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Urban community-based tourism development: A networked social capital model

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ABSTRACT

The rapid and uncontrolled tourism growth has impacted local livelihoods in many cities through commodification, gentrification, and expropriation. Though community-based tourism offers a prospective development alternative, the phenomenon has been underexplored in urban contexts which are more complex than their rural counterparts. The urban dwellers who are seeking to engage in collective actions need social capital. This study deploys a qualitative ethnographic approach using an in-depth interviewing technique undertaken in three historic Bangkok communities to investigate the dual nature of social capital in promoting and impeding cooperation and collaboration. The study presents six analytical themes and the networked social capital model to explain the roles of positive and negative social capital in urban community-based tourism development.

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Introduction

Over several decades, city developments around the world evolved from traditional functions of production, commerce, and housing, to offering a diversity of pleasure-related products (Mullins, 1991). Progressively, tourism development has become an important strategy for urban revitalisation, as it creates jobs, improves transport systems, boosts city marketing, and attracts investment (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Edwards, Griffin, & Hayllar, 2008; Murphy, 1992). Policymakers are giving more attention to tourism for land use, site development, building regulations, infrastructure, environmental quality, employment, and social inclusion (Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2017; Law, 1992). Globally, cities serve as tourism destinations, transport hubs, gateways for multi-destination trips, and economic anchors through tourist accommodation and activities (Edwards et al., 2008; Higham & Luck, 2002). Hence, tourism has not only been an urban function, but also a driver of value creation with potential benefits for multiple sectors (Pasquinelli, 2016).

However, tourism-driven developments have changed urban societies generally and local communities in particular (Qian, Feng, & Zhu, 2012). An increasing number of urban communities have become new "*objects*" of consumption, commodification, and commercialisation (Imai, 2012). Due to rapid and uncontrolled development, they have become spatially and socially fragmented through gentrification (Jigyasu, 2015). Specifically, gentrification that favours tourism creates issues: hyper-concentrations of tourists, proliferation of tourist accommodations, relocation of local businesses, and homogenisation of city cen-

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tres (Füller & Michel, 2014; Minoia, 2017). Also, urban dwellers in the gentrified areas, especially in the case of poorer residents, have faced higher rents and demolition of their houses, leading to displacement and enforced emigration (Imai, 2012; Musavengane, Siakwah, & Leonard, 2019; Sirisrisak, 2009). Consequently, tourism-driven gentrification can exacerbate social alienation and disparities amongst urban dwellers, depriving them of cooperation and resilience which might otherwise allow them to cope with urban challenges (Edwards et al., 2008; Hinch, 1996; Kassahun, 2015).

A certain amount of social capital must be developed and maintained if urban dwellers are to act collectively (Flanagan, 2010). However, the phenomenon of social capital can be "*double-edged*" (Villalonga-Olives & Kawachi, 2017). Social capital is widely recognised for its role in facilitating interactions amongst urban dwellers, reinforcing shared values and traditions, and communicating their needs (Moscardo, Konovalov, Murphy, McGehee, & Schurmann, 2017). Social capital also plays a crucial role in coordinating various stakeholder contributions to community benefits (Hwang & Stewart, 2017; McGehee, Lee, O'Bannon, & Perdue, 2010). On the negative side, social capital may create elitism and nepotism, leading to social divisions and disparities (Hensel, Kennett-Hensel, & Sneath, 2013; Nunkoo, 2017). Behind the harmonious scene of collective actions, some dwellers may be pressured and marginalised (Ishihara & Pascual, 2009). Hence, this study investigates the dual roles of social capital, both in promoting and impeding cooperation and collaboration in an urban tourism context.

Scholars have proposed community-based tourism as an alternative paradigm for tourism development, focusing on the grassroots, local participation and empowerment, and sustainability (Edgell, Allen, Smith, & Swanson, 2008). However, it is commonplace to confront scepticism when adopting this paradigm in urban settings due to deeply-rooted rural or anti-urban ideologies which view cities as places for "*serious*" tasks of work, trade, and government, rather than for community development (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2017). Instead, community-based tourism has often been misunderstood as another tourism-related product that resembles homestay, village, or indigenous tourism (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen, & Duangsaeng, 2015). Whilst the precise intersection between community-based and urban tourisms remains unclear, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2012) has issued an urgent call for more studies on sustainable approaches to urban tourism development. Despite the strong prevailing rural concentration, this has urged the study to explore the potential applicability of community-based tourism in other contexts, with particular reference to urban communities (Imai, 2012; Singh, Timothy, & Dowling, 2003).

Given the limited application of community-based tourism in urban contexts, this study seeks to contribute to the literature by connecting social capital theory with the perspectives of urban communities in urban tourism development. The study proposes the model to advance knowledge about social capital in urban community-based tourism development, offering practical implications to policymakers, practitioners, and urban communities. It focuses on the challenge of identifying conditions, allowing for harnessing the merits of social capital, whilst simultaneously retaining its integrity and dissipating its shortcomings (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Despite the similar benefits of social capital in terms of group cohesion and resource mobilisation in rural contexts, the study provides a novel conceptualisation of urban community-based tourism, highlighting the distinctive needs and challenges of urban dwellers (Ashworth & Page, 2011). Bangkok's old-town communities are considered for their relevance in addressing specific challenges posed by urbanisation and tourism commodification (McGrath, Sangawongse, Thaikatoo, & Corte, 2017; Noparatnaraporn & King, 2007; Sirisrisak, 2009).

Literature review

Social capital theory

The social capital theory recognises connections between people that create collective actions in problem-solving and everyday interactions (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Hanifan, 1916). Specifically, social capital is defined as occurring within a network of relationships as a resource, stimulus, and result of collective actions (Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 1993). As an input or stimulus, social capital involves trust, concern, sympathy, or willingness that transcends people's behaviours from utilitarian self-interest to mutual benefits (Flora, 2004; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Zahra & McGehee, 2013). From a network perspective, social capital can be explained as "*bonding*," "*bridging*," and "*linking*" social capital (Woolcock, 2001; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Bonding social capital pertains to the relationships between individuals within families, neighbourhoods, and communities, as defined by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988). These relationships are characterised by "*homophily*," where individuals are emotionally close and share similar demographics and attitudes (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Flora, 2004). The presence of bonding social capital motivates individuals to engage in collective actions through influences: obligations, expectations, and norms. This, in turn, strengthens the sense of community, fosters local pride, and promotes a cohesive community environment (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Edgell et al., 2008).

Bridging and linking social capital refer to external relationships that extend various kinds of people, groups, and organisations (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Flora, 2004; Woolcock, 2001). Particularly, bridging social capital is an important source for diffusing information, exchanging new ideas and opportunities, and garnering resources and support through institutional channels (Burt, 1992; Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Granovetter, 1973). Meanwhile, linking social capital focuses on the distinct levels of hierarchy between actors (Woolcock, 2001). Individuals may leverage resources, ideas, influences, and information through relationships across explicit, formal, and institutionalised power gradients in society (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004).

