help. They do this willingly, with a positive disposition and constructive interactions. The volunteer behavior of Pga K’nyau adolescents is not seen as a burden by them. Instead, they see it as a virtue:

It (volunteerism) is connected to the temple because it is the center of worship of the community. I have been going to the temple with other members of the household, ever since I was a child. I always accompanied my mother and grandmother. It is the same with the ceremony to change the robes of Kruba Wong. We are willing and eager to help the abbot at the temple with various chores. Every member of our household respects Kruba Wong (PY03).

Our community has important annual events. Everyone is expected to pitch in and help. We would go to the temple on the morning of the big event. The people in the community respect Kruba Wong, so everyone shows up. This is a time to remember the grace of Kruba Wong who has helped lead the community to prosperity and wholesomeness. It is a sacred ceremony that reminds us to do good things and love one another (PY18).

The Pga K’nyau youths are motivated by their peer group and friends. Still, they recognize and appreciate the inherent reward from volunteer work and sharing tasks together in a spirit of fun, socializing, and making new friends. Some of the key informants expressed this sentiment as follows:

When there is an important merit-making event at Wat Phra Phutthabat Huay Tom, friends invite each other to help the abbot prepare the temple for the event beforehand. On the day of the event, we begin working at daybreak. We help move things around, wash the food containers, prepare the food, and do other chores. We do this every year because it is an annual tradition. I enjoy doing it. I meet my friends and have fun too (PY06).

My friends invited me to come and, besides, it is a traditional activity of the community. We should be involved in helping to get the job done properly (PY20).

The social solidarity and factors contributing to the volunteer behavior of Pga K' nyau youths in the Ceremony of Changing the Robes of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana and the Kruathan Parade at Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom community are summarized in Figure 5.

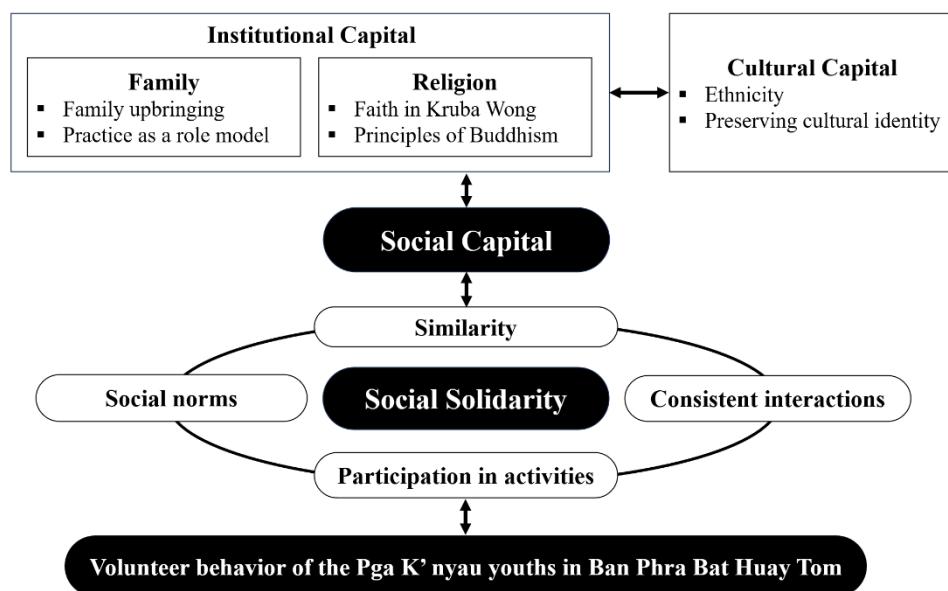


Figure 5 The components of social solidarity and factors supporting volunteer behavior of Pga K'nyau youths in Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom community

Source: Authors

Discussion

From this case study, it was found that Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community has the following elements of social solidarity including 1) Similarity of members in the community; 2) Having common social norms; 3) Having good interactions toward one another; and 4) Participating in community activities. These elements are in line with Homans (1950) who described social solidarity as a fundamental component of human behavior within a society, including 1) Activities that members of society do together; 2) Interaction of members in society; and 3) A feeling of satisfaction and generosity, or having a positive attitude toward people in society.

