



Empowering Klong Khu Village: Leveraging Consultation Democracy and the Spirit of Community Culture for Pioneering Local Problem-Solving

Wanlapat Suksawas*, Parinya Soithong and Aumnoay Pirunsarn

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok, Thailand

*Corresponding author. E-mail address: wanlapachs@nu.ac.th

Received: 3 November 2023; Revised: 19 December 2023; Accepted: 8 January 2024; Available Online: 19 March 2024

Abstract

In the quest to empower Klong Khu Village, this participatory action research examines an engaging story of multisectoral engagement within the community, guided by the principles of consultation democracy. The study meticulously employed four potent instruments designed to foster consultative democracy throughout distinct stages of the process: 1) Public Meetings and Forums, 2) Citizen Surveys, 3) One-on-One Interviews, 4) Community Surveys and Mapping, 5) Capacity Building, and 6) Evaluation of Consultative Initiatives. The research adopted a comprehensive approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data analyses to derive meaningful insights from the application of these dynamic tools. The findings illuminate the pressing issues confronting the community, primarily revolving around two core challenges: the rampant nocturnal motorcycle rides by adolescents, disregarding the safety of lives and property, and the vexing issue of drug-related problems. Interestingly, this research underscores the instrumental role of a robust community culture. It is the binding force that fosters consensus and cultivates active participation, not only among the residents but also with relevant agencies. Through this harmonious collaboration, sustainable solutions emerge, paving the way for the village to reclaim its vitality and spirit in pioneering consultative democracy for local problem-solving. This vibrant journey showcases the remarkable power of community culture as a catalyst for transformative change.

Keywords: Consultation Democracy, Community Culture, Community Problems

Introduction

In Muang District, Phitsanulok Province, therein lies a remarkable community that has emerged as a beacon of promise and inspiration in the realm of local problem-solving and community development. This community, Klong Khu Village, is the focal point of our research, and the choice to examine this vibrant locale is driven by several compelling factors. First and foremost, Klong Khu Village holds a distinctive status as a model village, as designated under the Model Community Development and Learning Development Project of Naresuan University. This prestigious project was conceived with the noble aim of enriching community development and learning to empower residents. It follows, therefore, that the presence of Klong Khu Village as a participant in this initiative signifies a remarkable level of potential and a commitment to thriving as a community.

Klong Khu Village's vision encapsulates a resolute determination to rise above challenges, with a pledge to transform into a drug-free community while simultaneously embracing the principles of organic farming and the sufficiency economy philosophy. This community is actively steering towards the establishment of a self-sustaining and contented way of life, setting an example for others to follow. Local insights further underscore the unique strengths of Klong Khu Village. It is a place where the bonds of community are strong, the spirit of cooperation is palpable, and effective leadership abounds. These qualities, coupled with the prudent management of a community fund, the presence of a sufficiency economy community learning center, and a considerable corpus of community savings, collectively underscore Klong Khu Village as a shining example of a well-defined and robust community culture.



The purpose of this study is to delve deep into the fascinating world of Klong Khu Village, with a focus on its community culture and its potential to serve as a catalyst for effective local problem-solving endeavors. By examining the interplay of consultation democracy and the community spirit, the study aims to understand how this remarkable village leverages its unique characteristics to address the challenges it faces and emerge as a beacon of empowerment for the broader community. This research endeavors to shed light on the processes, structures, and mechanisms that underpin this remarkable journey, with the aspiration that the lessons learned in Klong Khu Village may inspire and guide similar efforts in other locales seeking community-driven solutions to their challenges.

This article delves into the concept of harnessing the potential of consultative democracy and community culture as a dynamic duo for addressing and resolving pivotal issues within a community.

First and foremost, it underscores the significance of consultative democracy, an organized system of decision-making that places community members at the core of the process. By encouraging active participation, it ensures that the voices of those directly affected by community issues are not only heard but also given due consideration. This approach is an embodiment of inclusivity, as it embraces the diverse perspectives and viewpoints within the community (Elster, 1998; Mansbridge, 1999). Through consultative democracy, the community members become key players in shaping the trajectory of their community's development, making it a powerful tool for resolving critical challenges.

On the other hand, community culture is introduced as a potent force, drawing from the rich tapestry of traditions, values, and shared experiences that bind the community together. It emphasizes the importance of unity and shared purpose, instilling a collective identity. This shared cultural heritage can serve as a cohesive element, motivating community members to collaborate towards common objectives. Furthermore, it offers a framework for crafting tailor-made solutions that are rooted in the community's unique character and specific needs (Cohen, 1985).