Connecting social capital theory with community-based tourism development

Social capital and community-based tourism are interconnected as they both encompass aspects of community development. Since its introduction in the community development field by Lyda Judson Hanifan (1916), social capital has become widely

adopted in social sciences as an accumulative resource for societal improvement (Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Ishihara & Pascual, 2009; Portes, 1998). Meanwhile, community-based tourism is regarded as a community development tool that integrates poverty reduction, cultural heritage, and conservation, and is increasingly recognised for its potential to enhance social capital and contribute to socio-economic prosperity of communities (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012; Richins, 2011). Consequently, extensive community-based tourism studies have focused on examining how social capital is utilised by stakeholders, especially local communities, to support tourism development and the benefits it brings to social capital in return (Moscardo, 2012).

Social capital is needed for facilitating cooperation, formation of shared vision, maintenance of social norms, formation of groups, and exchange of valuable resources, enabling solidarity, inclusivity, and resilience in collective actions (Abom, 2004; Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Larsen & Bærenholdt, 2019; Villalonga-Olives & Kawachi, 2017). Social capital can be considered as the accumulation of trust ingrained in the norms and networks amongst community members, groups, and organisations. This trust is fostered through community organising and sustained participation in development (Speer & Perkins, 2002). Throughout the process, social capital drives individuals to interact, learn, solve problems, and pursue collective benefits as the outcome of development (Perkins, Hughey, & Speer, 2002). Specifically, Woolcock and Narayan (2000) elucidated this process as iteratively leveraging bonding and bridging social capital to "*get by*" then "*get ahead*."

Since the tourism industry is fragmented, social capital is important for coordinating a range of stakeholders contributing to community benefits (Hwang & Stewart, 2017; McGehee et al., 2010). Community members can progress along the development process thanks to bridges to organisations and linkages with authorities that perform community-level operations and fulfil "*structural holes*" (Burt, 1992; Schwab, 1992). Lacking these connections, community-based tourism development is prone to failure due to its limited access to resources and markets (Goodwin, 2006). Also, bridging social capital serves as a counterforce against corruption, dismantling particularistic norms and evoking transformative movements (Graeff & Svendsen, 2013; Mayer & Rankin, 2002). In return, community-based tourism builds solidarity, conveys a sense of local pride and identity, and preserves cultural assets (Edgell et al., 2008; Tavakoli, Mura, & Rajaratnam, 2017). For instance, community-based tourism involves developing interactive public spaces, enhancing community values and traditions, and communicating community needs (Moscardo et al., 2017).

Negative social capital and challenges in urban community-based tourism

The negative effects of social capital often stem from closed or isolated dense networks where bonding social capital is mismanaged or misused (Putnam, 1993). Certain groups may develop "*strong ties*" but limit the exercise of resources, information, and power within narrow cliques, resulting in collective blindness (Granovetter, 1973; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Nunkoo, 2017; Putnam, 1993). Strong bonding within a group leads to excessive demands being placed on its members, restriction of freedom, exclusion of out-group members, and conformity to prevailing norms (Baycan & Öner, 2023; Krivokapic-Skoko, 2007; Villalonga-Olives & Kawachi, 2017). As a result, the downsides of social capital can generate mixed and varied outcomes: conflicting interests, inequality, elitism, nepotism, corruption, and divisions, in the overall community (Abom, 2004; Graeff & Svendsen, 2013; Wesselow, 2023).

In the urban context, Ferdinand Tönnies' work "*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*" has made a longstanding contribution to understanding communities across a rural-urban continuum (Tönnies, 2001). Social capital has emerged as a crucial concept to explain the challenges as communities evolve towards globalised, urbanised, and highly interconnected societies (Lyon & Driskell, 2012). Noting that urban communities have larger populations, more heterogeneous groups, complex relationship structures, and rich opportunities (Baycan & Öner, 2023; Hillery, 1955), it can be difficult to implement a community-based tourism approach in the context of fragmented and dispersed social ties which result in greater individualism, anonymity, and segmentation of life (Edwards et al., 2008; Hinch, 1996; Hofferth & Iceland, 1998). A lack of social capital may hold back a full understanding of collective outcomes and inhibit progress towards developing inclusiveness and partnerships with stakeholders (Hensel et al., 2013).

A prevalence of negative social capital leads to substantial power disparities in controlling resources and political inequality amongst stakeholders (Tolkach & King, 2015). Moreover, urban destinations face the challenge and need to reach a compromise between the competing interests of public institutions, private businesses, residents, and tourists, whilst also predicting the costs and benefits of empowering local communities in tourism development (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Ugur, 2017). Whilst a certain amount of social capital is required by urban dwellers for collective actions (Flanagan, 2010), empirical studies exploring the application of community-based tourism in urban contexts remain scarce. The current study addresses this gap by investigating how social capital can be mediated in pursuing a balance between the various upsides and downsides, noting the complexities applicable to urban tourism settings through the community-based development process. The study also aims to present a theoretical framework for social capital in urban community-based tourism.

Research methods

Research paradigm and approach

This study deploys a social constructionist paradigm to guide ontological and epistemological perspectives and elicit diverse intersubjective views across complex actor networks (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Ethnography has been selected as an appropriate methodological perspective because it allows immersive reflections and in-depth understandings of community culture and livelihoods (Hennick, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). Specifically, community fieldwork, involving participant observations and in-depth interviews, was undertaken as a research approach. The observations entailed systematic noting and

recording of events, behaviours, and artefacts (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), and allowed for familiarising with community context, identifying gatekeepers, and building rapport with participants (Hennick et al., 2011).

Semi-structured interviewing can reflect socio-cultural meanings of events and behaviours from the perspectives of community members (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Noting the choice of Thailand as the study setting, a collaborative back-translation technique was used to ensure the accuracy and validity of the questions. For instance, generic questions like "*How do you involve residents in community-based tourism?*", "*How do you get involved in community-based tourism?*", "*What prevents you from participating in community-based tourism?*" and "*How do you support community-based tourism activities?*", were predetermined. Meanwhile, semi-structured interview settings also included probing questions regarding obligations, expectations, obstacles, and conflicts experienced by research participants.

Study context and participants

Bangkok is well-established as Thailand's premier city, as one of Asia's most rapidly urbanising mega-cities, and as an important regional hub in Southeast Asia (Kaothien, 1991; Storey, 2012). The living heritage and longevity of traditional cultures and old-town communities have brought recognition to unique city characteristics which are now highly commodified as tourist attractions (Erickson, 2017). The old-town communities have been greatly influenced by extensive urbanisation since 1851, and the various redevelopments have led to gentrification (Evers, 1966; McGrath et al., 2017; Sirisrisak, 2009). For example, livelihoods have been shaped by modernised housing, thereby increasing land prices and territorial demarcations (Noparatnaraporn & King, 2007). Issues arising from urbanisation include disparities between socio-economic classes, homogenisation of local identities, migration, and relocation (Evers, 1966; McGrath et al., 2017).

The fieldwork was undertaken over five months in three Bangkok's old-town communities: *Nang Loeng*, *Talad Noi*, and *Banglamphu*, considered as the original settlements. Historically, Nang Loeng accommodated Southern artist migrants, then became the bustling old-time commercial district after launching Thailand's first land-based market. The vibrancy of Nang Loeng is evidenced by its historic theatre and dancing house. Second, Talad Noi was traditionally settled by Chinese, Vietnamese, and Portuguese migrants with diverse faiths. The prosperity of Talad Noi was marked by the first public bank—*Siam Commercial Bank*. Third, Banglamphu was the shopping district and cultural melting pot amongst Thais, Chinese, Burmese, and Malays. It is home to the world-renowned nightlife attraction—*Khao San Road*—alongside historic Muslim mosques and Buddhist temples. Noting the heterogeneity and unique socio-cultural characteristics, including a mix of dwellers (Baycan & Öner, 2023; Hillery, 1955), valuable lessons can be drawn for others seeking to develop urban community-based tourism.

