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Researching Research in Action: Social Capital Development and Exchange Through Principal-Agent Relationships

透過委託 - 代理關係的社會資本發展及交換

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Abstract

Indigenous peoples around the world are faced with many economic, social, and cultural difficulties as a result of colonial histories. Modern social and solidarity economic theory has led to developmental initiatives that seek to create more equitable conditions for marginalized peoples by leveraging cultural knowledge, values, and traditions in a modern market system, and action research programs have been created to allow inclusion and participation of local peoples in their own development. By linking local peoples to outside resources, such as technological, scientific, and political expertise, long term economic, social, and political benefits are expected.

One such program developed by scholars at National Chengchi University in Taiwan, was the Lokah Initiative; an SSE based action research project that focused on increasing community capacity of the indigenous Atayal people of Wulai. By mobilizing resources, academics behind the Lokah Initiative were able to activate the local community and reach some developmental successes. The process, however, required no small effort to build relationships with an initially skeptical community that had experienced many stalled projects in the past.

Principal-agent theory may provide some insight into the difficulty in aligning interests between outside experts who create programs and community members who participate in them. However, agency relationships do not occur in a social vacuum. In particular, literature on social capital implicates trust, reciprocity, and a sense of fairness as relational factors that indicate bridging links between principals and agents that can be used to build relationships and reduce agency costs.

This thesis seeks to examine the Lokah Initiative's agency relationships through the lens of social capital. By doing this it is hoped to provide generalizable insights into practices that can help increase the likelihood of success for future projects under the Lokah umbrella and beyond.

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摘要

世界各地的原住民因殖民歷史而面臨經濟、社會和文化的種種困境。現代社會與團結經濟理論帶來了發展倡議，在現代市場系統中透過文化知識、價值觀和傳統的運用，為邊緣化的民族提供更公平的條件。行動研究計畫的創建亦使當地民族得以融入並參與自身的發展。將當地民族與外界資源（如科技、科學和政治等專門知識）連結，預期會在經濟、社會和政治等層面帶來長期效益。

台灣國立政治大學的學者就發起一個這樣的計畫，名為「樂酷計畫」。這是針對提升烏來地區原住民族泰雅族的社區能力、以 SSE 為基礎的行動研究專案。「樂酷計畫」背後的學界人士運用其資源，使原民社區動起來並達到某些發展成效。然而，對經歷過許多停滯不前的計畫、一開始就抱持懷疑的社區來說，建立關係的過程並不容易。凝聚專案前進的動力需要大量且持續性的互惠關係。

來自外界的計畫發起人和參與其內的社區人員，兩者間協調利益的困難性或許可從「委託代理人理論」找到一些洞察。但代理關係並不會在「社會真空」狀態下發生。尤其是社會資本的文獻將信任、互惠和公平觀念視為連結委託人和代理人的關係因素，用來建立關係並降低代理成本。

本研究旨在透過社會資本視角，檢視「樂酷計畫」的代理關係，藉此為實際運作提供可推論的一般性見解，盼能為日後「樂酷計畫」或其他計畫框架下的專案提供參考，提升其成功的機會。

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Keywords

Agency theory, action research, social capital, trust, reciprocity, Wulai, Atayal,

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Indigenous peoples around the world face a multitude of postcolonial economic and social difficulties that include poverty, alcoholism, disempowerment, loss of cultural heritage and identity, and environmental degradation. Developmental projects and ecological conservation initiatives imposed by outside actors have often failed; environmental damage and cultural marginalization continue while poor economic conditions remain.

A great deal of scholarly work has sought to address these issues from various perspectives, including environmental conservation, cultural rejuvenation, education, responsible economic development, and institutional policymaking and governance, among others. Over the past several decades, ecotourism has often been presented as a solution for indigenous peoples who are attempting to reconcile the need for economic development with that of maintaining ecological sustainability. Yet the knowledge, working capital, and marketing tools needed to run such businesses are often limited, and negotiation with stakeholders - who often have conflicting and changing goals and motivations - remains a challenge.

The emerging social and solidarity economy has been garnering the attention of scholars and policy makers for its contributions to social cohesion while providing alternative solutions to state and market failures (Marques, 2013). By looking at self-organization and democratization through collective action, people are able to counteract the effects of a capitalist, market dominated economy. These projects often start small, in "base of the pyramid" communities that suffer from poverty and disenfranchisement, yet if as Laville has said, such initiatives could increase participation "beyond their immediate constituencies, to increase their commitment to and involvement in matters of public regulation and to ally themselves with social movements that share their goals, they could

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contribute more effectively to the democratization of economy and society" (Laville, 2013). One path to this participation is through local development programs.

For their part, action and participatory researchers attempt to use their expertise to in order to help communities see some of these benefits realized. They attempt to help harness local, non-academic knowledge and resources in order to mitigate power imbalances. This is done with an emphasis on collaboration between the academics and local populations in a way that is cyclical and inclusive. Action research has a long history of concern with disenfranchised indigenous populations, with roots going back as far as the 1930s United States Bureau of Indian affairs work towards education in local languages and economic self-sufficiency (Noffke, 1997). Because of the importance of local, non-professional input, action research depends in no small part on the ability of researchers to understand local communities and create an alignment of interests. This requires field experience as well as the ability to share information without inadvertently creating a sense of alienation when engaging in research actions. Action research is being increasingly used as an approach to community development across a wide range of settings, including education, health care, post-disaster relief and recovery, agriculture, environmental conservation, and local development projects such as ethno-tourism development programs.

Eco- and ethno-tourism have recently been touted as a possible solution to the problem of development that is equitable and socially responsible as well as being sustainable economically, culturally, and environmentally. A broad range of literature has dealt with the positive outcomes that are possible when eco- or ethno-tourism programs are developed. Some benefits that have been identified are outlined below. Most indicators of success in the tourism literature focus on clear and tangible aspects, such as numbers of jobs, visitor or customer numbers, the emergence of capable leadership, changes to local governance institutions, or legal recognition of land rights (Lemelin, Koster, & Youroukos, 2015). A range of political, legal, social, economic, and cultural items that fall along five dimensions of community empowerment, community wellness,

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community economic development, community learning, and community stewardship have been identified in the Canadian context, (Colton & Whitney-Squire, 2010; Graci, 2012; Jenkins, 2010), while a perspective focusing more on environmental benefits and respect for cultural and traditional knowledge, retention, reintroduction, and putting into practice of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge has also been seen in cases in New Zealand and Canada (Moller, Berkes, Lyver, & Kislalioglu, 2004; Stephenson, Berkes, Turner, & Dick, 2014), and Taiwan (Chao & Hsu, 2011), among others.

In the broad range of research perspectives above, each has nested within its indicators of success and change the underlying element of social capital. Individuals, sub-groups, communities, and society at large are linked through interconnected relationships that operate at multiple horizontal and vertical levels. The strength of these relationships, especially the ones between a disenfranchised community and academic elites, is not a given, and cultivating these relationships - that is, developing social capital – is one important piece of the puzzle for implementation and continuation of developmental programs. If developing relationships and social networks is overlooked, programs are likely to falter, have difficulty gaining momentum, or fail outright with negative consequences to both the community and the environment. How to avoid these pitfalls through the investigation of the processes of negotiating these relationships is the subject of the following work.

Thus, the goal of this work is to examine the Lokah Initiative development project between NCCU and the indigenous community of Wulai. the project is analyzed in the context of literature on agency theory and social capital. By analyzing the processes and interactions of relationship between actors involved in the project, the work aims to give insight into how social capital is developed, as well as to inform best practices as the project moves forward. It is hoped that insights gained through this case study can also be used in more generalized settings.

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1.1 A Brief History of Indigenous Issues in Taiwan

As of 2014 there are approximately 530 000 indigenous peoples from16 recognized aboriginal groups: the Ami, Atayal, Bunun, Hla'alua, Kanakannavu, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisiyat, Tao, Thao, Tsou, Truku, Sakizaya, and Sediq, numbering approximately 530 000, or 2.3% of the population of Taiwan. The Atayal, (also known as Tayal or Daiyan,) are the second largest number around 86000 and have traditional territory that is located in the northern mountain areas, some of which lies within the jurisdiction of New Taipei City. Of The 6200 people living in the town of Wulai, approximately half are Atayal.

In Taiwan, historical factors of colonialism, authoritarianism, and capitalist development have resulted in the same "underdevelopment syndrome" seen in other Indigenous communities around the globe. The indigenous Atayal peoples who have inhabited Wulai district located in the mountains south of Taipei City, Taiwan, for at least 5000 years do suffer in this respect. In 1925, restrictions implemented by Japanese colonial authorities placed Wulai inhabitants in fragmented reserved lands or forced them to migrate from their original mountain environment altogether, which in turn forced a change from traditional hunting economy to one based on agriculture (Lin & Icyeh, 2007). Restrictions were also placed on cultural activities, for example with weaving and facial tattooing being banned by the Japanese in the mid-1930s and limitations placed on the practice of traditional religious beliefs, while education was conducted in Japanese (Yoshimura & Wall, 2010).

These restrictions and emphasis on agriculture continued when the island came under KMT dominion after World War II. Culturally, the language for education was switched from Japanese to Mandarin, and changes in religious practice occurred as missionaries from Canada and Australia were able to successfully convert a large number of Atayal to

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Presbyterianism and Catholicism (Yoshimura & Wall, 2010). The KMT continued the Japanese forestry policy and operations until the privatization of Atayal lands in 1966 allowed an influx of private capital from non-mountain residents. Although regulations prohibited the sale of indigenous owned land to non-indigenous people, in practice a black market arose in which indigenous land was sold to outsiders, while government regulations were changed three times to legalize non-indigenous land ownership (Kuan, Yen, & Ai-Ching, 2003) .

Wulai, with its great endowment of natural beauty and natural hot springs[1] saw tourism in took off after 1956 when Chiang Kai-shek established a new tourism policy. The area saw an average of 3000 tourists per day from the mid-1960s to the early 1990s, with the majority being Japanese, and tourism was the most important source of income for Wulai residents at this time (Yoshimura & Wall, 2010). Workers in the tourism industry were primarily women who took part in weaving or dance demonstrations; men were largely absent from the tourism scene (ibid.). After martial law was lifted in 1987 the emphasis on Wulai tourism shifted from international to domestic visitors, and the number of Japanese tourists declined.

Together with democratization came an increased awareness of indigenous issues in Taiwan. In 1984 indigenous peoples across Taiwan formed the Alliance of Taiwan Aboriginals (ATA), which three years later distributed a manifesto that placed a strong emphasis on land use and territory, based on a growing sense of indigenous solidarity both within Taiwan and internationally. Further legal amendments occurred in the 90s with the repeal of the pejorative term “shanbao” in favor of “yuanzhumin” for government documents, guarantees of indigenous political participation and government assistance, and an expanded language relating to rights to land (Reid, 2011). In 2004 the forestry act was amended, recognizing that indigenous peoples may use forest resources for their own living needs and in the same year, the Wildlife Conservation act allows

[1] The term “Ulay”, from which the town of Wulai gets its name means hot spring in Atayal.

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hunting and use of wildlife for traditional ritual use (Reid, 2011). The caveat to both laws is that the actual rules of resource use are left to the central government to determine, thus effectively preventing indigenous freedom to use and manage their traditional lands.