When consultative democracy and community culture are combined, a harmonious synergy emerges. The participatory nature of consultative democracy ensures active engagement in identifying, prioritizing, and resolving the most critical issues within the community. Simultaneously, the inherent strength of community culture provides motivation, shared values, and a deep sense of belonging that sustains these efforts over the long term. The aim of this research is to delve into the intricate facets of Klong Khu Village, with a particular emphasis on its community culture and its potential, along with the principles of consultative democracy, to act as a catalyst for facilitating effective local problem-solving initiatives.

Research Objectives

To assess the effectiveness of consultative democracy processes within Klong Khu Village in promoting community empowerment and local problem-solving.

To investigate how the distinctive community culture, including its strong sense of community, cooperative spirit, and effective leadership, influences and interacts with consultative democracy to facilitate local problem-solving and community development in Klong Khu Village.

Literature Review

In the upcoming section of this article, it will delve into a comprehensive review of the literature covering consultative democracy, cultural community, and the interplay between community culture and consultative democracy. The details will be as follows:



Consultative Democracy

Consultative democracy is a democratic framework characterized by a commitment to informed and respectful discussions among citizens as a primary means of decision-making (Elster, 1998; Mansbridge, 1999). In this model, active citizen engagement in dialogues and debates is encouraged to facilitate the emergence of a mutually agreed-upon decision (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). Key tenets of consultative democracy encompass principles of inclusivity, diversity, reasoned argumentation, and the utilization of evidence and information to guide the decision-making process (Habermas, 1996; Dryzek, 2002). The fundamental aim of consultative democracy is to foster more legitimate, equitable, and effective decision-making processes by ensuring that the input of all citizens is not only heard but also accorded due consideration (Fishkin, 1991; Niemeyer, 2011).

Dryzek (2002) defines consultative democracy as a democratic system that enables citizens to engage in open, respectful discussions on various issues. This approach aims to create a public sphere where informed conversations and debates take place, ultimately leading to fair and effective decision-making. Consultative democracy is characterized by three core features: inclusion, deliberation, and decision. Inclusion underscores the importance of providing every member of society with an equal opportunity to participate in the deliberative process. Deliberation, on the other hand, emphasizes the quality of discussions and dialogues, emphasizing mutual respect, reasoned argumentation, and the use of evidence and information to inform decision-making. Finally, decision pertains to the outcome of the deliberative process, which should ideally be achieved through consensus or near-consensus among participants.

Dryzek (2002) further distinguishes between two main types of consultative democracy. Discursive consultative democracy places a primary emphasis on open dialogue and debate, aiming to reach a shared understanding of the issues at hand. In contrast, aggregative consultative democracy leans toward voting and decision-making processes designed to reflect the preferences of the majority.

In addition, Fishkin (2018) offers a comprehensive perspective on consultative democracy, characterizing it as a democratic system in which citizens engage in open, well-informed discussions and debates concerning matters that directly impact their lives. The overarching objective is to arrive at decisions that genuinely represent the collective will of the people. This system grants citizens the power to actively participate in the decision-making process and to play a pivotal role in shaping policies and decisions affecting their respective communities. Fishkin (2018) contends that this form of democracy is inherently more effective and legitimate than representative democracy.

For consultative democracy to function optimally, public deliberation becomes paramount, as it facilitates the cultivation of trust and understanding among diverse groups of individuals. According to Gaventa (2004), the cultivation of a positive and collaborative community culture can significantly contribute to the success of community consultation in addressing local issues. Similarly, Arnstein (1969) underscores the critical role of community participation and engagement in ensuring the effectiveness of community consultation.

In summary, a robust community culture proves indispensable for the successful implementation of consultative democracy in addressing community problems, underlining the pivotal role of community engagement, trust, mutual respect, and active participation in this democratic framework. This study aptly reflects the potential for harnessing these democratic principles to enable the Klong Khu Village community to address their local challenges through consultation democracy and the preservation of their unique community culture.



Cultural Community

Cultural communities are intricate social constructs, embodying groups of individuals who share not only common geographical, cultural, or social characteristics but also a profound connection rooted in their shared values, traditions, and customs. These communities often form the essence of one's identity, fostering a deep sense of belonging and shared heritage. Cultural communities are not solely about "whats" and "hows", but they delve into the "whos" of a specific societal context. The bonds within these communities are cultivated through the transmission of cultural knowledge, practices, and a collective memory that unites individuals in a shared cultural experience (Anderson, 1983). This shared cultural identity plays a pivotal role in shaping the character of a community and the interactions among its members, offering a support network and a platform for mutual understanding (Cohen, 1985).

Furthermore, the concept of cultural communities underscores the significance of preserving cultural diversity and heritage, as these communities contribute to the richness of the global cultural tapestry. They serve as reservoirs of traditions, languages, and customs, and are essential for the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations (Hannerz, 1996). While the diversity of cultural communities might pose challenges related to multiculturalism and social cohesion, it also offers an opportunity for individuals to learn from and appreciate the richness of various cultural expressions. In essence, cultural communities are not static entities but dynamic spaces where identities are forged, and cultural expressions evolve over time (Barth, 1969).