To ensure quality and well-rounded representation of research participants, the authors deployed purposive sampling and a maximum variation approach. Research participants were categorised based on their roles in urban community-based tourism: leaders, participants, non-participants, and external agents. Ethnographic studies typically use a sample size of 30–50 interviewees (Morse, 1995). Meanwhile, the widely referenced principle of "*saturation*" is used to determine the point at which the collected data tend to repeat themselves (Hennick et al., 2011). In this study, the interviews were conducted with 45 individuals, including 6 leaders, 15 participants, 15 non-participants, and 9 external agents.

Data analysis

After verbatim transcription and translation, thematic analysis was conducted by inquiring into the data, reflecting on the theory, and categorising them into themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The transcribed data were deductively coded: bonding, bridging, and linking. Considering the urban community as an analytical unit, all connections amongst community members were coded as bonding, whilst external relations were coded as either bridging or linking. As per their respective definitions reviewed in the previous section, linking denotes the external relations attributed to hierarchical power relations, whilst bridging represents those without such hierarchy. Furthermore, social network analysis was employed to map these relationships. The social network diagrams were analysed using various metrics: nodes, clusters, and ties, measuring social capital types, strength, and degree centrality. The findings were triangulated with social capital and community-based tourism studies, identifying rural-urban parallels, and uncovering new insights specific to this context.

The coded results were analysed inductively for emerging themes based on the roles of positive and negative social capital, thereby proposing the networked social capital model. Specifically, the inductive thematic analysis involved two steps: open coding, which identified initial themes, and axial coding, where commonalities within the initial themes were analysed to develop final themes. For instance, the initial codes: "*shared values*," "*working structure*," "*task delegation*," and "*community groups*" were grouped under the "*group formation*" theme. Meanwhile, "*community engagement*," "*benefit distribution*," "*ethnicity*," and "*religious groups*" were placed in the "*diversity engagement*" theme. Also, "*convenience*," "*scepticism*," "*jealousy*," "*corruption*," "*transparency*," "*lack of cooperation*," and "*segregation*" were thematised as "*favouritism and nepotism*." Six analytical themes were identified, with three themes focusing on positive aspects and another three addressing negative aspects.

Findings

Research fieldworks and participants

Table 1 descriptively presents the number of research participants and Table 2 displays types of dwelling groups with different governing structures. There were four community committees in Nang Loeng, six in Talad Noi, and seven in Banglamphu. Beyond

Table 1
Number of research participants.

Types	Total (n)	Fieldwork		
		Nang Loeng (F1)	Talad Noi (F2)	Banglamphu (F3)
Leaders	6	2	3	1
Participants	15	6	3	6
Non-participants	15	5	5	5
External agents	9	6[a]	6[a]	7[a]
Total (N)	45	19	17	19

[a] External agents were not limited to working in only one fieldwork.

their founding administrative structures, the formal establishment of community groups can occur through different regulations (e.g., council, committee, association, foundation). Meanwhile, some groups have been assembled informally for specific purposes (e.g., business, charity, simply gathering). The study refers to four groups with pseudonyms as tourism working groups. These groups were established by leaders for coordinating and facilitating the tasks, and for connecting with stakeholders. Most tourism working groups (75 %) were informal, whilst Group B was formally commissioned by the public scheme. Though Groups X-Y were not positioned as tourism working groups, they were recognised as being beneficial to urban community-based tourism and have been included in the study.

Tables 3 and 4 describe the socio-demographics of research participants. The specific names of participants, their groups, and affiliations were anonymised using generic descriptions. Specifically, Table 3 shows group leaders (L) were dominated by females (83 %), with an average age of 52.3 years. About the same proportions of males and females served as participants (P) with an average age of 53.9 years. Whilst the participants in Nang Loeng and Talad Noi were generally retired and mature, those in Banglamphu were young. Additionally, most non-participants (NPs) were male (60 %) with an average age of 67.6 years. Table 4 presents the socio-demographics of external agents (E) across the public (22 %), private (44 %), non-profit (22 %), and academic sectors (11 %). Their male-female ratio was five-to-six, with an average age of 48 years.

Urban community-based tourism networks

Each section of fieldwork comprised heterogeneous clusters of social ties amongst residents, between residents and external agents, and amongst external agents. The study uncovers that these clusters were not organised within the formal structure but rather were mobilised throughout the community. Group leaders were not necessarily the same as those who were community leaders. Whilst the leaders involved a small, close, and cohesive group of participants, they occasionally sought specific resources from other residents without engagement and some non-participants were excluded entirely. These leaders assumed various roles, such as coordinators, spokespersons, and "*gatekeepers*" for external agents. External agents, including public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors, played a supportive role by providing resources, convening stakeholders, and promoting community works to outsiders.

In Nang Loeng, the authors discovered Groups A and B were largely disconnected. Fig. 1 illustrates their distinct set of followers and external supporters, suggesting possible conflicts. Though P3 and NP3 could potentially bridge the gap as "*brokers*"

Table 2
Community committees and groups.

Fieldwork	Community committees	Formal groups	Informal groups
F1	1) Wat Sunthorn Thammathan 2) Suphamitr I 3) Suphamitr II 4) Wat Sommanas	1) District's Council of Culture 2) Nang Loeng Market Committee 3) Group B	1) Group A
F2	1) Talad Noi 2) Choduek 3) Wanichsamphan 4) Politsapa 5) Neejongsawat 6) Phu Kha Alai Gao	1) District's Council of Culture 2) Zhou Shi Kong Shrine Foundation 3) Buddhakhun Charity Association	1) Group C 2) Group X 3) Autopart Business Group
F3	1) Wat Sangwet 2) Wat Mhai Amataros 3) Wat Sampraya 4) Masjid Chakkrabongse 5) Masjid Baan Tuekdin 6) Trok Kaijae Kianniwas 7) Baan Panthom	1) Khaosan Road Business Association	1) Group Y 2) Group D

Table 3
Socio-demographics of urban dwellers.