After Taiwan's democratization, regulations in Wulai focused on protecting natural areas, with special consideration focusing on the watershed area that supplies the Taipei area's 8 million inhabitants. Strict governmental regulations on land use and building construction that were meant to protect the urban water supply have seriously hampered the local indigenous peoples' ability to improve their life conditions (Tang 2018, unpublished). At the same time, lowland capitalists had already been able to retain, or even gain new benefits from prior projects that may or may not have been undertaken within the legal regulatory framework. The social situation in Wulai became one seen in many indigenous communities in the world, that of economic stagnation, youth out-migration, loss of identity, drug and alcohol abuse, while illegal developments fueled by outside capital produced environmental degradation and economic disparity. The situation became one where the indigenous Atayal of Wulai are involved in tourism-based ventures for the most part as employees, without the business knowledge or financial capital to strike out on their own. Such a historical context is similar to those found in many indigenous areas around the world. Questioning the historical fairness and present use of resources has become a driving factor for scholars seeking to find alternative economic developmental strategies that seek more fair and equitable alternatives to existing systems.

1.2 Social and Solidarity Economy

Social and solidarity economy (SSE) as outlined by Utting refers to forms of economic activity that prioritize social and often environmental objectives, and involve producers, workers, consumers, and citizens acting collectively and in solidarity, and involves cooperatives, mutual associations NGOs, forms of volunteering, self-help groups, fair

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trade networks, solidarity purchasing, informal economy workers, and other new forms of for-profit social enterprises and social entrepreneurs, and has at its core the idea of pushing forward social and systematic transformation through redistributive justice, sustainability, alternatives to traditional capitalism, and democratic and emancipatory politics (Utting, 2015). The new social associational economics are democratically structured and operate with non-traditional motivations. These motivations go beyond the simple maximization of profits under a hegemonic capitalism. Of present and growing interest is the inclusion in SSE of non-traditional alternatives to competition, using social capital as "the infrastructure and the engine of economic activities for human-centered local development" (Dash, 2016).

With the historical basis of SSE coming in part from utopian socialists, some theorists see SSE as a panacea of alternative community based economic pathways to address problems caused by market globalization, the decline of the welfare state, and a monopoly of the paradigm of profit as a bottom line that stem from traditionally imperial economics. By expanding economics to include different rationalities, relational capital, cooperative logic, psychic income, social profit, and ecological well-being, they suggest a future of restored socio-cultural and environmental well-being (Dash, 2016). Although there is a long and diverse history of SSE-type concepts, there remains a good degree of fluidity in the evolving field.

This diversity of views can become rather vocal with some authors lamenting the possibility the field is moving away from the utopian ideal, instead facing the risk of being coopted by connections with the existing capitalist system. Some ways SSE could be diluted come from destabilizing policy and regulatory environments, or top-down policy making that is often associated with a particular party; states actively promoting SSE but only giving priority to certain aspects; SSE expansion towards market principles and practices, and splits and tensions arising within SSE networks and movements due to ideological and/or personal differences (Utting, 2012). Nonetheless, characteristics of

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solidarity, trust, cooperation, and community spirit that are rooted in the local social fabric are common factors throughout the SSE literature.

Ideological assertiveness notwithstanding, there is considerable potential in the SSE even when operating in a capitalist environment. For sustainable and equitable economic development in order to “correct the flaws” of traditional economics, there is both a risk of approaching the task from an overly romantic position that could neglect difficulties and contradictions when attempting to increase the scope of SSE projects (Utting, 2012). Indeed, there exists danger of “glossing over the heavy constraints of structure internal group dynamics, and the relationships between internal and external actors”.

An approach that takes into account such internal and social constraining factors may be an important factor to the successful implementation of SSE programs. SSE goals may be of grand and positive vision, but there remains a need to consider the actual tensions and difficulties that are often encountered at community and individual levels during the development and implementation of SSE programs. Bringing people onboard is vital to achieve consensus of purpose and long term follow-through, as stated by Pereira Morais and Bacic:

> … the success of these alternative production and community organization experiences in the territories depend, to a large extent, on their capacity to integrate processes for economic transformation and cultural, social and political changes, building networks of collaboration and mutual support, which implies in a progressive participation in formulation and implementation of public policies activities, based on the idea of co-creation of these policies. (Pereira Morais & Juan Bacic, 2017).

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Bringing in external expertise through the negotiating the cultural, social, and political changes, building networks, and co-creation of policies requires skillful negotiations that depend to a great extent, open, communicative, and respectful partnerships. In this way, the action researcher may be best suited to implement SSE ideals.

The following document will consist of a literature review encompassing program background, social capital, and agency theory. This literature will then be used to set out the direction for research methods. The data concerning how the Lokah project dealt with difficulties and challenges of relationship building will then be reviewed. Finally concluding comments will be made.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Action Research

Action research has at its basis socially transformative goals. The field is sometimes seen as a propagator of an "alternative globalization" that seeks to disrupt the status quo of colonial domination and hegemonic globalization in order to create mutual respect and understanding that cross economic, geographic, political, cultural, and epistemological divides with hopes of creating a healthy and sustainable world economy (Rowell, Bruce, Shosh, & Riel, 2017). The hopes held by those in the field in terms of social justice are that sustainability can be applied not only to environmental and economic factors, but also to the continuation of preexisting and often threatened cultural aspects as well.

Practicality and real-world application are a clear focus in action research. The gains in knowledge are intended to be liberating and empowering, by both "studying reality in order to transform it" while "transform[ing] reality in order to study it" (Rowell et al., 2017). The transformation is central, through a broad analysis of real-world problems. Transformation, both individually and collectively, depends on confronting practices that are not working because they are:

> a. irrational because the way participants understand the conduct and consequences of their practices are unreasonable, incomprehensible, incoherent, or contradictory, or more generally because the practice unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-expression of the people involved and affected by the practice,
>
> b. unsustainable because the way the participants conduct their practices are ineffective, unproductive, or non-renewable either immediately or in the long term, or more generally because the practice unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-development of those involved and affected, or

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> c. unjust because the way participants relate to one another in the practice, and to others affected by their practice, serves the interests of some at the expense of others, or causes unreasonable conflict or suffering among them, or more generally because the practice unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-determination of those involved and affected (Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors, and Edwards-Groves, 2014, p. 5) (in McTaggart, Nixon, & Kemmis, 2017)

The kind of real-world problems where action research can be found are many, ranging a myriad of research/practical environments from policy, tourism (Bennett, Lemelin, Koster, & Budke, 2012), education (Robertson, 2000) and educational reform (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009), community and mental health (Cargo & Mercer, 2008; Maiter, Simich, Jacobson, & Wise, 2008), organizational management (Moss, Alho, & Alexander, 2007), agriculture, disaster mediation and post disaster relief (Ozerdem & Bowd 2010), post conflict reconstruction, and environmental conservation through traditional knowledge (Popova, 2014) among others.

Action research includes various branches, including participatory action research, critical participatory action research, living theories, action learning, emancipatory action research, informal action research, and collaborative action research (Rowell et al., 2017), as well as community based research, educational action research, and others. In all these branches public or stakeholder involvement is underpinned by normative, substantive, and instrumental benefits enriching social and individual learning, encouraging multiple perspectives to improve understanding of complex issues and the selecting of appropriate solutions, and having collaborative relationships that assist in project implementation and defusing conflict (Blackstock, Kelly, & Horsey, 2007). Accessing these benefits through requires a development of understanding multifaceted perspectives though a reciprocal exchange of information.

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A characteristic value of action research is that the direction of inquiry is a participative, democratic process. Research directions are determined through input of both researchers and participants. Traditional research is often target based, delegated by researchers from their positions of power. For action research, a participatory worldview approaches people not as objects of research, but instead as valued sources of knowledge. The action researcher places a high level of importance on the input provided by participants or practitioners through input into the analysis, design, implementation, and decision-making processes of the research project (Harrison & Callan, 2013). Through interaction between the researchers and participants, synergy can occur, though for these effects to be realized an experienced researcher who recognizes an existing problem and can navigate the interpersonal relationships in a way so as to gain insight, understanding, and create positive change. Two-way communication at all stages is critical to create mutually a mutual understanding of project aims and philosophies (Dyer, J., Stringer, L.C., Dougill, 2014).

Participants in action research are involved in the analysis, design, implementation processes, and decision making processes along with the researcher in order to create a kind of "synergy" between the researchers and so called researched, as well as between the normative, substantive, and instrumental benefits of the research itself. Somewhat more informal and interpretive, the methodology encourages a cyclical process of reflection, development, and action. This cycle is meant to continue with the inclusion of the participants (or the 'researched') being involved in moving through the cycle and giving their input in an open environment where their ideas are on equal footing.

Action research needs to be a flexible and cyclical process. The purpose and/or direction may change during development or implementation as the researcher and practitioner both increase their awareness through a flow of continual feedback. Because this kind of research operates at a social level, interventions and modifications to the process and

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even research questions are likely to arise during the process. A challenge for this method comes from keeping interests of both parties aligned during the process, which requires open and ongoing discussions between the two parties. The discussion, reflection, and modification, allow for the development of interim conclusions and charting out courses of action for the next cycle iteration. Put another way, this requires reciprocity, reflexivity, and reflection-on-reality (Robertson, 2000).

As action research is designed to approach a particular situation, policy, or scenario, in order to address a perceived shortcoming or create an as-yet unattained benefit, it stands to reason that those involved would be interested in addressing an unsatisfactory situation. The work of the researcher thus has real-world consequences for current problems and situations, and while both the researcher and the participant are looking to create positive effects, consideration should be given to any possible negative effects that may occur if the process is not a truly open or equal one (Nadasdy, 2003).[2] Considering that much action research seeks to create long-term benefits and relationships, the knowledge of process that can be gained from such programs may be just as important as gains in theory or even outcome.

Together with action and participatory research should come social learning. Social learning accruing and spreading over time can in turn lead to both transformations at personal and institutional levels. While individual changes may occur in the short time – these could be as simple as “changing one’s mind” – change and transformations that appear at higher community or institutional levels following a developmental program can take a good deal of time to become evident, perhaps a decade or more (Blackstock et al., 2007). In this regard, it may be more useful to address possible mid-level changes that

[2] The issues surrounding process-related difficulties in action or participatory research may be of interest when seen in the context of relationships of reciprocity. While successful action research can result in closer working relationships, increased levels of trust, and better cooperation (i.e. social capital), and increased community capacity, failures of action researchers to follow through with fairness and transparency risks creating negative outcomes such as withdrawal or disinterest in future projects or even negative reciprocity, leading to a destruction of social capital.

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can occur during the formation of stronger institutions, which may take a considerable about of time. Many authors have linked the development of social capital with other changes that occur within communities (for example, Gordon, Kayseas, & Moroz, 2017; Riel, 2017; Urquhart & Wearing, 2017), and these criteria can be used to measure processes and outcomes during a long-term, ongoing project. The study of the “how” this social capital is built could be useful in assisting with more efficient negotiations and interactions between researchers and communities.

2.2 Agency Theory

At the core of agency theory is the idea of one party acting on behalf of another. Agents are appointed to act on the behalf of principals, with the principal seeking advice or services from a professional, and the agent generally being a person with professional qualifications or particular skills. Principal-agent relations in fields such as economics, management, and law are often expressed through contracts that outline responsibilities and tasks of the agent. Principal-agent relationships also operate and are formalized to limit conflicts of interest, with an expectation that value will be created in the future.