The Relationship between Community Culture and Consultative Democracy

The intricate relationship between community culture and consultative democracy is profoundly significant, as scholars have underscored. Community culture, defined by shared values, traditions, and customs, is foundational in shaping the dynamics of community consultation. It is within the context of culture that individuals express their opinions, engage in dialogue, and determine the approach to conflict resolution, decision-making, and collective problem-solving (Burt, 2010).

Furthermore, scholars like Gaventa (2004) highlight that a positive and collaborative community culture can empower community members and foster active participation in decision-making processes. Arnstein (1969) emphasizes the critical role of community participation and engagement, reinforcing the idea that community culture creates an environment conducive to involving community members in the consultation process. Fishkin (2018) supports this view by stating that effective community consultation hinges on trust and mutual respect among community members, qualities that are nurtured through a strong community culture. Community culture, therefore, proves instrumental in ensuring the success of consultative democracy, underpinning trust, encouraging participation, and facilitating effective problem-solving (Smith, 2005).

Methods and Materials

In this study, a participatory action research approach was employed, which involved the active engagement of community stakeholders to tackle issues within the framework of the local community culture and consultative democracy. The research team utilized a diverse array of data collection methods, each carefully chosen to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Figure 1 illustrates the six procedural research steps.

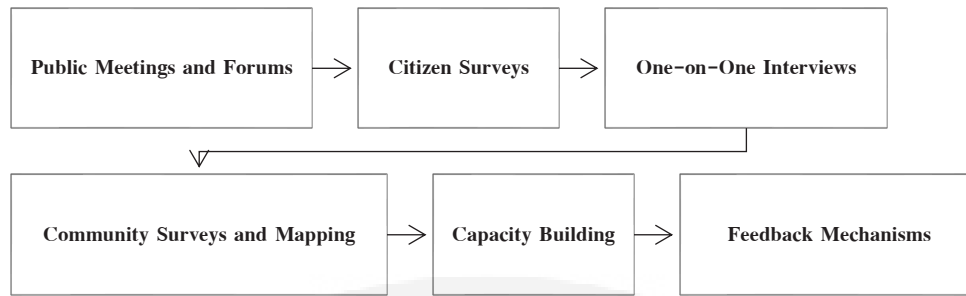


Figure 1 The Six Procedural Research Steps.

Table 1 delineates the procedural steps associated with the research tools, which served as the study's structural framework. This representation underscores the research team's commitment to enhancing the pertinence and efficacy of the study's outcomes through the active involvement of community stakeholders in every phase of the research process.

Table 1 The Procedural Steps Associated with the Research Tools

Step	1
Process	Public Meetings and Forums
Objective	Public Meetings and Forums: These open gatherings served as a platform for community members to collaboratively address and work towards solutions for local issues, sharing concerns, insights, and engaging in open dialogues to resolve pertinent problems.
Target Group	Local leaders and local people
Methodology	<p>Population Size: The target population for those public meetings and forums encompassed the local community, with a focus on local leaders, local people, and individuals with expertise relevant to the discussed issues.</p> <p>Sample Group: The sample group that participated in those gatherings included local leaders, local people, and experts who contributed valuable insights and perspectives.</p> <p>Data Providers: Information was sourced directly from the participants attending the public meetings and forums. Both local leaders and local people actively engaged in providing information, sharing concerns, and expressing their viewpoints on various local issues.</p> <p>Selection Method/Randomization at Each Step: The selection process was purposeful, involving the identification of individuals with expertise and influence in the community, such as local leaders and those directly affected by the issues discussed. The method ensured a diverse representation of perspectives. The selection was not randomized but followed a thoughtful approach, allowing for a comprehensive and inclusive discussion on pertinent problems.</p>
Data Analysis Technique	Thematic Analysis: Identify common themes and patterns in the discussions.
Step	2
Process	Citizen Surveys
Objective	Structured surveys were undertaken to systematically collect the opinions and perspectives of community members, with a view to addressing local issues comprehensively. This approach ensured a diverse range of views, contributing to effective problem-solving within the community.
Target Group	Local people



Table 1 (Cont.)