Pseudonym	Fieldwork	Gender	Age	Description
L1	F1	Female	60	Group A's founder, community leader, art workshop organiser
L2	F1	Male	52	Group B's founder, temple warden, Council of Culture's leader
L3	F2	Female	55	Group C's co-founder, spokesperson, community secretary
L4	F2	Female	57	Group C's co-founder, accountant, handmade bedding store owner
L5	F2	Female	51	Group C's founder, coordinator, guesthouse owner
L6	F3	Female	39	Group D's founder and manager, full-time banker
P1	F1	Female	33	Group A's manager
P2	F1	Female	73	Artist troupe manager, traditional dance teacher
P3	F1	Female	50	Community museum owner, dance workshop organiser
P4	F1	Male	61	Traditional embroidery store owner, Group B's researcher
P5	F1	Female	57	Artist troupe manager, traditional dance teacher, Group B's researcher
P6	F1	Male	78	Theatre museum's manager, Group B's coordinator, royal bureau volunteer
P7	F2	Female	65	Group C's clerk
P8	F2	Female	54	Group C's photographer
P9	F2	Male	38	Tour company's manager, Catholic school's association committee
P10	F3	Male	27	Barista, Group D's youth guide, traditional dance manager
P11	F3	Male	65	Community leader, Islamic teacher
P12	F3	Male	61	Community leader, Islamic mosque committee
P13	F3	Female	62	Traditional music school owner, band manager
P14	F3	Female	54	Traditional embroidery store owner
P15	F3	Male	30	Chinese traditional dance troupe manager
NP1	F1	Male	61	Traditional snack shop owner
NP2	F1	Female	90	Traditional dessert maker
NP3	F1	Male	61	Photograph and handmade locket shop owner
NP4	F1	Male	70	Traditional dessert shop owner
NP5	F1	Female	66	Traditional dessert shop manager
NP6	F2	Male	40	Group X's co-founder, coordinator
NP7	F2	Female	83	Chinese shrine association committee
NP8	F2	Male	45	Restaurant owner
NP9	F2	Male	65	Tool shop owner, community historian
NP10	F2	Female	74	Community leader, Chinese mansion owner
NP11	F3	Female	82	Community leader, Group Y's member, community health centre volunteer
NP12	F3	Female	71	Traditional dessert shop owner
NP13	F3	Male	82	Traditional handcraft factory manager
NP14	F3	Male	35	Traditional handcraft factory employee
NP15	F3	Male	89	Public school's principal, Group Y's member

between the two fragmented groups, most participants and supporters remained separate. In Talad Noi, Group C asserted itself as the sole tourism working group whilst Group X emerged as another distinct group competing for resources. Fig. 2 shows Group C had a robust external network of ties, mostly facilitated by L3. Consequently, Group X was marginalised by its limited connections, hence less resourceful. Similar to Nang Loeng, most followers and external supporters remained disconnected, though there were several brokers (P7, P9, NP9, NP10). These observations raised the concern of inequitable distribution of resources due to social fragmentation within the community.

In contrast, the study observed an opposite scenario in Banglamphu. Fig. 3 visualises social cohesion amongst two clusters (Groups D and Y) and an external agent (ES4). This situation was made by the extension of ties between major leaders. Particularly, Group D's leader (L6) effectively utilised Group Y's connections to expand their network across various community committees, leading to thorough connections and resource sharing amongst the residents. Moreover, the museum (ES4) took a proactive role in community engagement by developing ties with all leaders and some dwellers who served as "*gateways*" to additional sub-clusters. To do so, the study revealed that the effective mobilisation of resources was facilitated by mutual trust and respect within their reciprocal relationships.

Table 4
Socio-demographics of external agents.

Pseudonym	Sector	Fieldwork(s)	Gender	Age	Description
ES1	Public	F1/F2/F3	Male	54	Tourism development official, civil society network secretary
ES2	Academic	F2/F3	Male	41	University lecturer, researcher
ES3	Private	F2	Female	60	Urban development company director
ES4	Public	F2/F3	Male	41	Museum curator
ES5	Private	F1/F2/F3	Female	29	Urban development company director, tour company manager
ES6	Private	F1/F2	Male	39	Tour company director, project, event manager
ES7	Non-profit	F1/F3	Male	45	International development agent
ES8	Non-profit	F1/F3	Female	62	Journal editor-in-chief, foundation committee
ES9	Private	F1/F3	Female	62	Tour company director, business network committee, industry expert

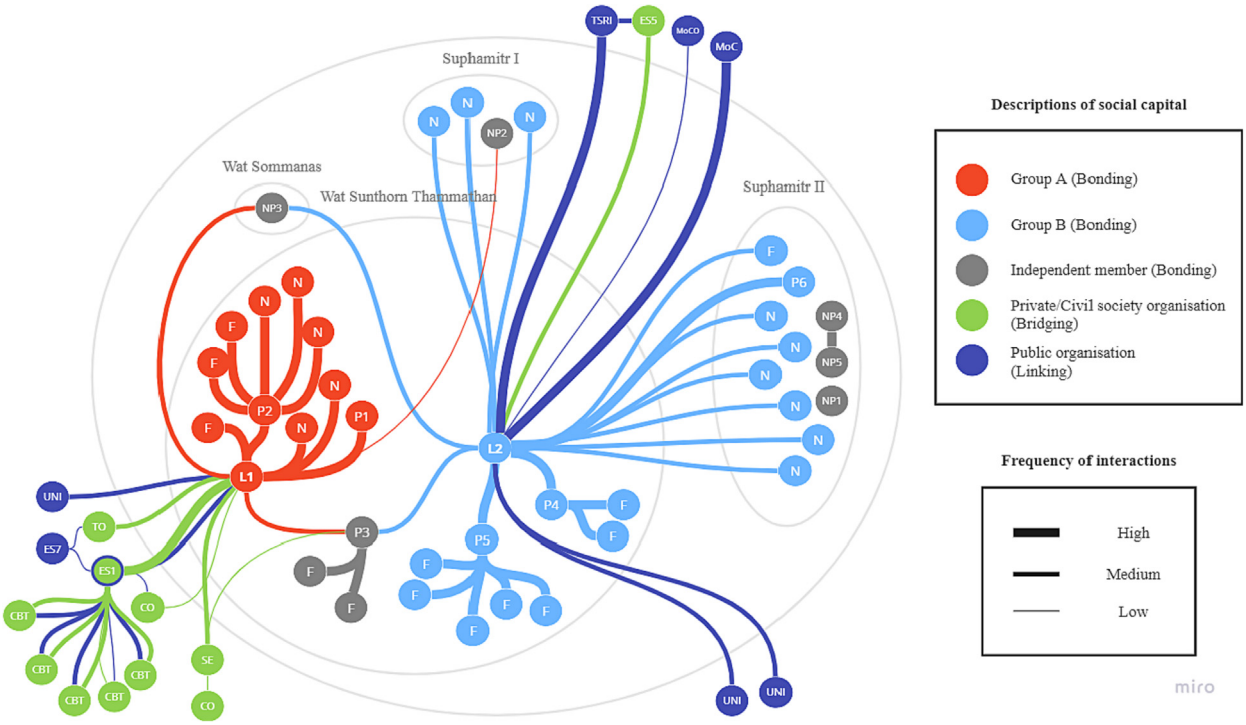

Fig. 1. Nang Loeng community-based tourism network.