The field of agency theory has roots that are strongly planted in rational choice theory in traditional economics (Braun & Guston, 2003; Shapiro, 2005). In the relationships between two parties, a principal has resources at his or her disposal, but not the resources appropriate to realized their particular goals. An agent can accept the resources to act in the interest of the principal. In the traditional principal-agent theory held in economics, actors are considered to behave according to self-interested rational choice, being constrained against predatory action and moral hazard by certain institutional and contractual designs. Ideally, both principal and agent should profit from this exchange relationship.

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In the case of university based action researchers, two main agency roles are played. With the base in cooperation and participatory action with goals informed through community input, research teams act as agents to the community principal. The community principal in this case can be seen as both the community members in general and their representative leaders. The action researcher's second main agency relationship is as an agent to the unit that gives access to funding that makes the action research possible.

Agency theory assumes that agents and principals have conflicting goals. Because both parties are expected to act "rationally", they are likely to maximize their utility which leads agents to not always act in the best interests of the principal. This leads to agency costs due to the effort and resources that must be used in order for the principal to constrain the activities of the agent, for the agent to convince the principal that their best interests are indeed being acted upon, and of the residual losses that occur due to incomplete utility alignment (Van Puyvelde, Caers, du Bois, & Jegers, 2012).

Agency problems arise when there is imperfect sharing of information and the interests of the principal and agent diverge creating agency costs that, while sometimes difficult to measure precisely, are significant and likely to occur (Bosse, Phillips, & Phillips, 2016). Much attention has been given to the actions of principals to mitigate negative effects of agents who operate in a classically rational and self-interested way. Along this economic bent are often found detailed calculations that aim of creating contracts that minimize agency costs, such as monitoring and compensation, with the goal of increasing value of organizations and creating higher returns. However, it is unlikely that agents (or principals) operate without some kind of limits on aggressive or predatory self-interest; instead they are constrained by psychological and social norms in a way that lead them to act in consideration of fairness.[3] While much literature focuses on controlling and monitoring to reduce moral hazard and shirking on the part of the agent, it is also

[3] Not all agents are constrained by psychological or social norms of behavior. Research into corporate psychopaths and CEOs with narcissistic personalities indicates that these people do not operate according to established social norms of fairness (Body 2005).

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important to consider the possibility of principals to engage in shirking as well (Braun & Guston, 2003).

While agency theory at its most basic consists of dyadic relationships between actors in the role of principal an agent, in practice complicated interactions at multiple layers of agency relationships occur. Actors play both roles at the same time, they act in groups as multiple principals, and multiple agents compete from different hierarchical levels and with various personal internal interests in a complicated web of interrelated agency relationships. Researchers are confronted with problems such as free-riding, collective action, informational and power asymmetries, operational difficulties in monitoring, and historical context. In some criticisms of the strict economical perspective, taking the individual as a purely self-interested rational actor seeking to maximize benefit has been seen as an oversimplification of an inherently complicated social environment where in reality perfect agency is rare (Shapiro, 2005).

Some critics of agency theory see a reductionist approach to specific tangible variables as risking or ignoring the institutional and social context that influences behaviors and outcomes. For example, Wiseman et al. (2012) bring up the possibly simplistic assumptions of human nature, such as purely self-interested agents who disregard principals in favor of maximizing their own personal benefit. If it is indeed the case that agents (and presumably principals as well) act out of unmitigated self-interest, then there would be little cause to approach agency questions from other non-economic contexts, as there would be considerable difficulties with theoretical validity. On the other hand, it has been argued that motivations of principals and agents have socially derived interests that may not automatically cause pure maximization efforts or complete alignment of interests (Bosse et al., 2016; Shapiro, 2005; Wiseman, Cuevas-Rodríguez, & Gomez-Mejia, 2012). Put another way, “some agents may genuinely desire to serve the principal, while others may seek to serve a principle even when it conflicts with the wishes of the principal” (Wiseman et al., 2012).

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Wiseman et al. further note that focusing solely on contracts risks neglecting factors of the broader social, institutional, or cultural context that could affect outcomes, and leaves open opportunities for research to further refine the theory (ibid). They also suggest approaching agency issues by looking at cognitive factors, and though his analysis does not include the influence of social capital, this has been explored by other authors who note that by recognizing the influence of the social environment we can improve our understanding of agency problems. According to Bosse et al., for example, "understanding positive reciprocity incentive alignments and monitoring mechanisms have the potential to improve aggregate social welfare by creating agency benefits as well as agency costs" (Bosse et al., 2016 p. 290).

With slightly modified theoretical elements agency theory has been successfully extended to other fields, such as management, law, political science, international relations, and sociology. Through reconsideration of the underlying assumptions of unidimensional actors, agency theory can be applied across such various fields. Scholars outside of economics "abandon the assumption of an acontextual, ahistorical, and static relationship between principals and agents (Mitnick 1992)" instead considering the relationships in the broader social context that includes "other agency relationships, competitors, interest groups, regulators, legal rules, and the like" (Shapiro, 2005). By moving away from the traditional mathematical perspective of economics agency theory has expanded to encompass a wide variety of approaches on the quantitative/qualitative spectrum. In this way, agency theory has been able to provide a wide variety of insights to each of these fields.

In a more sociological interpretation of agency relationships, agency costs are still assumed arise if the agent is not acting in the principal's best interests. It can be difficult for information be credibly conveyed by between the information holder, whether principal or agent, to the other party who would benefit. This credible transference of

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information can become even more challenging between parties who are separated by language and cultural differences. However, in the traditional economic perspective, information asymmetries can be mitigated through contracts and monitoring, which applies to the sociological interpretation as well. In addition, the sociological interpretation allows that clear and flexible channels of communication that can make information sharing possible can be improved by building trust, fairness, and reciprocity, i.e. by developing social capital.

Difficulties may arise from a history of previous agency relationships. If these relationships proceeded badly, resulted in project or social failures, ended before results were achieved, or were concluded too abruptly, locals may come to see relationships with outsider researchers not as repeating interactions, but instead as a series of one-off engagements. This could be interpreted as a weakness in cooperation or failure to create social capital, or worse, the destruction of social capital that connects principals and agents. The experience of prior difficulties or failed relationships that have occurred in the past may create a context that makes it particularly difficult for new, incoming researchers to build or rebuild trust. This situation could be made particularly challenging if past agents were not seen to have been acting in the best interests of the principal, whether purposefully or not, and is certainly at play in disenfranchised communities and those with a colonial history.

Agency problems can also present a complicated set of problems for the action researcher. The researcher as an agent acts on behalf of the community to provide knowledge and expertise to benefit the community, while also requiring knowledge, experience, and effort from the community members to be able to create scholarly output that allows access to the funding that makes action research possible in the first place. This puts the researcher in the role of as an agent acting concomitantly on behalf of the community and the funding institution. Seeking participation from the community and funding from a government institution means that agency problems can operate in both

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directions, especially when monitoring is made more difficult through physical distance, information asymmetries, or opaque policy.

Some principal-agent difficulties in a post-colonial indigenous community were presented in a review by Vining and Richards of natural resource extraction development projects by hybrid indigenous non-indigenous organizations in Canada (Vining & Richards, 2016). These hybrid joint ventures between indigenous and non-indigenous groups provide indigenous communities access to expertise in creating contracts as well as with giving them input into policy decision making processes. For the non-indigenous actors, benefits include access to natural resources, for the indigenous communities other benefits such as financial, management, employment, land use, and social improvement are expected.

Though these programs create links between community insiders and outsiders and a level of benefits are accrued to an extent, they do run into a multitude of issues such as fragmented ownership, divergent goals, difficult to determine ownership statuses due to unclear treaty rights, internal and external constraints on transfer of ownership rights, security from trespass, the long-term survival of indigenous ownership rights (at a collective community level), and conflict between indigenous and non-indigenous principals. Such conflicts are further exacerbated by a pre-existing mistrust of non-indigenous institutions on the part of indigenous communities that stems from a long and difficult historical background. Although economic benefits were found in this case, evidence of increased community wellbeing resulting from increased own-source income was less clear. The question then arises of how to mitigate these agency relationship difficulties so as to increase meaningful, though intangible, community benefits.

Parallels to agency issues between indigenous principals and not-indigenous agents in the Canadian context can be seen in Taiwan. Many developments in indigenous areas in Taiwan have suffered for reasons that include past unclear ownership of property

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resulting from grey or black-market property transactions, restrictive government regulations on the transfer of ownership rights as well as on development of existing properties, land rights issues including past removal from and present limited access to and use of traditional lands, as well a general mistrust of outside institutions. These problems are highly salient to local populations and both result from and lead to difficulties in aligning goals between community insiders and outsiders.

Of particular interest to the present work is found in the more qualitative perspective that can approach issues of “norms, networks, authority, organizations, social control, regulation, trust, social cognition, and so on” (Shapiro, 2005). In literature related to trust, agents and principals are more likely able to align value and interests when they are closer to each other through kin, community, or associations (ibid). Some authors have presented the concept of bounded self-interest to integrate norms such as of fairness as variables that influence the trajectory of principal-agent relationships. In this approach, trust and reciprocity can generate positive outcomes and benefits for social welfare that are not captured by traditional models that assume pure self-interest (Bosse et al., 2016). The importance of sociocultural variables can also be seen in cross-cultural studies of agency theory that move outside traditional western population samples, for example between collectivist and individualist cultures or in cultures that place different levels of importance on power hierarchies (Johnson & Droege, 2004).

In addition, an agent can often find him or herself in the difficult position of serving many principals. In the case of the action researcher, creating a successful program often depends on both acting effectively with the community and on producing material that provides access to the necessary funding supports. This means that the action researcher acts as agent to both the community and the funding institution as principals. Yet the outside institution may have goals that conflict with those of the researcher, or for that matter of the target community.

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> "Only the rare agent has the luxury of aligning her interests with a single principal. Conflict of interest is hardly about shirking or opportunism with guile; it is about wrenching choices among the legitimate interests of multiple principals by agents who cannot extricate themselves from acting for so many, [these] agents are increasingly buffeted by the conflicting interests of the principals they serve" (Shapiro, 2005)

The agent must then balance goals of both the community principal and the funding institution principal that are not necessarily in alignment. In such cases, conflicting goals make successfully negotiating from their position a delicate proposition, one requiring knowledge of social and cultural environments from principals on either side of the table.

Studies of agency relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous communities are often interested in determining structural conditions that exist for the agent to meet the needs of their principal, but they seem to less often examine the linkages of communication that are vital to aligning intentions. Some work has been done to investigate the importance of signaling processes in indigenous political policy and regulation in the United States (Worsham & Gatrell, 2005). This work did suggest that communication links are vital in understanding principal-agent relations, though the question was approached from interactions among bureaucracies. When the question is brought into agency relationships at the meso level of the community and micro level of the individual, communication methods remain vital, though it seems that they are also less-well studied.

2.3 Social Capital

A common thread exists within the literature on action and participatory research, social and solidarity economy, needs based development, assets based development, and recent work on agency theory. In each of these fields, the social capital is increasingly being

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viewed as important to the understanding of community development. Although theoretical bases of social capital is less well studied in economics, there is growing evidence of the importance that social capital is important to providing economic returns through networks of social relationships, trust and norms of reciprocity, and institutions that encourage people to be active members of community networks (Pargal, Huq, & Gilligan, 1999). While the intangible and multifaceted nature of social capital being has resulted in the concept being criticized for being defined overly broadly (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014), distilled to its most basic concept, social capital can be seen as allowing returns to result from networks and social relationships.