Methodology	<p>Population Size: The term “local people” denoted individuals residing within the defined geographic boundaries of the community. The overall population size reflected the community under study.</p> <p>Sample Group: The sample group, drawn from the local population, represented a subset of individuals chosen to participate in the surveys. This selection considered residents over 18 years old with a residency duration of over 2 years.</p> <p>Selection Method: Participants were selected using a systematic approach, ensuring fairness and unbiased representation. This involved the random sampling technique.</p> <p>Sampling Process at Each Stage: The sampling process involved several stages, including the identification of potential participants, the invitation to participate, and the confirmation of their willingness to contribute. Each stage aimed at progressively forming a diverse and inclusive sample.</p> <p>Diversity Considerations: Deliberate efforts were made to ensure diversity within the sample. This involved considering factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and other demographic characteristics to capture a broad spectrum of opinions and perspectives.</p> <p>By employing these strategies, the structured surveys sought to engage local people meaningfully, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the community’s needs, concerns, and viewpoints. This approach aimed at promoting effective problem-solving within the community by incorporating a wide range of voices and experiences.</p>
Data Analysis Technique	Quantitative Data: perform statistical analysis to identify trends and frequency.
Step	3
Process	One-on-One Interviews
Objective	Individual interviews were conducted to facilitate in-depth discussions, allowing for a thorough exploration of specific local issues and personal experiences, thus contributing to more effective problem-solving within the community.
Target Group	Local people
Methodology	<p>Population Size: The target group for one-on-one interviews was the local people, referring to individuals residing within the specified geographic boundaries of the community. The population size corresponded to the community being studied.</p> <p>Sample Group: The sample group consisted of individuals from the local population who were selected to participate in one-on-one interviews. The selection may have considered specific criteria such as age, residency duration, or other relevant factors to ensure a representative sample.</p> <p>Selection Method: Participants for the individual interviews were selected through a deliberate process. This may have involved purposive sampling, where individuals were chosen based on their ability to provide valuable insights into the specific local issues under investigation.</p> <p>Sampling Process at Each Stage: The sampling process included identifying potential participants, inviting them to participate in one-on-one interviews, and confirming their willingness to engage in in-depth discussions. Each stage was designed to form a targeted and insightful sample.</p>
ata Analysis Technique	Quotes and Examples: Extract meaningful quotes and examples from the interviews that encapsulate the essence of the issues and experiences.
Step	4
Process	Community Surveys and Mapping
Objective	These combined efforts, involving surveys and mapping exercises, were instrumental in developing a spatial understanding of local issues, offering valuable insights into the geographical dimension of challenges, and contributing to effective problem-solving within the community.
Target Group	Local people



Table 1 (Cont.)

Methodology	<p>Population Size: The target group for community surveys and mapping was the local people, referring to individuals residing within the specific geographic boundaries of the community. The population size aligned with the community under study.</p> <p>Sample Group: The sample group comprised individuals from the local population selected to participate in community surveys and mapping exercises. The selection process may have considered specific criteria such as age, residency duration, or other relevant factors to ensure a representative and informed sample.</p> <p>Selection Method: Participants for community surveys and mapping activities were selected through a thoughtful process. This may have involved purposive sampling, ensuring that individuals chosen could provide meaningful insights into both the challenges faced by the community and the spatial aspects related to these issues.</p> <p>Sampling Process at Each Stage: The sampling process included identifying potential participants, inviting them to take part in surveys and mapping exercises, and confirming their willingness to contribute. Each stage was designed to create a comprehensive and geographically informed understanding of local challenges.</p>
	<p>Data Analysis Technique Spatial Analysis: this includes examining spatial patterns, identifying hotspots to gain insights into the geographical dimension of the issues.</p>
	<p>Step 5</p>
	<p>Process Capacity Building</p>
Objective	Dedicated sessions were organized to equip community members and work group with essential skills and knowledge, enabling their active participation in local decision-making and effective problem-solving processes.
Target Group	Local people and work group
Methodology	<p>Dedicated sessions were organized to enhance the skills and knowledge of both community members and work groups. The goal was to equip them with essential capabilities, fostering active participation in local decision-making and facilitating effective problem-solving processes.</p> <p>Target Groups: The primary target groups for the capacity-building sessions are local people and work groups. “Local people” refers to individuals residing within the specified geographic boundaries of the community, while “work groups” may include teams or organizations actively involved in community development or related activities.</p> <p>Population Size: The population size included the total number of local people and work group members who were potential participants in the capacity-building sessions. This size was reflective of the community and work groups being addressed.</p> <p>Sample Group: The sample group comprised individuals selected from the local population and work groups to actively participate in the capacity-building sessions. The selection process may have considered specific criteria, such as their roles, interests, or potential contributions to community development.</p> <p>Selection Method: Participants for the capacity-building sessions were selected using a purposeful approach, ensuring that individuals chosen had relevance to the goals of the sessions. This may have involved targeted invitations to community leaders, representatives of work groups, or individuals with specific skills or expertise.</p>
	<p>Data Analysis Technique Feedback Collection: Gather feedback from participants about their experiences during the sessions.</p>

**Table 1** (Cont.)

Step	6
Process	Feedback Mechanisms
Objective	Implement feedback channels that empower residents to continually contribute their insights, stay informed about project advancements, and voice their concerns, all aimed at addressing and resolving local issues effectively.
Target Group	Local people
Data Analysis Technique	Report Generation: Compile the results and analysis into a comprehensive report.