Additionally, the study investigated the construction and organisation of dwelling groups by employing social capital as an analytical framework. According to Figs. 1–3, Table 5 compares their social network metrics: nodes, ties based on types and strengths, and degree centrality. Whilst both groups in Nang Loeng had an equal number of nodes, Group A showed higher degree

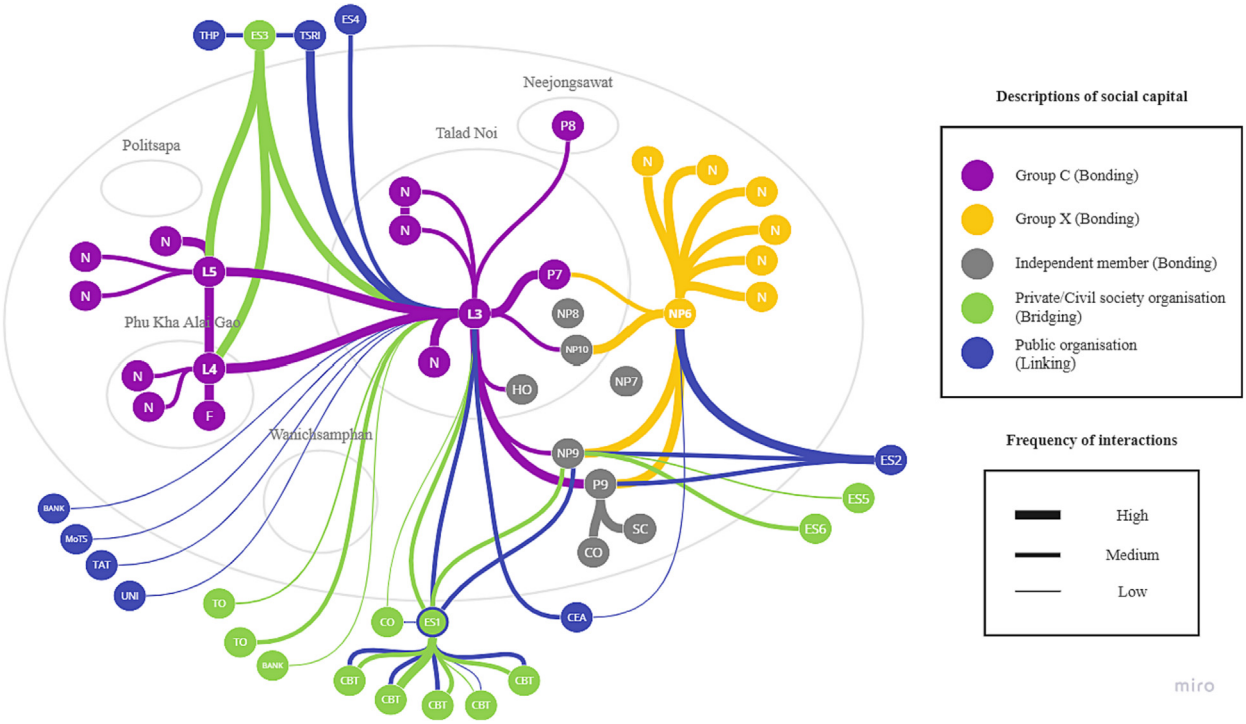

Fig. 2. Talad Noi community-based tourism network.

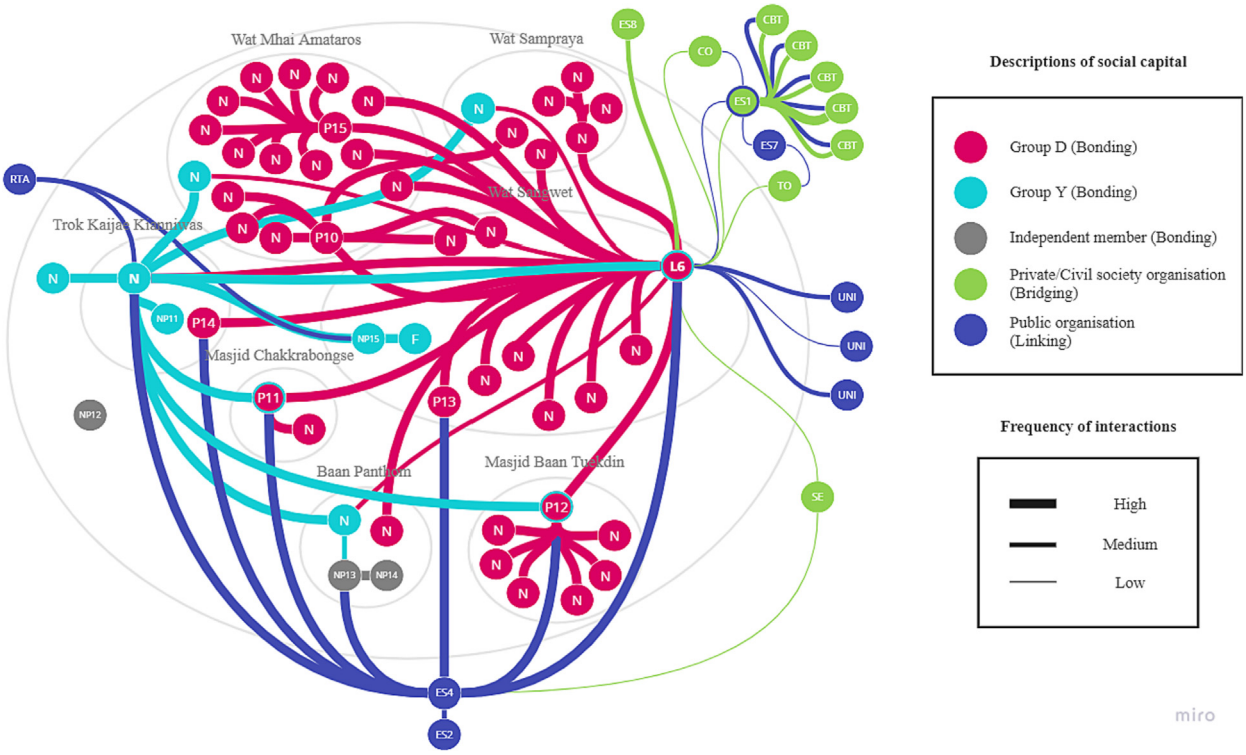

Fig. 3. Banglamphu community-based tourism network.

centrality with stronger bonding and bridging. Meanwhile, Group B had a wider bonding reach and demonstrated high linking strength. Upon analysing Fig. 1 and considering that both groups were actively involved in urban community-based tourism, it suggests that they were engaged in competition over resources, potentially causing community conflicts.

The study shows that the dominance of Groups C and D may potentially have marginalised other community groups. Based on Figs. 2–3, it became evident that both groups adopted different approaches towards the leveraging of social capital, resulting in varying levels of cooperation. Groups C and X demonstrated minimal interconnectivity, indicating the lack of cooperation and potential marginalisation of Group X. Meanwhile, Groups D-Y were highly connected, showing a substantial degree of cooperative relationship. Group C displayed stronger bridging whilst Group D exercised the highest strengths in bonding and linking. The

Table 5
Social network metrics comparison.

Fieldwork	F1		F2		F3	
Cluster (group)	A[a]	B[a]	C[a]	X	D[a]	Y
Sub-clusters	4	3	6	3	8	4
Nodes	**27**	**27**	**39**	**13**	**62**	**14**
Within community	*16*	*21*	*20*	*11*	*46*	*11*
Outside of community	*11*	*6*	*19*	*2*	*16*	*3*
Bonding social capital	**15**	**24**	**19**	**12**	**44**	**11**
High strength	*12*	12	*9*	*11*	*41*	*10*
Medium strength	*2*	12	*10*	*1*	*3*	*1*
Low strength	*1*	0	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Bridging social capital	**11**	**1**	**13**	**0**	**11**	**0**
High strength	*1*	*0*	*4*	0	*1*	*0*
Medium strength	*6*	*1*	*5*	0	*5*	*0*
Low strength	*4*	*0*	*4*	0	*5*	*0*
Linking social capital	**10**	**6**	**16**	**3**	**18**	**4**
High strength	*0*	*2*	*1*	*1*	*5*	*1*
Medium strength	*6*	*3*	*10*	*1*	*8*	*3*
Low strength	*4*	*1*	*5*	*1*	*5*	*0*
Total number of ties (Degree centrality)	**36**	**31**	**48**	**15**	**73**	**15**

[a] Tourism working group.

following section indicates positive and negative social capital and explains their roles in urban community-based tourism around six themes:

Positive social capital

Group mobilisation

Tourism working group leaders adopted various approaches to mobilising bonding social capital, despite the urban complexities. The leaders of Groups A (L1) and C (L3–L5) mainly rallied dwellers by leveraging bonds built upon shared characteristics (e.g., familial ties, common neighbourhoods, faiths). L4 mentioned: "*It's like we know everyone because we are mostly Chinese [descendants], Teochew Chinese. We speak Chinese Teochew dialect*." Meanwhile, some leaders (L2, L6) deployed a structural approach to assemble a wider range of residents and to establish a formal work structure, as required by funding organisations. As was explained by L2: "*[Our work] is divided into three parts, including history, arts and culture, and food. We set up committees, allocated budget [to each] and execute [their tasks]*."