Social capital can be held both at group and individual levels. It can be transferred between groups and individuals, and can diffuse within groups. For example, the social capital held by respected community members can be transferred to outsiders, and the "possession" of social capital by researchers can then help engender trust in the greater community. An exchange of social capital does not necessarily occur on a strictly one-to-one basis; as an intangible asset, social capital can grow through interaction and exchange in a way that tangible capital, such as money or infrastructure, cannot.

Within each of the fields above, sub-factors of trust and reciprocity in working definitions of social capital. This is perhaps unsurprising as reciprocity has been shown to be important in social interactions across human societies, as well as in non-human primates and canids (Brosnan, 2006; Kurzban, 2013). The likely biological basis of this behavior suggests that an evolutionary advantage is conferred on species that display reciprocity; this long term evolutionary perspective may be of particular importance in light of the dangers to both indigenous societies facing the disappearance of their culture and to humans as a species facing the perils of global climate change.

The concept of reciprocity being important for development and providing returns is not only found in western scientific tradition. The importance of reciprocal relationships

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extends beyond relations between people. In many indigenous philosophical systems, the social connections and relationships of reciprocity are an important element of environmental ethics found in indigenous traditional knowledge that are extended to include humans and the natural world. For example, hunting practices of the Ojibwa, Cree, and Inuit groups in North America do not dichotomize between human and nonhuman persons in the environment, instead viewing the two groups as equals operating in a respectful and reciprocal way (Kapashesit & Klippenstein, 1991; Reo & Whyte, 2012). A similar ethic of reciprocity is also found in the Quechua peoples of the Andes, as can be seen in the "Potato Park" agrobiodiversity project. Based on indigenous traditions and philosophies, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is being maintained through reciprocal relations between human beings and their social and natural environments (Oudenhoven, 2010). Ritual practices found in North America and the Andes in which offerings are made to deities (tobacco in in North America, wine and food in the Andes) reinforce the importance of reciprocal interactions and respect with the environment and create a symbolic lesson for guiding relationships at the interpersonal level as well.

Reciprocity – or at least cooperation - between animals that is assumed in many traditional indigenous belief systems has also been witnessed by scientists with a Western background. For example, Pierrotti et al. describe how their research was informed by the indigenous idea that marine mammal and birds foraged together out of a cooperative relationship, with gulls serving as aerial spotters who could locate widely distributed fish and squid, while dolphins, sea lions, and whales would come to feed, and force the prey to the surface, whereby both mammals and birds would benefit (Pierotti & Wildcat, 2000).

Sharing of physical resources as a basic relationship of reciprocity is found at the group or community level for many indigenous peoples. Ojibwa hunters, for example, are expected to provide meat to people who cannot hunt and to the people who taught them how to hunt (Reo & Whyte, 2012). Sharing meat is also found at the group level in

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Taiwan, with Truku hunters and trappers sharing meat with their village members. While there may be no formal rules governing the sharing, it was nonetheless expected to be reciprocated, thus reinforcing bonds of friendship and kinship (Simon, 2013). Sharing of agricultural products is also seen with the Andean Quechua, who set aside a portion of the highest quality agricultural products for maintaining social relations (Agrumendo and Wall, 2010). There exists an ongoing benefit in these types of sharing relationships whereby greater trust that resource sharing today will result in reciprocal sharing in the future. Community members gain resilience in that they have access to resources in times of need, and mutual assistance strengthens community bonds that in turn leads to higher trust. This reciprocal sharing of resources sometimes extends to neighboring communities as well.

Accruing social capital does not necessarily lead to positive outcomes, although using a value laden term such as "negative social capital" has been seen by some authors as problematic (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002). "Too much" social capital such as in cases of excessive trust based on ethnic, regional, or religious homogeneity risks price bubbles in economics and aggressive exclusionary action in politics (Portes, 2014). Although in some cases, such as with crime syndicates, social networks can create problematic negative externalities, the social capital is perhaps better seen as "damaging" or "harmful" rather than simply "negative"; the social capital still exists in a form that can be transferred and mobilized to create a "positive" outcome. This can be seen in examples such as mafia organizations providing earthquake relief in Japan (Matanle, 2011) or illegal provision of day to day services such as electricity and television in places such as poor Indian neighborhoods.[4]

At a governance level, the family networks that operate in some Canadian aboriginal governments can also be seen in this context. These communities may have strong social

[4] Another interesting example of the transference of "negative" capital (financial, human, and social) into "positive" outcomes is the Walled City of Kowloon.

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capital within certain groups that are often based on family and kindship bonds, yet benefits that come from information and access to resources can be funneled away from outgroup members. This situation can be seen in terms of the problems of excess or un-transferred bonding social capital that is not extended to the greater community.

As reciprocity influences the level of cooperation within groups, social bonds within the group are strengthened and the ability of groups to work cooperatively also increases. The growth of informal networks that come from cooperation have been identified as drivers of problem-solving (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014), and groups or communities with stronger interpersonal networks are able use social norms to prevent elite capture and strengthen of cooperation (Tai, 2007). This cooperation can be applied at a higher level, such as with interactions with neighboring or outside society or the greater state. An analysis of three cases of water resource management in British Columbia, Canada showed that negotiations for aligning conservation initiatives were more successful[5] in situations with a mutually respectful attitude and reciprocal sharing of information between indigenous and non-indigenous groups (Von der Porten & De Loë, 2013).

Social justice towards a disempowered community may be realized in part through reciprocity operating between the researchers and targets in action research. This mutual and collaborative work as academics undertake the cyclical processes of action research that incorporate local needs and wants to allow adaptation, growth, and resiliency can help decolonize knowledge gathering, while feelings of long term mutual interests are promoted that allow the application of outside resources with less risk of capture or non-cooperation. Justice between the community and the greater society is also increased as researchers act as mediators negotiating for resources from the state or through marketing. The mobilization of human and financial capital that helps balance resource

[5] Although in general the literature on First Nations relations with the Canadian state indicates that this respect and sharing is the exception rather that the rule, indicating the difficulties in engendering such positive relationships.

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asymmetries is is facilitated through the exchange of social capital between community leaders and researchers that occurs through collaboration.

However, cooperation and the ability of a community to distribute resources equitably can be reduced in situations where outside resources are injected too quickly or without consideration, thus slowing or even stopping collective action from occurring (Tai, 2007). In these cases, social capital can be diminished, as can be seen with lower participation in local networks, lower levels of trust, and a reduced chance of participation in reciprocal behaviors. The question of how to create cooperation for a development initiative while avoiding the issues of capture and gaining local support was one faced in the early stages of the Lokah Project.

As has been mentioned above, social capital as a concept has been criticized for being an overly broad term that is problematic for study. To address this issue, theorists have sought to understand the sub factors that make up social capital. Some of these interpretations are discussed below.

Some authors break down forms of social capital into two main types: structural and cognitive (for example, Adler & Kwon, 2002; Grootaert & Van Blastelaer 2002). When referring to the sharing of information, decision making, social networks and other social structures such as rules and procedures is known as structural social capital. This type of social capital is in some ways more amenable to observation through groups memberships, for example, while cognitive social capital such as the shared norms, values, trust, attitudes, and beliefs is related more closely to internal states and therefore more intangible in nature. These two types of social capital can complement each other and overlap, though it is not always the case that they do.

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Another way to delineate between different types of social capital is in terms of bonding and bridging. Some earlier interpretations view bonding social capital as focusing on the internal connections and structures between people in the same groups, while bridging social capital encompasses the relations and connections that tie one actor to others (Adler & Kwon, 2002), while other interpretations of bonding social capital refine these concepts further, to approach bonding social capital as describing close emotional connections within a highly similar group, for example between family and friends (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014). Bridging social capital then describes social connections involving connections that although being looser, span larger and more diverse organizational groups (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Some scholars add a third dimension of linking social capital to further separate elements of bridging social capital to include connections between regular people and those in power.[6]

Both bonding and bridging capital are related to increased community capacity. Bonding social capital is connected to higher levels of assistance and immediate aid given by family and kin groups in times of disaster, whiles bridging social capital that through connections with social organizations and people who are outside close kin groups gives increased access to outside resources and support for long term (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014). These bridging connections are seen as vital by authors such as Woolcock and Narayan who view the conditions that enable access to formal institutions and expertise as essential for community development, so long as bonding social capital is maintained (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

A further way to compartmentalize different types of social capital types is to look at structural, relational, and cognitive components. Structural social capital includes network ties and network features, relational social capital includes trust and relationship types, and cognitive social capital includes shared language, identities, beliefs, and norms

[6] Not all authors completely share this third delineation. For example, some authors use "communal" vs "linking" social capital rather than bonding and bridging, or bonding, bridging, and linking. (Adler, 2002 p19)

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(Ansari, Munir, & Gregg, 2012). Again, these subtypes of social capital are mutually interacting, with social capital of one type having interactive effects on the others.

The different types of social capital are not mutually exclusive; instead, they can be complimentary and mutually reinforcing. For example, as community members and outsiders work together and develop personal links during projects, thus increasing bridging social capital, the psychological distance between the two decreases as well. In this way, the two individuals begin to develop their own bonds of trust and reciprocity, creating a level of bonding social capital that operates across the two separate groups. A psychological interpretation could be that the ingroup-outgroup distance is reduced. From a principal-agent context, an increase or exchange of social capital could result in improved ability to align interests and decrease informational asymmetry.

2.4 Measuring Social Capital

It may be difficult, or even impossible, to obtain a single measurement of social capital. Social capital is inherently multidimensional and exists at multiple levels of analysis; social capital is not static, and changes over time, and diffuses through networks and between informal and formal institutions (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Because social capital presents difficulties for direct measurement, measurement must be approached using proxy variables. While there are a multitude of proxy variables available, such as group memberships, voting participation, tolerance of diversity, charitable involvement, sense of trust, etc., there may, in fact, be no perfect proxy variable that can be applied across all contexts, as the actual indicators are subject to geographical or sectoral contexts (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002).

The choice of proxy indicators of trust can be determined in part based the scope and level of observation. This can range from macro-level national or international institutions, to inter-community level interactions, to associational life, to family and kinship connections, to interpersonal interactions. Measurements can also focus on

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approaching these areas from standpoint of structure or cognition. Structural indicators of social capital that have been used include association or network memberships, meeting attendance, and participation in collective activities. Relational social capital is often measured through proxies of trust in people or in institutions, or through norms of reciprocity, sharing, and cooperation.

Considering the body of literature above, the application of agency theory to the action research paradigm may provide insight into developing more effective programs. By moving beyond a traditionally financial perspective on agency, a more sociological orientation with an emphasis on creating positive effects on both agent and principal behavior through interest alignment, monitoring, and incentivizing, may be beneficial. Thus, incorporating intangible assets such as bonding and bridging social capital into analysis may prove informative in terms of their influence the progression and outcomes of principal-agent interactions within action research programs.

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Chapter 3 - Methods

> "Principal-agent can be used for a variety of purposes and illuminate the basic tensions in the generic [agency problems], and it can be used to reflect in general on the "fairness" of the contracts defined between the principal and the agent" (Braun & Guston, 2003)

3.1 Framework

Aligning interests and creating trust between actors is a technical imperative. If the academic and local communities can align themselves through reciprocal relationships, programs of value to both the academic and the community can be more efficiently implemented. By the using the framework of capital assets through the lens of reciprocity it is hoped points of action important to the target community can be identified so as to increase social capital through the dimension of reciprocity, ultimately allowing development that is equitable and sustainable.