Results

By employing the designed research process, the community's problems can be solved from consultative democracy with community culture. The details are shown as follows.

Table 2 Results of the Employment of the Designed Research Process

Step	1
Process	Public Meetings and Forums
Results	The findings of the joint discussion between the research team and the community participants revealed that there were 118 households with a total population of 423 people living in the community. Most of the area was flat and situated along the main road connecting Bang Rak district and Muang Phitsanulok district. Besides the issue of infrastructure, two other significant problems were identified: drug abuse and reckless motorcyclists who frequently gathered to race, posing risks to the safety of others, and causing disturbance to the residents, particularly at night.
Step	2
Process	Citizen Surveys
Results	<p>The findings stemming from the comprehensive Citizen Surveys offer a conclusive picture of the issues that have left the community dissatisfied and eager for resolution. Through these surveys, community members from diverse backgrounds came together to express their concerns, resulting in a nuanced understanding of the community's priorities.</p> <p>It is evident that certain issues have prominently risen to the surface, bearing significant weight in terms of community dissatisfaction. At the top of this list is the concern regarding teenagers riding motorcycles during the night, which amassed a substantial 231 points, signifying the community's deep unease about nighttime safety. This is closely followed by the pressing matter of drug problems, registering 223 points, highlighting the community's collective aspiration to combat substance-related challenges and their consequences.</p> <p>Furthermore, the survey results reflect the community's desire for an improved quality of life, as evidenced by the concern over community welfare problems, totaling 198 points. Additionally, the desire for aesthetic enhancements in the village, with a focus on landscape improvements (127 points), and the need for better road infrastructure within the community (163 points) demonstrate the comprehensive scope of community priorities. These survey results offer invaluable guidance for local authorities and community leaders, underlining the urgency of addressing these critical issues. They underscore the significance of community-driven decision-making and emphasize the need for prompt action to enhance safety, quality of life, and overall community well-being.</p>



Table 2 (Cont.)

Step	3
Process	One-on-One Interviews
Results	<p>The insights gleaned from the One-on-One Interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of the community's concerns, ultimately leading to a consensus on the most pressing issues that significantly impact the community's well-being. Through these interviews, community members, representing a diverse array of perspectives, collectively identified and prioritized the issues that demand immediate attention.</p> <p>The consensus arrived at through these interviews revealed a clear order of urgency in addressing these issues. At the forefront of concern was the matter of teenagers riding motorcycles at night, a situation that has raised apprehensions about safety and responsible behavior within the community. Following closely in terms of urgency was the issue of drug problems, reflecting the community's deep-seated desire to combat substance abuse and its associated challenges. Finally, but by no means less significant, the issue of community welfare problems emerged as a priority, signifying the community's collective aspiration for a better and more sustainable way of life.</p> <p>This prioritization, stemming from the collective insights shared during the One-on-One Interviews, serves as a valuable guide for local authorities and community leaders in addressing these critical issues effectively. It underscores the importance of community-driven problem-solving and highlights the need for immediate action to enhance the overall well-being and safety of the community.</p>
Step	4
Process	Community Surveys and Mapping
Results	<p>The findings derived from Community Surveys and Mapping clearly indicate that the community must come together and coordinate its efforts to address the critical issues of teenagers driving at night and drug use within the community. These results emphasize the shared belief within the community that immediate action is required to tackle these problems for the overall betterment and safety of the community.</p>
Step	5
Process	Capacity Building
Results	<p>The agency forum resulted in collective action by local administrators, leaders, and community members to address the problems of teenage motorcycle driving at night and drug use in the community. Two activities were planned as follows:</p> <p>Activity One: Organizing the installation of CCTV cameras to enhance safety and security in the community. The community work group informed the monthly village meeting about the proposed camera installation and discussed the locations for the cameras. After careful consideration, the meeting reached a consensus that the working group should purchase three CCTV cameras, costing approximately 35,000 baht, to control and manage security for the community. The working group also proposed developing a security system that can be expanded to cover high-risk areas in the future. The results of the camera installation will be evaluated and reported to the monthly village meeting every three months.</p> <p>Activity Two: Addressing the increasing drug use in the community, especially among at-risk youth and workers, by taking the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Conducting a survey and screening of households to identify at-risk households and create a map of households at risk of drug addiction. 2) Visiting at-risk households by responsible government agencies and the community working group. 3) Establishing community rules and agreements based on peaceful means to prevent and solve drug problems. 4) Developing positive and creative community spaces and reducing noise pollution by installing CCTV cameras. 5) Evaluating and summarizing the lessons learned for further improvement in addressing addiction problems in the community.