Both approaches helped the leaders to mobilise necessary resources internally and to organise groups that would pursue collective actions in urban community-based tourism development. Specifically, knowledge, expertise, skills, local wisdoms, cultural assets, and even financial contributions, were pooled together for collective actions. However, the nature of the urban community posed various challenges for the leaders. They struggled to mobilise sufficient resources due to a lack of cooperation and interest in communal activities.

Resource acquisition

To support group mobilisation for urban community-based tourism, the leaders leveraged bridging and linking connections with external agents to acquire necessary resources, such as funds, technical skills, and professional knowledge. For example, ES5 shared how her team assisted when Group B was lacking: "*[They] wanted to talk about their history [and have] materials that share correct information [to the visitors]. So, we supported the design [and intervened] establishment [of] the group. Having the official name, leader, [and] logo [has made] their voices to be heard*." Furthermore, the study demonstrates bridging and linking social capital acted as the catalysts for group mobilisation because external agents were able to facilitate events/activities that brought urban dwellers together for collective actions, as described by L4 below:

> "*Initially, [she] came to sit and ask about our shop. I didn't know [her much before] because she came to talk to old people. She came quite often and I met her. She said that there would be a meeting and she was working on community [development]. If interested, please join. There was a vegetarian festival and we could share our opinions if we would like to cooperate.*"
>
> [(L4)]

Besides, the study revealed that linking social capital was utilised as a tool to attain political power when negotiating with authorities about their issues (e.g., traditional livelihoods, cultural heritage) against the adverse effects of gentrification. For example, L1 suggested a nuanced approach to developing linking social capital through urban community-based tourism: "*It's the only way to talk to the public sector. They won't talk about land [rights] with us. If we say tourism, they will listen. Then, we use our way to gradually insert our issues*." In particular, P4 mentioned that linking social capital was used to obtain official recognition for their work and to strengthen their negotiation power against authoritative expropriation plans. Also, ES4 highlighted the movement where several Banglamphu residents prevented the demolition of the historic building by securing legal protection through linking social capital:

> "*[They approached] the Fine Arts Department to register the building as a National Historic Site. Since then, […] it has been under the protection of […] Ancient Monuments Act for conservation. It's sensitive to manage [it] so we changed the plan from gentrifying [the area] as a park to a community museum.*"
>
> [(ES4)]

Diversity engagement

Tourism working groups could extend bonding social capital to engage other groups/residents, fostering diversity in collective actions. These groups/residents, whilst not directly related to tourism, were consulted regarding their needs and concerns, or connected through the tourism value chain to ensure that benefits from urban community-based tourism were distributed to them. In Talad Noi, L3 shared the story about the traditional Chinese snack shop: "*They were previously antagonistic but now their son is friendly to us. They almost quit, so we brought visitors there. I feel good that he returned to succeed what his father has done*." Meanwhile, L6 engaged residents from diverse religious backgrounds through bonding social capital deployed from community committee structures. Consequently, their previously restrictive boundaries were emancipated, as expressed by P12's quote below:

> "*Previously, people lived on their own, Muslim people lived by Muslim way, Buddhist people grouped together, they knew but were not close. But once they gathered and improved [their] relationships. They recognise faces, talk longer, instead of just smiling and passing by.*"
>
> [(P12)]

In encouraging participation by more diverse dwelling groups in urban community-based tourism, the study discovered that some external agents organised regular and engaging events/activities as a platform for urban residents to develop bonding connections. As previously mentioned by L4, Group C's leaders were not acquainted with each other until ES3 bridged them together. Additionally, ES4 was known by multiple groups in Banglamphu for effective diversity engagement strategies. Specifically, he allocated different teams of museum curators in each community committee's area to build rapport with residents and engage them through research activities. Furthermore, the museum was positioned as an open space for dwellers to gather and organise communal activities, including tourism, as envisioned by ES4 below:

> "*[We are] trying to prove that museum and community are not isolated. We can say [we] coexist. Museums should be surrounded by living communities, rather than walls. So, museum that is located within the community should allow the residents to participate and present their stories.*"
>
> [(ES4)]

Negative social capital

Favouritism and nepotism

Strong bonding contributes to favouritism and nepotism, the emergence of small cliques, and the exclusion of out-group members from the opportunities and benefits associated with urban community-based tourism. In Nang Loeng, the study found Groups A and B with comparable degree centrality. Fig. 1 implies cooperation breakdown due to the lack of bonding social capital between L1 and L2. Despite the P3's potential broker role, it was not feasible due to strong favouritism and nepotism entrenched in both groups. She felt discomfort when participating with either group: "*When I helped another group, [I got questioned] why I helped [them]. Did you know how they got funding?*" This also happened in Talad Noi where strong yet exclusive bonds within Group C exacerbated conflicts with Group X. Group C's claim to represent the entire Talad Noi created distrust and scepticism, resulting in a lack of cooperation between them, as expressed by NP9 below:

> "*[They] aren't the only [group] who do [traditional] snacks or Chinese calligraphy if [they] were ever interested and wanted to encourage everyone to participate. Talad Noi's identity can't be built by only one group which is doing everything.*"
>
> [(NP9)]

The study revealed that conflict resolution was hindered by an excessive focus on making exclusive use of bonding social capital for group interests, thereby contradicting the collective goals that are embraced by urban community-based tourism development. Particularly, their independent pursuit of bridging and linking social capital for resource acquisition could have long-lasting negative impacts on the existing bonding relationships amongst urban dwellers. For example, ES5 expressed: "*[Each group] got its own connections. Different departments. Whenever [they had activities], they didn't invite [or] participate in another group's activities. Sulky feeling. Because the government official was closed to [only] one person, [then] jealousy emerged.*"

Furthermore, strong bonds amongst individuals close to the leaders cultivated doubt and scepticism about transparency amongst other group members. This was notably the case when there were multiple sub-clusters within Groups C-D. In such cases, the decision-making processes could be dominated by individuals with strong ties to the leaders, indicating favouritism and nepotism. For instance, Group C exhibited the dynamic wherein its leaders (L3–L5) shared there were the "*smaller*" sub-group was responsible for making most decisions, whilst the "*larger*" sub-group was for soliciting and validating opinions. L3 received complaints from other members about her limited communication and work distribution amongst only a few members:

> "*Today I've received many calls. Do I need to report every single one [to group members]? They asked me why. Only coordination [task] is already intense and stressful. The problem is I know [and] do things by myself. I said no, it's not! I didn't do things alone, but I know who can help me out [and] talk to them.*"
>
> [(L3)]

Expectation and exploitation

A lack of clear agreement amongst dwellers and external agents resulted in inconsistent expectations, leading to the exploitation of trust. Their false expectations could damage the existing relationships amongst group participants (bonding) and between leaders and external agents (bridging and linking). Although strong bonding helped the leaders to mobilise extensive resources with low transaction costs, they might anticipate ad-hoc and continuous support from members and other dwellers, necessitating the sacrifice of personal resources into the communal pool. Unfortunately, this practice resulted in privacy violations and disrespect, metaphorically referred to as the "*mafia approach*" by P3. NP10 also observed that her residence was often used as a public tourist attraction without permission being sought:

> "*They didn't tell me who they brought [to my house]. The visitors came to sit right here and they explained about my house. They thought it was their house. They can't do this. Do you understand? They don't honour the house owner.*"
>
> [(NP10)]

The study noted that the relationships between tourism working groups and external agents were subject to exploitation for commercial interests, leading to community conflicts. L1 shared one incident with the tour operator: "*We suggested one Pad Thai shop, then they organised [tours] to only there by themselves. [The residents] thought we did for them. They didn't consider the local context and created problems. If they told me, I would [distribute] to others too.*" In Talad Noi, there were two different sides to the occurrence at the shrine premises. L5 mentioned that: "*The shrine purchased this house and intended to renovate it, but no progress was made*," whilst NP10 said: "*They promised the revenue would be used for renovation. Ask the shrine, not even a single cent was contributed.*" Some dwellers proceeded to withdraw from tourism as a result of demanding expectations and exploitation.

Elitism and marginalisation

When neglecting internal conflicts arising from strong though fragmented bonding within urban communities, the study indicated that external interventions could turn into an additional catalyst for social division. Due to social fragmentation, the influx of external resources, such as financial, human, and political capital, could be unevenly distributed amongst dwellers, exacerbating their conflicts. Since bridging and linking social capital can grant access to these essential resources, certain groups exploited them as a means to gain a competitive edge over others. As indicated in L1 below, linking social capital can enhance the legitimacy, recognition, and power of certain groups, giving rise to elitism and the marginalisation of lower-resourced groups due to limited external connections:

> "*They have money and capability […] and got certified by the authority. The outsiders came to conduct research and wrote there are many artist troupes here. This has created new groups and become a new history. Their research just distorted the history. The good thing is the performing arts can be preserved, but there is a deep conflict between people. Who is right? Who is wrong? The right person is the one who is more accepted by the outsiders.*"
>
> [(L1)]

Furthermore, the study identified numerous gateways that connected urban communities with external agents. Irrespective of involvement in community-based tourism, urban dwellers could independently cultivate bridging and linking social capital, enabling access to resources and support that aligns with their self-interests. The uncontrollably exclusive use of external resources to support the activities of a particular group perpetuates the culture of competition rather than cooperation, further worsening community conflicts and creating long-term negative sentiments against community-based tourism initiatives. For instance, Talad Noi served as the prime example of a zero-sum battleground where Groups C and X engaged in fierce competition to secure valuable resources by leveraging their respective bridging social capital. Accordingly, P9 observed:

> "*Talad Noi [is] the area with high conflicts of interest. Each group is trying to find [their own] external support. For example, [Group C] got [ES3], and [Group X] got [ES2]. They don't share resources [for] collective outcomes. It's not a bad thing [but] we can't [work] without communicating with every group. There's no best outcome, but if only one group is doing [and] not contributing to cooperation, it's wrong objective.*"
>
> [(P9)]

Discussion

Since urban communities present greater intricacies than their rural counterparts, investigating their unique social dynamics contributes to the comprehensive understanding of community-based tourism development and how it can serve urban populations effectively. Fig. 4 illustrates the various roles of social capital in urban community-based tourism. With holistic intention, the model portrays the scenario where different dwelling groups pursue collective actions in community-based tourism by deploying social capital both within and outside the urban community. The inner layer of the model highlights interactions amongst heterogeneous groups within the urban community (Hillery, 1955; Hooghe & Botterman, 2012; Nunkoo, 2017; Tavakoli et al., 2017), emphasising the varying roles of bonding social capital. The outer layer portrays an abundance of resources, such as financial, human, and political capital, within the large and highly networked opportunity structure in urban environments (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Urban dwellers can utilise these resources by leveraging bridging and linking connections with external agents. Based on social capital theory, this section discusses the roles of positive and negative social capital, represented in Fig. 4 by green and red text, respectively.

Despite the prevalence of individualism, social alienation, disparities, and normlessness in urban environments, the study affirms the existence of strong bonding within the urban community, exhibiting both positive and negative effects (Edwards et al., 2008; Jones, 2005; Kassahun, 2015). Urban dwellers can mobilise existing resources within the community, facilitate the formation of cohesive groups, and escalate individual actions to collective actions for communal benefits (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Costa & Galina, 2015; Edgell et al., 2008). However, strong ties within groups can limit the flow and exchange of resources, information, and power in densely closed networks (Nunkoo, 2017). This restriction contributes to favouritism and nepotism, exacerbating conflicts and excluding out-group members from decision-making (Putnam, 1993). Additionally, strong ties foster a high sense of obligation and expectation amongst group members, making the situation susceptible to the exploitation of trust (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This dynamic results in withdrawal from collective actions, as participants may feel disillusioned or exploited.