Development initiatives can run into difficulties in the short term, as was the case in the Lokah project. Along the bumpy road faced by the Lokah Project, aligning interests through was a difficult task, though when expertise was shared the beginnings of a larger transformation through reciprocity and social capital exchange between the team and the community were seen. While the researchers identified an original goal of developing institutional strength, it was through negotiation and give and take of power at the junction of researcher and researched that initial positive results were seen. It would be an addition to the literature to delve further into how negotiations of reciprocity operated to increase capacity in a development first community, as rarely has a focus been put on the social capital dimension of reciprocity in cases in Taiwan. An examination of these could help bridge the gap between interest heterogeneity and allow a more fully

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integrated understanding of mutual positions, reducing conflict and promoting understanding that, in the long term, may help expand institutional strength.

This work stems from the perspective that outside academic researchers have an important role to play in the community development in Wulai. In a similar way to Ansari's approach (2012) using organizational literature to describe the capability advantages that can be transmitted from multi-national corporations to "base of the pyramid" communities, access to academic knowledge, experience, and expertise also has similar benefits to increasing community capacity. This transference of knowledge and capability can be challenging, and often comes from access to information and skills that are held in an outside institution or by outside experts. This implies that closer links between the expert practitioners and the communities that seek to develop are needed, something that is facilitated by relational, bridging social capital (see Figure 1). If bridging capital can develop, projects are much more likely to succeed.

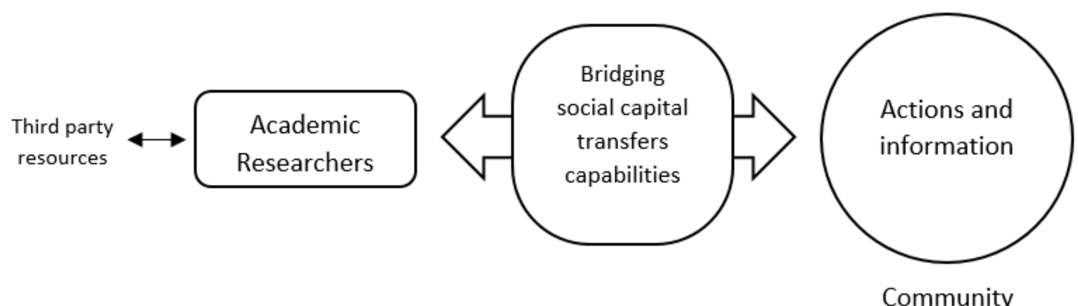

Figure 1. Social capital facilitating transfer of capabilities

Measuring the tangible outcomes of research programs, such as number of jobs created or number of tourist visits to a community is relatively common in the literature; however, measuring the processes related to creating those outcomes is less common. The evaluation of an action research program provides an opportunity to unpack processes that allow the development of trust, fairness, and reciprocity to develop between

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researchers and communities that may in turn be used to inform future practice. However, when approaching intangible aspects of change in an organic and multidimensional project it can be more difficult for an evaluation to capture a clear picture, especially in a situation where the expected goals may be realized to a greater extent in the long term.

Indeed, some authors suggest that the institutional transformations following a developmental program, action based or not, can take some, perhaps a decade or more to become evident (Blackstock et al., 2007). Yet together with action and participatory research should come social learning that in turn leads to both personal and institutional transformation. In this regard, it may be more useful to address possible mid-level changes that can occur during the formation of stronger institutions. Yet systems that bridge the sociological, ecological, economic, and political present a challenge for keeping a project in scope.

In terms of creating a workable evaluation of a research program that has broad goals and multifaceted associated changes, it becomes necessary to limit the scope of variables considered. This "bounding" of the topic has been taken to limit questioning to quantifiable tangible variables based in economics on the one hand[7] (Lemelin et al., 2015), or attempting to broadly assess culture or society in sociological literature on the other (Kagan, Burton, & Siddiquee, 2006). Indeed, because many action research programs have multiple and often intangible goals, quantitative measurements may be difficult or inappropriate to implement. There is relatively less material, however, in the literature that focuses on the experiences and relationship building processes.

[7] Management, tourism, and much developmental literature tends to focus on tangible and quantifiable factors such as cost-benefit analysis, numbers of jobs created, income generation, numbers of visitors, etc. These factors are of course useful in looking at projects ex ante from a standpoint of return on time invested in a program, yet they fail to capture the processes involved issues relating to relationships that are vital to a program's success (or failure).

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Because some official Lokah Initiative projects are completed and others are presently on pause, this research takes a combination formative/summative approach. An ex-post summative approach focused on outcomes is used to examine the sub-projects under the Lokah umbrella that have been already completed. At the same time, the informal continuation of Lokah relationships and the continuation of other subprojects allows a reflective review of project direction as well as a formative evaluation of processes, with an emphasis on learning from the changes to intangible experiences during the project.

3.2 Proxy Indicators

Grounding criteria that have previously identified in a broad context of literature include trust, reciprocity, and collaboration found in relationships and social networks developed during projects/processes (Bennett et al., 2012; Blackstock, Waylen, Dunglinson, & Marshall, 2012). Many authors have linked the development of social capital with other changes that occur within communities (Bennett et al., 2012; Blackstock et al., 2007, 2012; Klain, Beveridge, & Bennett, 2014) and suggest that increased social capital can result from developmental and tourism programs. From their theoretical perspective, scholars of agency theory have found similar factors to mediate principal-agent relationships, including fairness (or conversely unfairness) trust, and reciprocity (for example, see Bosse, Phillips, & Phillips, 2016; van Puyvelde, Caers, du Bois, & Jegers, 2012; Johnson & Droege, 2004; respectively)

As such, the grounding criteria chosen for the present study has been determined as social capital, specifically along the dimensions of trust and reciprocity between the research team and the community. These criteria can be used to measure processes and outcomes both during a long-term, ongoing project in order to gain insight into issues that may be hidden or overlooked due to political or power issues.

This work does not seek to quantify the specific economic impacts of the Lokah Initiative. While strict economic indicators are relatively more amenable to measurement,

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there are difficulties in the determination of what is actually considered a “good” result (Blackstock et al., 2012). In some cases, while economic benefits have been measured and seen, ratings of community wellbeing have not been shown to have significantly improved (Vining & Richards, 2016). Thus, it can be problematic to assume purely economic variables as a standard measure of wellbeing. Rather, this study seeks to evaluate the intangible and ongoing processes of building social capital through trust and reciprocity, which have been related to community benefits (Ansari et al., 2012). As those authors claim, “Qualitative research may inform what types of barriers exist in creating structural, relational, and cognitive social capital…for effective capability transfer”. While Ansari et al were referring to relations between businesses and communities, capability transfers between any outside group with expertise and a local community would be expected to benefit from this research direction. This interim step can be valuable in several different ways: as a way to inform and improve “best practices” in the present case study, as a way to provide skills that can be used for incoming researchers and practitioners.

It can be challenging to assess the diffusion of technologies (for example in energy efficiency), and social technologies can also be difficult to quantify. When looking at such a factor that is difficult, if not impossible to observe directly, researchers must instead infer the existence of the factor through proxy variables. Due to the difficulties in direct observation and measurement of social capital, perceptions of trust, fairness, and reciprocity between the researchers and the target community as proxy indicators for relational social capital. These proxy indicators have a history of use across broad situations; for example, in studies of Madagascar traders, Malian farmers, and post conflict analyses in Cambodia and Rwanda (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002). These are chosen as variables in this study.

The semi-structured interview outline (appendix 1) was developed by bringing together work on social capital dimension of capital assets framework and perspectives on the social capital dimension of agency theory and evaluation. The three-part interview

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outline was intended to develop an understanding of the perceived level of social capital through proxy variables of trust and reciprocity over the course of the Lokah Initiative and in various Lokah related subprojects. Social capital in this sense can refer to that which can be held or mobilized by individuals and that can exist at the group level. The interviews were meant to be open-ended enough to allow for the values and perspectives of the interviewees to be considered.

In order to gain insight into the diversity of views, interview subjects were chosen to represent the heterogeneity of project stakeholders. These included academics and scholars (both Han and Atayal), local business people, project staff, and local workers and volunteers. Some interviewees were chosen due to their positions and/or participation within the project, others from introductions or by suggestions of prior interviewees, and some were met during field study.

Interviews were made by appointment, or spontaneously as the opportunities presented themselves. They followed a semi-structured format, open ended with discussion points that gave the interviewer the ability to adapt to the ongoing conversation. Interviews were recorded when possible, though in some cases a recording device was not used in order to keep conversations natural and informal. In these cases, notes were made at the earliest opportunity rather than during the conversation so as to not interrupt or create self-consciousness on behalf of the interviewee. The majority of interviews were conducted in English, with some being held in Mandarin Chinese or a combination of the two languages.

In total twelve people were approached over a period of approximately five weeks. Of the twelve people contacted, half were female and half were male. Three interviewees were Han Chinese, eight were Atayal, and one was of mixed descent. These included interviews with the head investigator of the Lokah Initiative Ching-Ping Tang, researchers Yueh-Po Huang and You-Lin Tsai, two students and members of the Wulai

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Atayal community who worked as support staff. In addition, three conversations took place with female community members who participate in local craft businesses, one of whom is an indigenous member of the weaving association. Two of these subjects are Atayal and one is a Han Chinese whose family has lived in Wulai for two generations. A further interview was held with a local Atayal resident who acted as a volunteer and community organizer. Other conversations included a teacher from the National Taipei University of Education and an Indigenous community activist who now resides outside of Wulai.

Interviews conducted in person lasted approximately one hour. Two were held at Academia Sinica, on National Chengchi University campus and a nearby coffee shop. Two interviews were held at the home of a Wulai resident with other discussion taking place at an Indigenous cultural festival and at the site of the “Old House”. Two interviews took place online using Skype or Facebook messenger services, lasting between forty-five minutes to one hour, with brief follow-up conducted through Facebook messaging. Several conversations occurred at locations in Wulai shops. One conversation took place at Pinglin district.

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Chapter 4 - Results

4.1 Background

In light of the challenges faced by the Wulai Atayal and with a goal of rebalancing economic and social agendas, an action research team consisting of faculty, researchers, staff, and students was put together at National Chengchi University in Taiwan. Originally inspired by successful cases of alternative development strategies, the group seeks to undertake research that aims to generate scholarly knowledge and improve social action at the same time, something that could be ideally suited to matching the needs of the disempowered population with expert knowledge from academia. It is in this vein that the Lokah Project was begun.

The title of the Initiative, “Lokah”, was chosen for its welcoming meaning. Somewhat similar to the Hawaiian term “Aloha”, the greeting contains a basic meaning of welcoming, compassion, and kindness, as well as a call for internal strength.[8] The group’s goal was to perform action research to help the local people through an ambitious “craft renaissance” program. Designed from the start as a way to combine ethno-tourism, environmental awareness, social justice, education, and strengthening of traditional values and institutions, the program aims to promote traditional Atayal hand weaving businesses. Woven products are a sought-after tourism product, and the weavers already had an organizational base in the form of a weaving association.