Table 2 (Cont.)

Step	6
Process	Feedback Mechanisms
Results	The results obtained through Feedback Mechanisms indicate a high level of satisfaction and contentment across all sectors involved. Local leaders, government representatives, residents, and those actively engaged in the process have expressed their collective happiness with the outcomes. This widespread satisfaction demonstrates the success of the feedback mechanisms in fostering collaboration and achieving results that resonate positively with all stakeholders.

The diagram below illustrates the synthesized findings.

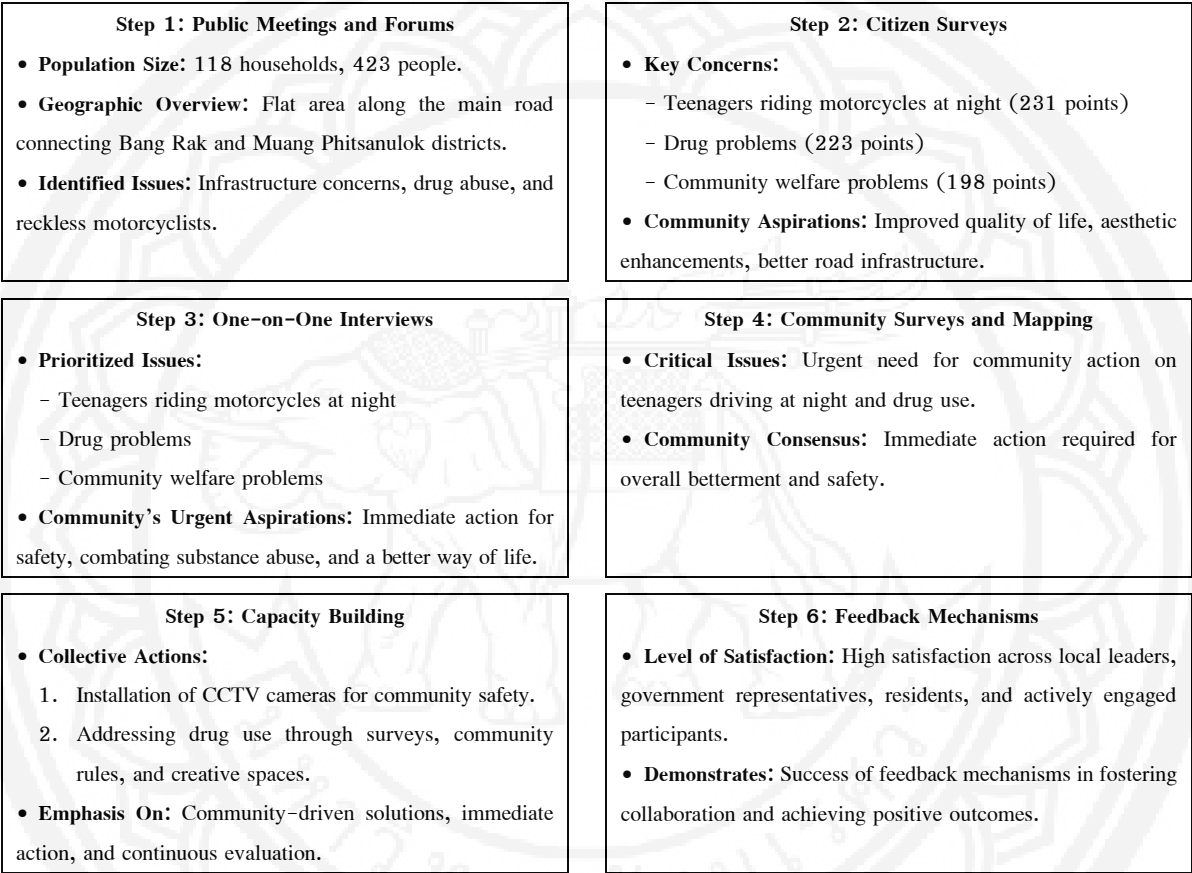


Figure 2 The Synthesized Findings.

Discussion

The preceding sections of this study have shed light on the dynamic interplay between consultative democracy and community culture within the context of Klong Khu Village. The discussions are as follows:

Empowering Change: The Synergy of Consultative Democracy and Community Culture in Klong Khu Village

The benefits of consultative democracy in the context of Klong Khu village are not only apparent but also transformative. Through meticulous research and adherence to the research team’s procedures, it is evident that the consultative democratic process has played a pivotal role in resolving the community’s issues efficiently and effectively.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this success story is the active engagement of a multitude of stakeholders in the community. This inclusive approach brings together diverse voices, ensuring that a wide range of perspectives



is considered when addressing pressing issues. At the heart of this accomplishment lies the robust community culture that thrives within Klong Khu village. It is characterized by a sense of unity, a commitment to community norms, and the presence of capable and trusted community leaders. This shared cultural identity has been instrumental in facilitating open and constructive dialogue, a fundamental element of consultative democracy.