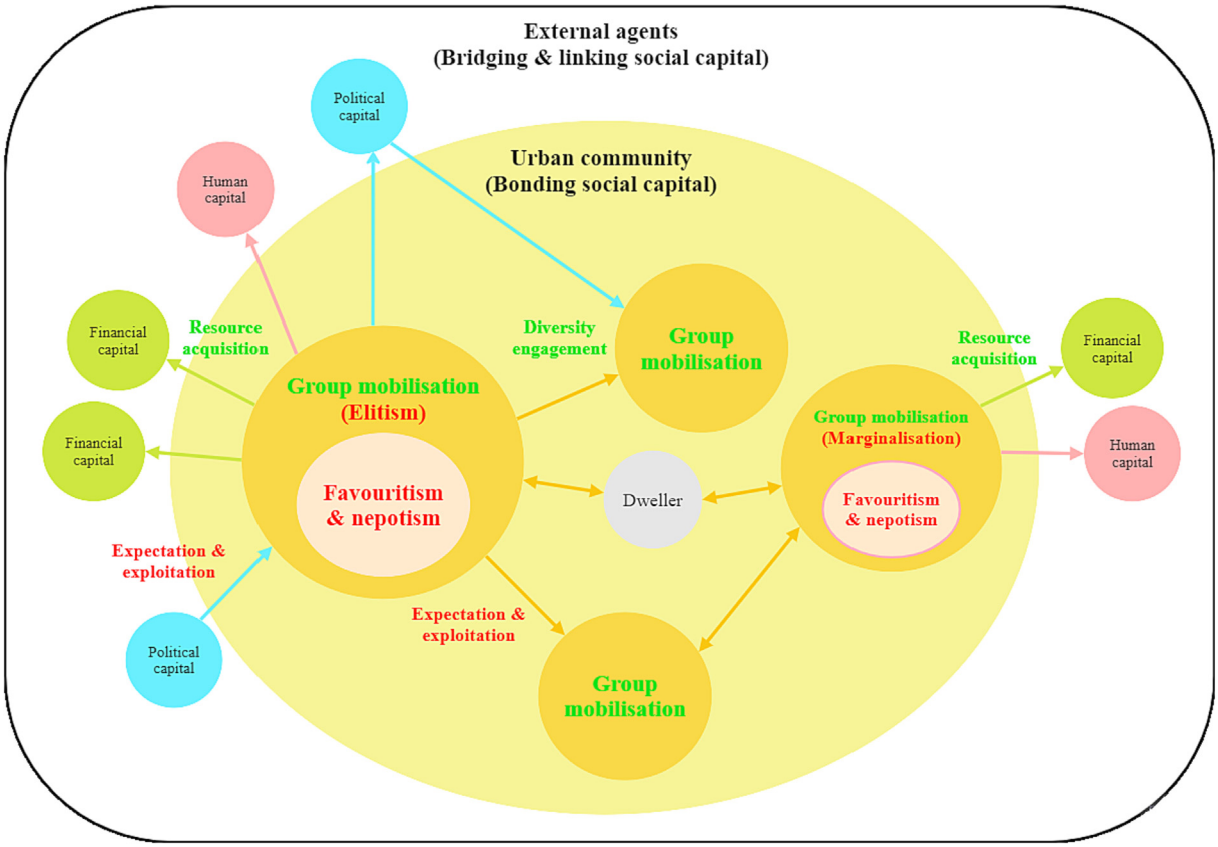

Fig. 4. Roles of networked social capital in urban community-based tourism.

Bridging and linking social capital facilitate urban dwellers in accessing necessary resources for their group mobilisation through external connections (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012). These resources can include financial capital (e.g., grants), human capital (e.g., skills, knowledge), cultural capital (e.g., wisdoms, heritages), and political capital (e.g., legal protection, bargaining power) (Costa & Galina, 2015; Flora, 2004; Woolcock, 2001; Zahra & McGehee, 2013). External interventions, such as structural requirements or engaging events/activities, can promote diversity, inclusivity, and equitable distribution of resources and benefits to all participating beneficiaries (Ashley, Loh, Bubb, & Durham, 2022; Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Nault & Stapleton, 2011; Zhao, Ritchie, & Echtner, 2011). Despite the drawbacks associated with strong bonding, the study adds that bridging and linking social capital can produce negative effects and undermine the long-term sustainability of urban community-based tourism development. Fig. 4 depicts the inflow of external resources for urban community-based tourism. This amplifies competition and power hierarchies (i.e., elitism, marginalisation) amongst fragmented groups marked by favouritism and nepotism, intensifying their conflicts (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2013; Ugur, 2017).

A more refined and nuanced approach to community-based tourism development must address significant roles for both positive and negative social capital. Given the urban complexities, social alienation and disparities are evident, causing feelings of apathy and inequalities within the community (Tosun, 2000). To foster an interactive and inclusive space where diverse groups can express opinions and reach mutual agreement (Nault & Stapleton, 2011), it is essential to deliberately integrate different forms of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking (Çakmak, Lie, & McCabe, 2018). Tourism working groups may extend bonding to excluded or marginalised groups/residents by including them in the tourism value chain as intended beneficiaries (Stone & Stone, 2011). When planning for community-based tourism, it is suggested that external agents should consider the existing social fabric within the urban community and work with dwellers on engaging diversity and inclusion in decision-making processes (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Urban community-based tourism development will be more sustainable when resources, strategies, and benefits are responsive to their diverse needs (Nault & Stapleton, 2011).

Conclusions

Collective actions in urban communities are not inherently driven by their default nature. Instead, they are shaped by constant and sustained engagement amongst residents, as well as by external interventions. This study has highlighted how urban dwellers leverage social capital to facilitate group mobilisation, resource acquisition, and engagement with others despite limited mutual acquaintances and interactions. Consequently, social capital is important for building trust and reciprocity, and coordinating residents towards cooperation and collective actions (Flora, 2004; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Furthermore, the study

sheds light on the challenges in navigating heterogeneity within urban communities and understanding the potential risks of favouritism and nepotism, expectation and exploitation, as well as elitism and marginalisation, posed by negative social capital. By acknowledging the dual nature of social capital, the study offers several theoretical and practical implications.

The present study has filled the knowledge gap in urban community-based tourism development by incorporating empirical insights from community fieldwork within the social capital framework. Specifically, this study has demonstrated how interactions between different social capital can lead to varied outcomes, determining the success or failure of urban community-based tourism initiatives (Jones, 2005; Putnam, 1993; Stone & Stone, 2011). Whilst previous rural community-based tourism investigations have explored the benefits of social capital in building cohesion and collective actions, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the unique challenges faced by urban communities. Whilst signaling similarities between rural and urban contexts, the study has offered new insights derived from the social complexities and dynamics and proposes the novel conceptualisation of urban community-based tourism. The model offers the theoretical lens for social capital and community-based tourism research, highlighting the importance of diversity and inclusion, and the role of negative social capital (Baycan & Öner, 2023; Graeff & Svendsen, 2013; Villalonga-Olives & Kawachi, 2017).

Practical recommendations are proposed for urban dwellers and external agents to enhance the prospects of effective community-based tourism development. Besides engaging specific dwelling groups, leaders are advised to identify other groups who may benefit indirectly or be impacted by developments. Diverse voices and opinions can benefit tourism working groups when determining communal goals, ensuring inclusive engagement, and monitoring community sentiments (Tosun, 2000). External agents (e.g., policymakers, urban planners, community developers, private enterprises) may adopt a nuanced approach to incorporating diverse community voices and interests in tourism interventions (Brohman, 1996; Çakmak et al., 2018). External agents should also navigate existing internal conflicts, competing interests, and power hierarchies within the community (Boyd & Singh, 2003; Ishihara & Pascual, 2009; Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2013). The current study serves as a practical guide for promoting good governance and community well-being in tourism cities (Goodwin, 2021; Musavengane et al., 2019).

When identifying relevant study participants, the authors of this study relied on the perspectives of tourism working groups where the leaders might be considered elites. It is also evident that the participants were dominated by tourism-related residents and by the older generation (≥50 years). Future studies can expand the horizon by approaching a broader range of stakeholders (e.g., marginalised groups, youths) who are unrelated to tourism. Moreover, future researchers might consider adopting other theories or concepts (e.g., community participation, power relations) as a basis for conducting an in-depth investigation. Furthermore, this study specifically explored old-town districts in the city, and it is recommended that future researchers expand the scope to other urban settings (e.g., commercial districts, suburban districts, second-tier cities). Besides, future studies may explore other types of community (e.g., ethnic minorities, religious and professional groups, sexual and gender diversity), even where they are not geographically confined. As the closing observation, future researchers are urged to explore possible solutions (e.g., co-opetition, diversity, equity, and inclusion) to address some complex issues emerging from community-based tourism (Ashley et al., 2022; Damayanti, Scott, & Ruhanen, 2017).

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Thanakarn Bella Vongvisitsin: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Wei-Jue Huang:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision. **Brian King:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2024.103759.

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