However, the research team ran into two sets of difficulties in bringing local people onboard. First, the area had long been exposed to well-meaning but ultimately ineffective development projects that in the end led locals to place little value on further cooperation, as financial support for projects was often withdrawn without notice or transparency, and without concrete results being achieved. Second, residents often rushed to compete for

[8] Considering the linguistic and genetic connections between Taiwanese Indigenous peoples this term could also be seen as a call to solidarity among a wide group of South East Asian indigenous peoples. The wider regional connections between these and other indigenous peoples has been discussed by Tony Coolidge (Hose, 2010).

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and capture as many funds as possible in the short time they were expected to be available. Neither choice is irrational; local actors are more concerned with making a living than being targets of academic research project, yet prior failures to create fair and ongoing reciprocal interactions led to a lack participation in further projects.

In order to prevent problems with follow-through due to lack of funding, the researchers approached Wulai only after having secured funds. However, aligning interests in the "craft renaissance" was severely hampered by the existing lack of trust and reciprocity between the locals and the outside researchers. When approached by the researcher with funds in hand, a local leader gave a prompt and blunt rejection that not only stopped the plan in its tracks, but also damaged the researchers' trust and morale. Faced with these problems, a reevaluation and recalculation was necessary. Two events then occurred that helped change the community's impression of the researchers.

In what could be considered a fortuitous turn of events for the team, an urban rezoning plan was being proposed at about the same time as they were attempting to cultivate local cooperation. Land zoning regulations were made to restrict property development in protected areas in order to protect the nearby Feitsui reservoir and watershed that supplies the Taipei area's eight million inhabitants with fresh water. This issue hit a nerve in the area, for several reasons. First, the indigenous Atayal were being prevented from developing traditional lands that had been held for generations. These regulations were strictly enforced, to the extent of an arrest being made over an extension to a bathroom facility on a local man's farm. These strict limitations and enforcement tapped into a deep resentment stemming from a long colonial history. The Atayal also felt their cultural traditions and knowledge were being ignored, as these regulations prevented them from developing organic and eco-friendly farming using traditional knowledge that had maintained ecological sustainability for generations.[9] Finally, the plan ignored local indigenous concerns about participation and did not allow access to the decision-making process.

[9] This ecological knowledge has been recently given attention by indigenous scholars such as Da-wei Kuan (2003) and Yih-ren Lin (2002).

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One story illustrating this situation was brought up by a team member who is also from the community. In interview 4, Yueh-po Huang related the experience of a local man whose son had recently been married and wished to build a toilet to accommodate the needs of his growing family. However, because according to New Taipei City zoning regulations his land was located within a protected zone, when the authorities discovered his renovations he was arrested and brought to the local police station. Securing the man's release was possible through the intervention of a local councilor. The regulations became a focal point of local attention according to Huang, who said, "That regulation is a kind of magnet for the local people who are trying to set up their business, including refurbishing their house."

The academic team identified this situation as a strategic point of entry and moved to help locals navigate the high-profile media and political landscape as well as provide expert scientific data to bolster their claims during protests. The assistance provided to the community by the research team in environmental, economic, and political expertise was valued by locals, and was reported by Dr. Huang as the most important factor in increasing community trust in the researchers, as well as an increased the willingness to cooperate with researchers in other areas.

Another important event that helped shape the relationship between researchers and the community was the arrival of typhoon Soudelor in August 2015. The third most powerful tropical storm of that year worldwide caused heavy damage, with mudslides cutting the road to Wulai and preventing some residents from returning home for weeks. According to principal investigator of the Lokah Initiative, Dr. Ching-Ping Tang, researchers and university volunteers made daily trips to provide support and assistance to the evacuated residents. This post disaster assistance during this difficult time was greatly appreciated and was reported to be a source of trust building that would facilitate future activities.

Throughout the project, the team also engaged in several other lower profile yet highly

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salient mini-projects such as after-school child care, seniors' services and post-typhoon relief. Another event that while less politically high profile was nonetheless related to the team's community presence was related to their own need for infrastructure. One of the challenges faced by the team in gaining a foothold in the community was finding a base of operations. Suitable infrastructure was not immediately found, and this limited the team's visibility. Several months after the project's beginning, an unused building was found in the vicinity of the public school. The team was able to secure use of the property through local connections for use as a meeting area and center for community outreach. A group of volunteers from the city was brought in to maintain and renovate the property. The finishing touch was the painting of a mural done by a local artist making the building, by then referred to as the "old house", a visible symbol of the team's presence.

The "old house" was then used for several purposes. It was used as a kind of base of operations for formal monthly team meetings, and other irregularly scheduled meetings. It was also used for informal get-togethers, and for community outreach activities such as senior care, and cultural programs such as the sharing of identity based stories about growing up in the community, a program to create questions to present to local elders, and building links between schools and the tribe.

The team's sustained efforts after identifying and assisting with highly salient issues and creating a visible presences allowed them to be seen not as short term transient actors, but instead as part of a concerned in-group. The resulting increase in trust, increased the team's capacity to approach the community with their "craft renaissance" program. The team first helped organize workshops for expert weavers to exchange their knowledge, then organized domestic exhibitions to increase the exposure of the weaving products, then extended internationally to attend exhibitions Japan and the United States. One financially profitable result was that the weaver's association was able to work collectively to fulfill corporate souvenir contracts.

The formally funded Lokah project ended in 2016; however, many of the secondary projects under the Lokah umbrella have continued, as have many of the relationships

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between the scholars and the community. Both through ongoing connection between the University and the community and through ongoing informal relationships, the Lokah project continues to this day. There are also hopes for projects to be continued in the future, and for new projects to be started.

4.2 Indicators of Social Capital: Trust and Reciprocity

The proxy variables chosen as criteria provided some interesting insights into the projects. Trust, and reciprocity were linked, and several interviewees indicated that perceptions of fairness were important as well. There were variations on what indicators were most clear in different situations. In general, interviews indicated that the proxy variables for social capital were higher at the end of the program. This indicates that the program did indeed increase social capital. The project overall was seen as increasing trust, fairness, and reciprocity, with consistent ratings of improvement across interviewees. There was good agreement between variables, with no interviewee reporting highly disparate levels of any variable. There were, however, differences reported in the strength of the variables depending on the following: time period, individual factors, level of connections to the project, and project salience.

In general, levels of trust increased with the length of the project. There appears to be a relationship between the length of time the project was going on with levels of reciprocity as well. In particular, interviewees reported that trust in particular rose as the project's timeframe went longer than previous programs if a genuine commitment on behalf of the researchers was felt. This data point does not confirm the actual intentions of either Lokah or previous researchers; although it does not seem that there was any expectation of purely altruistic behavior, the importance of the perception of commitment was clear. Entering the second year of the program, the level of community participation increased. A great deal of conversations and negotiations, often instigated by the researchers, led to an increase in reciprocal behaviors in terms of both project participation and

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communication on the part of community members that had the effect of making project action more efficient, indicative of an increase in bridging social capital.

This indicates that trust and reciprocal interactions are emerging over time, but the relationship is not strictly linear. There is always a background risk that if the project if a project stalls, increases to perceptions of trust and reciprocity might stall as well. Some interviews indicated that this may be the case, and there is a possibility that trust and reciprocity could revert to lower levels if connections and communication are not maintained. However, the waxing and waning of trust over time is part of an ongoing relationship building pattern that unfolds over time and can even include a healthy mistrust, especially at earlier stages of a relationship, as a way to build trust in the long run (Jagosh et al., 2015). A perception of commitment in the long-term was important in building trust that reflects bridging social capital.

Trust and fairness were differently interpreted at the local level depending on two factors. Both the cognitive distance from the project and on level of participation seemed to affect reported feelings of trust and fairness. With higher levels of participation came higher levels of trust, likely due to becoming more familiar with the intentions and motivations of the researchers. This was especially evident for those invited to participate, though somewhat less evident for those who were not included in the participatory process. For community members more peripheral to the organization groups, they could still experience higher trust through conversations with the participants and through visible follow-up actions. There could also be a portion of social capital that is transferred through association as community members less closely involved in the project's activities see other friends and respected community members taking part.

Reports of fairness gave a somewhat more nuanced picture. While again in general perceived fairness rose over time, this seemed to be more closely related to 1) the amount of personal participation in project planning and decision making, and 2) observations of

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other community members being involved in project planning and decision making. The more participatory the program was perceived through reciprocal interactions, the higher the level of fairness was reported.

Trust and fairness were also rated higher by those with closer ties and levels of activity within the Initiative's projects. Especially for interviewees that had roles as community and university members, perceptions of trust and fairness were good. This could be related to the importance of the project acting at the same time in two different important life areas, and therefore being highly salient to the individual. The importance of project salience was also seen in project actions that directly and strongly affected people. Three examples in particular stood out.

4.3 Subprojects

Prior to the commencement of the Old House restoration, the low level of community participation was a challenge for the team. Through the mobilization of university resources, namely time and volunteer action the creation of a local base of operations was a highly visible signal that helped gain increased levels of trust from community members, and the location was used both for official project meetings and activities as well as locally initiated social and educational events. At this point, for those involved with the Old House project and the activities held there, there was a higher level of trust and cooperation. However, with the withdrawal of project funding there was less opportunity to make use of the location as an administrative center, as well as other responsibilities of local community organizers resulted in less use of the facilities. Upkeep of the old house then began to lag, and the area adjacent to the entranceway was used as a parking spot. Although the informal contract to continue use of the property still exists and there is still a willingness to use the property for community engagement, there seems to be a risk that the visible signal of inter-community cooperation could come to represent cooperation lagging.

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Two types of subprojects that took place under the Lokah umbrella were an elderly care program and cultural programs. Both of these programs involved contact between older and younger generations of community members. Youth spent time interacting with elder relatives, taking part in similar activities and learning traditional stories and skills. While trust was not directly identified as a result of these programs, however, it seems to have increased a general positive sense of the researchers' intentions. Perhaps more important was the increased level of family connectedness, in other words, while bridging social capital was weakly affected, increases in bonding social capital appear to have occurred.

Reports of trust by those connected through the Atayal Weaving Association were in general positive. According to informants, the weavers enjoyed strong connections with the university, as well as pre-existing common interest and organization. The Lokah initiative was The association has office infrastructure in present use. This project is still underway as part of university activity in the community, and the informal ties remain strong with the Lokah Initiative. While reported trust and fairness were in general strong, this was not uniform across all interviewees. There was some indication of lower trust when concerns came up about differences in authenticity of different weaving styles. The fairness of a top-down vs bottom-up approach was questioned by two interviewees, with one asking: "If you want to promote, ok there are 20 weavers, and 5 are the most famous, you work with those 5. What about the other 15? But those 5 don't really need much help, they are already great."

However, it was also noted that bringing weavers to international venues for craft display increased confidence and capacity to the participants, as well as helping to link organizers with participants as to facilitate future cooperation, and it was also understood that due to limited resources not all weaving association members would be able to participate in these highly expected international events. There is a hope that more members can be included in future international activities, and there are presently plans for more trips. Interviews indicate that both bonding and bridging social capital have increased through the weaving association.

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A final element that was related to levels of trust was found at the level of the individual. As has been discussed at length in psychology literature, individuals have their own individual levels of trusting, as captured by agreeableness as one of the “big five” personality traits. Briefly, individuals higher in agreeableness may be naturally more trusting, and someone who is seen as being more agreeable is usually seen as being more trustworthy. Although individual agreeableness was not specifically assessed, the different reactions of interviewees to the interviewer as well as in discussions about members of the opposite group suggest that this dynamic is at play, especially considering the pre-existing historical conditions.