Furthermore, the willingness of government agencies to embrace the insights and opinions of the community and to take responsive actions has been a driving force behind the achievement of desired outcomes. This exemplifies the collaborative nature of consultative democracy, where the government becomes a partner in community-driven solutions. In Klong Khu village, it has resulted in a collaborative environment that nurtures trust, shared responsibility, and a genuinely inclusive approach to problem-solving. This approach reflects the core principles of consultative democracy, which prioritizes the participation of citizens and stakeholders in the decision-making process, ultimately leading to more equitable and effective solutions for the community.

Fostering Community Resilience: The Role of Strong Cultural Bonds in Klong Khu Village

This research underscores the pivotal role of a resilient community culture in effectively resolving community issues, particularly in Klong Khu village. Within this close-knit community, several noteworthy aspects illuminate the significance of their shared culture:

Fosters Community Participation: the robust community culture in Klong Khu village nurtures a profound sense of community pride and responsibility. Consequently, community members are inspired to take an active role in addressing issues. Their deep involvement in assessments, meetings, and their enthusiastic participation in problem-solving activities serves as a testament to the community's collective efficacy.

Promotes Collective Decision-Making: communities with a strong cultural foundation often place a high value on collective decision-making. This approach ensures that issues are addressed inclusively and equitably, benefiting all community members. The residents of Klong Khu village have showcased remarkable collaborative abilities in effectively addressing significant community problems. Through participatory democracy and community engagement, they've identified pressing issues and devised shared strategies for resolution. This collaborative spirit plays a vital role in successfully implementing public services and enhancing the overall quality of life in the community.

Facilitates Communication and Collaboration: a robust community culture fosters effective communication and collaboration among community members, government agencies, and other stakeholders. This facilitates the coordinated and efficient resolution of issues. The community's collaborative endeavors in Klong Khu village have yielded success in addressing critical problems and enhancing residents' well-being. Through active participation in assessments, meetings, and working groups, the community has clearly defined and prioritized key issues. This has led to targeted interventions and positive outcomes, such as the establishment of a community working group to tackle issues related to adolescent motorcycle driving and drug abuse. These community-driven initiatives not only address immediate concerns but also cultivate a sense of ownership, empowerment, and social capital, which can yield long-term benefits for the community.

Builds Resilience: a robust community culture contributes to building resilience, enabling the community to withstand and recover from challenges and crises. A resilient community is better equipped to address issues and adapt to changing circumstances. In Klong Khu Village, residents have demonstrated a commitment to adhering to government regulations, even when these regulations may restrict personal freedoms. In cases where the Tha Pho Administrative Organization faces budgetary constraints, community members have readily collaborated on



fundraising initiatives to address pressing community issues. This level of civic engagement and cooperation reflects a community dedicated to working together toward shared goals and enhancing the well-being of its residents.

Fostering Collaborative Solutions: The Role of Community Culture in Consultative Democracy

This study underscores the influential role of community culture in the consultative democracy process for addressing community issues. Several key facets exemplify this influence:

Fostering an Inclusive Working Group: Within Klong Khu Village, the community culture of cooperation and inclusivity lays the groundwork for establishing a collaborative working group consisting of civil servants, local leaders, and other community members. This cultural backdrop creates an environment where diverse ideas and opinions are not merely accepted but deeply valued. Such cooperation proves instrumental in pinpointing community challenges and generating potential solutions.

Forging Mutual Agreements: Community culture assumes a pivotal role in nurturing mutual agreements among the diverse stakeholders in the Klong Khu Village community. The culture of trust and collaboration is a cornerstone in shaping a shared comprehension of the prevailing issues and potential solutions. These mutual agreements serve as the bedrock for the collaborative approach to problem-solving.

Promoting Negotiation and Volunteerism: The community culture encourages the use of negotiation and voluntary efforts to address community issues. The ethos of community service and volunteerism motivates residents of Klong Khu Village to contribute their time and expertise to tackle community problems. Moreover, the culture of negotiation facilitates the development of win-win solutions that cater to the needs of all stakeholders.

Prioritizing Community Issues: Community culture is instrumental in prioritizing community problems in Klong Khu Village through mechanisms like the People's Score Card, the Dissatisfaction Assessment Form in government public service, and through Budget Expenditure Literacy. The culture of community participation and accountability ensures that the voices of community members are heard and that their concerns are at the forefront of the decision-making process.