In this sense, a society embodies a holistic nature that is internally coordinated for shared benefits. If the frequency of social interactions is greater as a part of a similar set of activities, then the feelings of mutual satisfaction and compassion tend to increase. The repetition of a certain activity over time will eventually become the norms of the society. The way members of the society follow the norms will make the society closer-knit. It was also found that the “social capital” of the community is a key factor in building solidarity in the community. This is reinforced by “institutional capital” (i.e., family and religious institutions), as well as “cultural capital.” The Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community exemplifies social solidarity, in line with the writings of Coleman (1994), who explained that community social capital supports the formation of a social structure in a manner that binds group and community networks. There is cooperation, mutual benefit, reciprocity, and trust, and this generates or reinforces social norms, collective action, and synergy.

When considering factors contributing to the volunteer behavior of Pga K'nyau youths in Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom, this study found that there are correlations between social capital and some factors

in various dimensions. These factors include family upbringing, exemplary behavior of parents, faith in Kruba Wong, and purity in religious teachings, as well as maintaining an ethnic identity with a distinctive culture. The study results reflect interesting findings that faith in Kruba Wong is belief in the individual, and with Kruba Wong's body not decaying, it makes people in the community feel as if Kruba Wong is still alive. Therefore, the ceremony of Changing the Robes of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana has been passed on until the present day. This is the source of Pga K'nyau youths' participation in volunteering to help with this event every year.

It was also found that youth behavior could also be explained by the social learning theory, which states that human behavior is a result of observing and imitating the model around them. This is because human beings are always dealing with the immediate environment, such as parents, teachers, friends, mass media, and influencers, among others (Bandura, 1977). This is consistent with findings from other research, such as the study of Jing (2023) on the influence of parenting styles on children's prosocial behavior. That study found that the more respect, understanding, and emotional warmth parents give their children, the better their prosocial behavior development. The studies of Erdogan (2010) and Dolan (2022), in relation to social support, empathy, social capital, and civic engagement, found that social capital is related to civic participation, and trust is essential for civic engagement. A feature of this engagement is voluntary cooperation in problem-solving and participation in local community affairs and political activities. Similarly, a study by Wu et al. (2018) examined the impact of social capital on volunteering and giving in the context of urban China. The researchers found that social capital factors, consisting of civic network norms of reciprocity, institutional trust, and stranger trust were positively correlated with voluntarism and social sharing.

Moreover, a study by Lunda sen (2021) examined religious participation and civic engagement and found that pious people who participated in religious ceremonies tended to display more civic engagement behaviors. Likewise, the study by Aksoy and Wiertz (2023) on the impact of religious involvement on trust, volunteering, and perceived cooperativeness found that religious attendance has a significantly positive effect on trust, volunteering, and perceived cooperativeness. Similarly, a study by Piatak (2023) examined sociocultural factors that drive civic engagement. The researcher found that religious attendance plays a greater role in volunteering.

Conclusion and suggestions

The findings of this research reaffirm the fact that Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom Community has a strong social capital. People in the community share the same thoughts and beliefs. They trust each other, and there are social networks that connect them together through cultural ties. This connectivity is a function of socialization through the family and religious institutions, as well as through cultural capital to produce a significant level of social solidarity. This cohesiveness is reflected in the volunteer behavior of Pga K'nyau youths in the Robe Changing Ceremony of Kruba Chaiyawongsa Pattana and the Kruathan Parade at Wat Phra Phutthabat Huay Tom, Na Sai Subdistrict, Li District, Lamphun Province. The social capital is an important supporting factor, including family upbringing, practice as a role model by parents, faith in Kruba Wong and strictness in principles of Buddhism, including maintaining the identity of ethnicity while preserving cultural identity. It refines and fuses the thoughts and beliefs of Pga K'nyau youths to love and bond with each other.

Therefore, Nasai Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Li District, Lamphun Province, in the capacity of a local administrative organization with a role in community development and the promotion of youth potential in the area, social institutions, government, private sector, civil society, religious organizations, educational institutions, and community organizations should focus on the promotion and development of social capital of the community. This effort needs to start with strengthening the family role since the family plays the most important role in nurturing the behavior of the new generation. There also needs to promote a meaningful role of religious institutions in

community development and in creating solidarity in the community. Additionally, importance should be given to the development of cultural capital which is a valuable asset to the community in any context. These can be done by preserving and passing down good traditional values of the community in terms of language, dress, and important rituals, as practiced by their forebearers. The focus on the development of social capital will help drive the community toward solidarity. This process also facilitates the voluntarism of people in the community, which is an important human capital development mechanism supportive for social capital.

In this research, we focus specifically on Ban Phra Bat Huay Tom community, which has a unique characteristic regarding Buddhist religious beliefs and local customs. Therefore, future research should study other Pga K'nyau communities, which follow different religions and cultures, to reflect the volunteer behavior phenomenon in diverse contexts.

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