4.4 Social Capital

Using trust and reciprocity as proxy variables for social capital, analysis of interviews shows that social capital was increased through the actions of the Lokah Initiative. Bridging relational social capital connecting researchers to the community and vice-versa has been developed, and the overlapping nature of social capital development appears to have had carry-over into bonding social capital within the community. The process is not without its own internal and external challenges, and social capital gains are not uniform across all stakeholders, but the gains that have been made can be the foundation of future interactions (fig 2).

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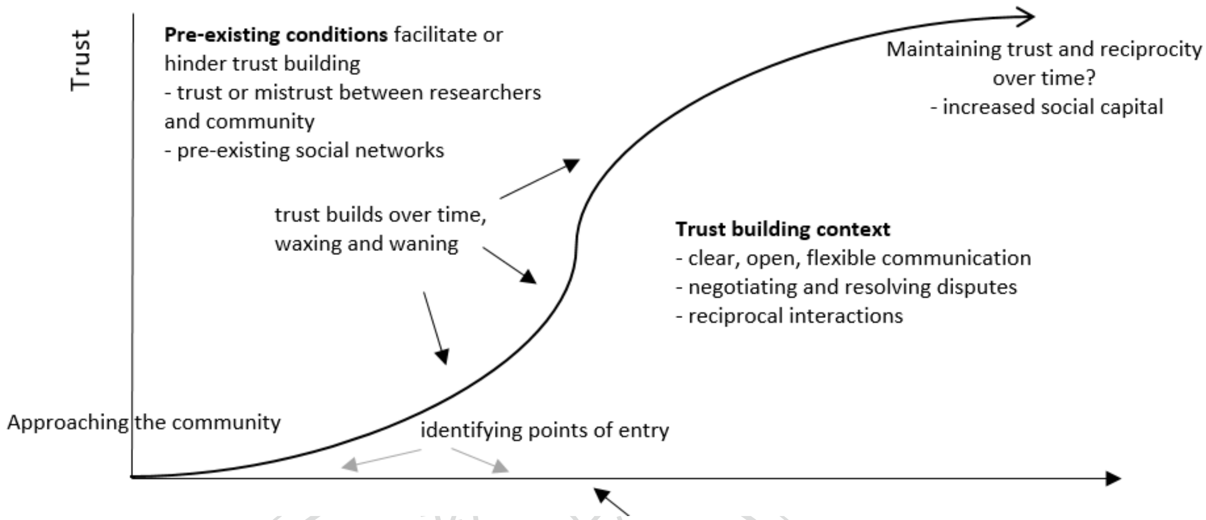

Figure 2. The pathway to building social capital (adapted in part form Jagosh 2010)

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Chapter 5 - Discussion

The difficulties faced as scholars implemented the Lokah Initiative indicate the need to develop a more nuanced understanding of the underlying methods of developing cooperation and cohesion between researchers and the community. Approaching this issue through a principal-agent theoretical perspective through the lens of social capital should provide some insights into how such projects can be successfully implemented. First, social capital indicators will be discussed, followed by an analysis from the perspective of agency theory.

5.1 Social Capital Indicators

The indicators of social capital seemed more important to some interviewees than others. Depending on the interviewee, trust, fairness, or reciprocity emerged as more dominant, thought there was no indication that any variable was not important. As these three proxies do have some conceptual overlap, this result is not surprising. However, it could be useful to consider these terms in relation to other criteria such as age, education, employment, or identity, especially if a goal is to gaining future cooperation with a specific segment of the community.

5.2 Perceived Motivations

The actions of the research team as agent for the community principal did not get off to a smooth start. The initial and abrupt rejection clearly indicates a lack of bridging social capital at the early stages of the program. The team’s inclusion of members who had experience operating within both the academic and local community was an important way for the project to develop momentum. By leveraging the existing bonding social capital of team members with roots in the community, the team was able to open more sympathetic communication channels. After these channels became accessible, clear and flexible communication needed to be sustained over a period of some months before the team was able to build enough trust to undertake secondary projects.

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A strictly rational interpretation of agency theory would assume that agents operating out of self-interest need to be monitored and controlled in order to diminish agency costs. Yet it is clear that in the Lokah project the team members did not operate out of pure self-interest. All team members had various, non-selfish motivations for participating that went beyond producing publishable academic material. A will to create community empowerment and identity, a deep sense of the importance of environmental protection, a respect and support for cultural conservation, and a wish to create equitable economic development were all motivations that operated with various strengths. Creating actionable academic material is certainly a benefit for an academic, and pursuing an agenda such as investing in social projects could be seen as a way to increase a researcher's status. It is clear however, that motivations were not strictly "rational", in that more altruistic intentions existed. Thus the choice to use a social-capital as a bounding framework for the study of principal-agent relationships is supported.

Motivations are usually considered an internal factor of the individual, however, the element of perceived motivations remains an important one. Countering the opinions based on perceived motivations (whether or not the opinion is accurate) that researchers are not genuinely concerned with community wellbeing was, and continues to be, a challenge to overcome. In the words of one interviewee concerning the long history of Wulai as a research target, "The researchers can come in, stay for a few days, get information, publish, and then get promoted. We stay with the same problems".

This sentiment was echoed by two other interviewees who said that it is important for researchers to consider the identities of the people, as indigenous people have felt objectified through research projects. From Dr. Tsai, "A problem with indigenous scholarship in Taiwan is that we can't always take a tribe as a subject.", and from a Lokah assistant, "It's not about personal gain or your publication, it's more about community sustainability and the community interest."

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The perceived motivations of researchers are based in part on a history where rural areas in Taiwan received less attention from "elitist" environmental activists who engaged in "vicious factionalism" (Grano, 2015) that implied higher importance on conservation in relatively remote areas than on the indigenous peoples of Wulai. This this situation began to change after around 2008. This legacy can still be seen however in the perception (though perhaps not actual behaviors) of elitism in outsiders today. No specific behaviors on the part of and researchers were reported as elitist; rather, the good intentions of the research team were almost unanimously praised. However, legacy of prior events was reflected in the lower levels of reported trust from some local interviewees when describing the general impressions held by community members towards outsiders in general and towards outside researchers in particular.

This places project organizers in a challenging position that requires skillful negotiation and receptive two-way communication. Countering experiences of the recent past bad experiences required taking steps to ensure the creation of social capital through of trust, fairness, and reciprocal behaviors. If a principal senses a lack of these elements of social capital, there is a risk of projects that rely on the interactions of indigenous and non-indigenous actors dissolving quickly.

Interestingly, some conversations with a local Han craft micro-business operator indicated that there may be some carry-over of this attitude towards Atayal who have moved away from or spend a good deal of time away from the community[10]. Though trust in those community members living outside the community proper is still higher than trust in non-aboriginal outsiders. It is possible that with the increased physical and social distance between a community member and the community itself the lower level of

[10] Interviewee 7 is a second generation Han resident of Wulai who has participated for many years in craft and cultural activities with the Atayal. She reiterated over several conversations that locals who spend time outside of Wulai are not necessarily "in the loop" with local sentiment.

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trust decreases due to the lower level of reciprocal interactions, as would be predicted by agency theories that incorporate a social dimension.

5.3 Second-Best Goals

As the Lokah researchers found themselves confronted with initial rejection, it quickly became clear that it would be necessary to take a different approach. In this case, “second best goals” rather than direct moves to increase institutional strength were negotiated that could be pursued as a first step towards the long term institutional change goals. When these goals transformed into visible action, social capital was developed that could be leveraged to gain cooperation of the community in other tasks. This can be approached as a tactic for aligning interests in a principal-agent relationship.

The scholars involved in the Lokah Initiative face challenging principal-agent issues that were addressed through secondary projects. Acting as agents in the transmission of expertise and knowledge of to the community, they must also gain cooperation from community members to take part in actions and projects. Gaining ongoing cooperation, however, was not always easy. The child-care program based in an unused building is one example of this kind of difficulty. While the day care program was identified as a helpful way to provide a community service, this service stalled after a period of time and the facilities fell into disuse.

Some interviewees could not identify who the care facility property belonged to, suggesting that lack of clear ownership may have played a part in the facility falling out of regular use. One possible interpretation is that this is because of a lack of clear sense of ownership of the property or for related maintenance responsibilities. However, time and manpower resources are limited on the part of the owners and volunteers due to other more pressing day to day responsibilities, and on the part of the team due to other work commitments and project funding. Presently, two of the property owners are working jobs (one academic and one professional) that are outside of convenient commuting

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distance, though both indicated a willingness to continue using the property for community based projects in the future. While it is likely that time and money constraints do indeed play a part, there are two other possible interpretations that arise from two separate branches of literature. While much agency literature focuses on the need to monitor agents to protect against “shirking”, others indicate that shirking can also occur on the part of the principal (Wiseman et al., 2012). This may be exacerbated in situations with multiple principals and lightly enforced informal contracts. Monitoring on the part of agents in this case may also be problematic if hierarchical relations or ingroup-outgroup biases are especially salient.

A second interpretation of this situation can be found in principal-principal issues regarding weak or unclear property rights. This mirrors a similar situation in many remote indigenous areas in Canada where infrastructure (housing and schools often built at some expense by the national government) tends to deteriorate more quickly than expected. Canadian parliamentary hearings in 2015 suggest this results from unclear sense of ownership obligations (Vining 2016). It may be the case that unclear ownership (of the property or of the daycare program) could be addressed in the future, perhaps though a continuation of formal contract or a mobilization of human resources on a volunteer basis. Although the ownership of the property is clear by title, the question of exactly who should be responsible for property maintenance could be addressed through renewed formal contract or other informal means. A visible presence of continued “outsider” action could go a long way to maintain the sense of long-term researcher involvement in the community, though this depends on both funding and manpower.

5.4 Layers of Agency

While at their most basic level, principal-agent relationships consist of a single agent representing the interests of one principal, in the building of a development initiative through access to state funds and university support in a mixed indigenous/non-indigenous community, this was far from the case. Multiple principals were served by

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multiple agents at multiple levels, and each relationship at each level can experience agency difficulties. Managing these relationships and reducing agency costs in this complex web was challenging, which is something that can be seen in the difficulty of project implementation.

The head researcher and the research team in the Lokah initiative served concomitantly as an agent for two main principals. First, the research team acted as an agent serving the indigenous community of Wulai, providing expert knowledge in science, economics, organization, and media relations. Secondly, the research team also acted as an agent on behalf of the government of Taiwan. In a position as gatekeeper with access to funding the team operates as the agent charged with fulfilling governmental policy. According to agency theory, problems of informational asymmetries goal conflicts can be expected to exist within both of these agency relationships. In addition, the agent working with two principals also finds him or herself with the further and complicating possibility that the two principals, in this case the government funders and the community leaders, may have divergent or incompatible goals.

Traditionally, principal and agents are seen as having divergent interests. The divergence may in reality be small, but the *perceived* divergence of interests between principals and agents creates an uncertain environment for a development program. Aligning goals was a difficult task, especially at the beginning of the project. This seemed to stem from information asymmetry relating to perceived motivations. As the team took first steps to demonstrate their intentions through communication, time spent in the community, and action, their good motivations began to become apparent, and community members reciprocated with their own participation. The community members' participation benefitted the team by giving access to information and especially through the involvement of respected elders, access to bonding social capital of the community. The actions that were identified in interviews as helpful were respectful two-way communication, reciprocal sharing of information, and the inclusion of respected elders. This was a consistently reiterated by interviewees: Ching-ping Tang indicated that it took

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“lots of talk, lots of time, and humility,” backed by the confidence to follow through. Yueh-po Huang emphasized including community leaders in a consultative and collaborative role: “...we also invite some local people to be a consultant to this project, senior local people, headmen, a lot of people who have senior position. A lot agreed to be informal members of our research team.”