Facilitating Collaborative Action: This collaboration extends to joint efforts among researchers, government agencies, working groups, community leaders, and citizens to drive change in Klong Khu Village's public service. A culture of trust, collaboration, and inclusiveness facilitates the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and resources, resulting in effective solutions to community issues.

In essence, community culture assumes a pivotal role in the consultative democracy process for community issue resolution in Klong Khu Village. It encourages the formation of working groups, mutual agreement development, negotiation, voluntary contributions, issue prioritization, and collaborative action to instigate positive transformations in community public service.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusion

In the exploration of the influence of community culture on community consultation and democratic processes for issue resolution, this study has emphasized the paramount importance of diverse and multifaceted participation. This collaborative engagement involves a spectrum of stakeholders, including local leaders, government entities, civil society representatives, and the community members themselves. Together, they unite in a collective effort to address and surmount the challenges faced by the residents of Khlong Khu Village.



Central to the realization of the research objectives set forth is the establishment of a range of working committees. These committees serve as the engines driving the research process, embodying the very spirit of cooperation, inclusivity, and shared responsibility that underpins the entire study.

The participatory approach to problem-solving, which has been the central focus of this research, emerges as a potent and effective method for addressing social issues within the community. This approach places a strong emphasis on community culture, collaboration, and empowerment. Actively involving community members ensures that their voices are not only heard but also empowers them to take an active role in the process of finding solutions.

As this discussion ends, the aspiration is that continued active engagement and collaboration among community members across different sectors will refine and optimize the process of resolving a broad range of social challenges. It is through these collective endeavors that the promotion of sustainable community development in Khlong Khu Village can be realized, ultimately enhancing the well-being and quality of life for all its residents.

Suggestions

For research suggestions, this study offers three suggestions which aim to further our understanding of the dynamics between consultative democracy and community culture in issue resolution and community development. Details are as follows.

Future research endeavors may consider conducting a comparative study that juxtaposes Klong Khu Village with another community where consultative democracy is not a focal point. This research could offer insights into the disparities in issue resolution, community engagement, and the overall well-being of the community.

Subsequent research initiatives might delve into the long-term effects of consultative democracy and the robust community culture in Klong Khu Village. An examination of how these elements have contributed to enduring development, resilience, and enhancements in residents' quality of life over an extended period could be valuable.

Future research may delve deeper into the specific cultural attributes within Klong Khu Village that have played a pivotal role in the successful implementation of consultative democracy. An investigation into the historical and societal factors that have influenced the community's culture and its effects on issue resolution would provide a richer understanding of the dynamics at play.

Acknowledgments

The researchers extend their heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated researchers who contributed their time, expertise, and unwavering commitment to this study. Your invaluable insights and collaborative efforts were instrumental in the exploration of the intricate relationship between community culture, consultation, and democracy in addressing community challenges.

The researchers would also like to express deep gratitude to the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) for their generous support and funding, which made this research endeavor possible. Their commitment to advancing knowledge and fostering research has been instrumental in the researchers' pursuit of a better understanding of community development and empowerment.

This research stands as a testament to the power of collective effort and collaboration, and it is with gratitude that we acknowledge the contributions of all involved.



References

- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York, NY: Verso.
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 35(4), 216–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977225>
- Barth, F. (1969). Introduction. In F. Barth (Ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (pp. 9–38). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Burt, R. S. (2010). *Neighbor Networks: Competitive Advantage Local and Personal*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, A. P. (1985). *Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203131688>
- Dryzek, J. S. (2002). *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. USA.: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/019925043X.001.0001>
- Elster, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Deliberative Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishkin, J. S. (1991). *Democracy and Deliberation: New Directions for Democratic Reform*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fishkin, J. S. (2018). *Democracy when the People are Thinking: Revitalizing our Politics Through Public Deliberation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gaventa, J. (2004). Towards Participatory Local Governance: Assessing the Transformative Possibilities. In S. Hickey, & G. Mohan (Eds.), *Conference on Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation Manchester, 27–28 February 2003* (pp. 25–41). London: Zed Books.
- Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. F. (1996). Democracy and Disagreement. *Ethics*, 108(3), 607–610.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Hannerz, U. (1996). *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. London: Routledge.
- Mansbridge, J. (1999). Everyday Talk in the Deliberative System. In S. Macedo (Ed.), *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement* (pp. 211–239). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Niemeyer, S. (2011). The Emancipatory Effect of Deliberation: Empirical Lessons from Mini-Publics. *Politics & Society*, 39(1), 103–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329210395000>
- Smith, G. (2005). *Power Beyond the Ballot: 57 Democratic Innovations from Around the World*. London: The Power Inquiry. Retrieved from <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/power-beyond-the-ballot-57-democratic-innovations-from-around-the-world/>