The community is often seen as a homogenous collective principal; however, in practice communities are made up of individuals who have their own particular needs, wants, and attitudes, and ideas. Often they can work together for their common interests, and when their own interests are aligned, viewing aggregate levels of social capital in terms of a collective principal at a meso or macro level is suitable. Yet in reality, even in small communities individuals play multiple roles and are involved with many overlapping subgroups; for example those based on gender, interests, jobs, family and kin, age, and so on. These various group memberships, while indicative of bonding social capital within groups, can still lead to conflict when members attempt to act collectively with community outsiders. There may be difficulties that arise in dealing with agents if actors within a collective principal do not agree on how to align their own internal interests, for example with regard to policy changes or institutional reforms (Nielson & Tierney, 2003) figure 3. Intra-group variations in power, status, expertise, or other factor then create their own agency relationships and costs.

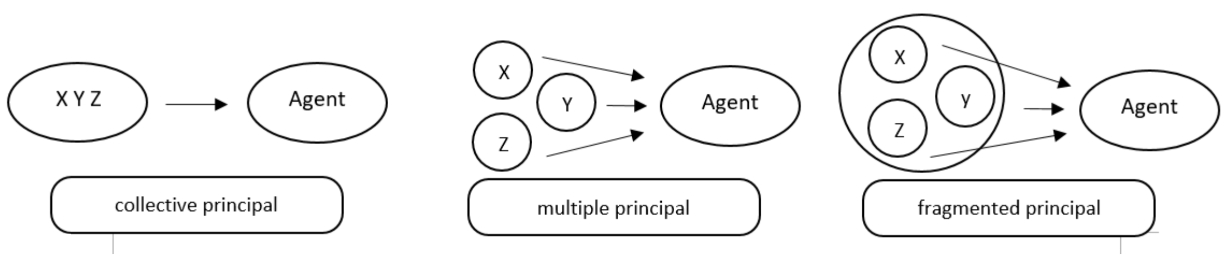

Figure 3. Common Agency Types (adapted in part from Neilson and Tierney, 2003)

One element that leads to agency difficulties is the presence of multiple principals. For the action researcher, he or she falls in the position as an agent for the local community

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on one hand, and of the greater society (represented by government) on the other. The agent must provide expert information to both sides, though this information must be presented in much different ways. The ability to navigate both the community and governance environments requires different skill sets and communication styles that are not necessarily complimentary. This situation is made even more difficult when the interests of these two different principals are not in alignment.

Such was the situation faced by the researchers in the land regulation situation. Representing the interests of the community meant supporting protests, but doing this too strongly or too publicly could lead to alienation of government, which could in turn cause difficulties in accessing funding. The team accompanied community members and provided political, geographical, and media relations information that helped the community come to a satisfactory solution with the government. This challenge in acting in the best interests of the community while still acting as mangers for national government funding. This assistance was appreciated by the community. According to Yueh-po huang,

"So we had a debate at the monthly meeting. Are we taking sides to show our position on this matter against the regulation or support this regulation? So the final decision, we just provide opinion from all the teachers and the, provide as much as possible for the local Atayals. We decided not to just take a laissez-faire approach on this matter, kind of work with them but not overtly. We had to keep some distance. The program was officially funded. If you take a radical position or too overt to support local Atayals, you can be drawn into a catch 22 situation".

Another aspect of agency theory that is clear from the property development regulations situation is multiple interests of the community. Often principals are treated as a single entity with shared vision, and sometimes indigenous communities are romantically viewed this way. Yet in reality this is rarely the case, as indigenous communities have within them divergent political, economic, and social interests. This could be interpreted

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as either a collective principal in the process of reaching consensus, as multiple principals within the community vying for the agents' services, or as a fragmented principal with dispersed stakeholders sharing broadly similar goals. A closer look at motivations for protesting land regulations provides some insight.

Community members were not all in agreement about the proposed changes to zoning legislation. While most wanted a relaxing of regulations to allow small developments on ancestral lands, others were pushing for complete abolition of existing restrictions. The divergence of interests in the context of previous property sales led to the question of background actors.

> "Some local Atayal are saying that the regulation on land use is too complex. we should Abolish this regulation so we can really develop land in our traditional way. but in reality you know maybe someone behind the local Atayal [is] manipulating the scene and they maybe that person is entrepreneurial urban [resident]." Yueh-po Huang.

The motivations of these hidden principals required careful consideration by the team, as moral hazard on the part of principals they served could lead to substantial agency costs[11].

This situation is less commonly addressed in agency theory literature, but interviewees did bring up the skill which some community members had developed over a long period of dealing with outside agents for bringing financial resources to the community although there can be tradeoffs in terms of autonomy. According to a program staff member, "It's easy to get resources from outside through the government, the government projects, and

[11] For an interesting discussion of moral hazard on the part of the principal, see Dohler's "Discovering the Dark Side of Power: The Principal's Moral Hazard in Political-Bureaucratic Relationships"

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also the research projects, but more resources means less ability to decide for ourselves because of the funding structure."

In general, however, it may be more accurate to describe the situation as one of fragmented principals, where the interests of principals are broadly similar rather than a multiple principal situation where principals have contradicting interests that place them in conflict. For example, there was no indication that the interests of any two community groups were in direct conflicting, yet at the same time bringing people from the various interest and age groups to take part in collective action did not occur immediately. While it is not yet clear if the Lokah Initiative's work seeking to increase perception of common interest and action among the community has led to continuing and increased commonality of interest between community members, the opportunities provided by the Initiative, for example through the "Old House", did provide a space for bringing together principals for information sharing. Beyond this kind of interaction being indicative of increasing bonding social capital within the community, it could also be an avenue that helps increase interest alignment between the principals, while the instigation of this subproject through cooperation shows the importance of social capital exchange between respected community members and action researchers.

In addition to fragmented principals, approaching the Lokah Initiative's work by incorporating the concept of informal principals may provide some insight. Whereas formal principals have in place principal-agent relationships based on formal contracts or agreements, accountability to informal principals is based on informal, implicit, or hypothetical delegation of authority. Relative power differences between agents and informal principals, be they individuals or groups who do not have a formal contract with the agent in place, can affect the relationships and accountability between principals and agents, bring with them issues of how to clarify accountability(Steets, 2010). The task of clarifying expectations and accountability can be difficult when the principal is a community rather than an individual, and where group heterogeneity and changeable or unstated expectations can lead to communication difficulties.

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A further dimension to this situation is the researchers acting as agents with government funding agencies as principals. While academia enjoys a good deal of freedom and autonomy, when funds are needed to support research or developmental initiatives, the balance of power can shift. The principal, in this case government funding agencies, may seek to gain higher levels of agent performance through monitoring and providing or withdrawing incentives, the decision on whether or not to support a program may be based on criteria that may not give the most accurate impression of the project's progress as determined by either the researchers or the community, as was brought up by Ching-ping Tang. These agencies, or actors within agencies may also attempt to control agent behavior through access to financial support that can be suddenly withdrawn with little prior notice or reason. The position of the research team relative to their positions as academics seeking funding was acknowledged by Lokah volunteer Yuakan: "Things in the tribe might move slowly, but because it's an initiative, they have to do something within six months. They need to show achievement. They have their own pressures."[12] However, a sudden or unexpected withdrawal of resources can present a serious challenge to building strong ongoing academia-community relationships.

At a different level of principal-agent relationship, the project's volunteers can also be seen as agents acting on behalf of multiple principals, and thus faced their own problems with agency costs. They were motivated and worked enthusiastically in support of the project and the local community.[13] They wanted to do a good job, though it is possible they had some interests that did not fully align with the researchers. They didn't always perceive high levels of fairness in the project, though this is possibly due to a lack of understanding certain project challenges. Although it may be the case that there was some lack of interest alignment or background information asymmetries, the volunteers seemed to gain an awareness of project goals. Some of this knowledge and activation led to

[12] Interview 9.

[13] They likely had their own self-interests as well, though bounded self-interest of volunteers is beyond the scope of this work.

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increased activity outside of the project's research area that included cultural and environmentally friendly entrepreneurial activities, a network that could be utilized in the future. With at least some volunteers, experience in the project led to improvements in human capital, as well as planting a seed of cross-regional social capital growth.

As was discussed earlier, there were some indications that different researchers engendered different levels of trust. Although it could be expected that if a collective agent presented a disunited front a lack of trust could occur, interviews gave no indication this was the case. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that different behaviors of researchers engendered different levels of trust. Thus trust levels differing between agents are more likely to be the result of personal traits within the observer, the actor, or both. As mentioned earlier, trust (as an indicator of social capital) has been related to the agreeableness factor in the Big Five personality model. While agreeableness has been related to prosocial behaviors that help facilitate group interactions, people with high agreeableness may find competitive fields more challenging (Judge & Zapata, 2015). While increasing the level of agreeableness in principal or an agent is likely an inefficient, or even impossible endeavor, training the observable behaviors that imply agreeableness could be used to increase impressions of trust.

There is some literature on leadership and action research that suggests trust can be engendered in such a way. It is likely worth considering that training trust engendering behaviors is something that could be done to help increase social capital growth in future projects. This could be incorporated in a kind of leadership training for team members. Indeed, this idea of skills training could also be applied within the community as part of future programs.

As stated by Cargo and Mercer,

> The integrity of partnerships rests on the presence of mutual respect and trust, both of which are fostered in decision-making

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> environments that support diversity and allow partners to express and accommodate their different points of view through ongoing, open, and honest dialogue. Effective leadership, a strong predictor of partner- ship synergy, facilitates this type of communication. (Cargo & Mercer, 2008)

On the part of the researchers, there also exists different levels of trust in community members. Although this remains to be studied in depth, this could be due to personality factors or due to weaknesses in developing clear and flexible lines of communication, or due to the influence of outside actors.

5.5 Power, Hierarchy, and Communication

The difficulty in communicating information within contexts of power and hierarchy seems to be an issue at play in Wulai. For example, an interviewee whose relative was involved in the weaving group brought up internal differences with regard to the "correctness" of cultural heritage activities in relation to a weaving seminar held by the Lokah team.

> "She went to this course that was organized by Lokah or something. And then basically, the whole lecture was telling her that her way of weaving was wrong. And she was misunderstood because according to research it's supposed to be XYZ, but she was doing it the wrong way... Maybe they meant good, to let people understand the local history, and they invited people, historians, but it's just, it's just not a good way."

This interviewee related that the feeling of respect for crafts tradition was important in developing the willingness to reciprocate with participation.

It was mentioned by a volunteer at the Old House how some weaving activities and artistic methods were supported as anthropologically accurate by outside experts, and

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therefore received more support. It was also suggested that some would have preferred a more inclusive and nuanced interpretation of the cultural value of modern craft techniques. While it was not stated outright by interviewees, one must consider the possibility of intra-group status issues creating difficulty in aligning intra-group interests. In extreme cases this could even lead to individuals facing a dilemma of whether or not to continue participation in the activity. While directness can be a means of clearly transferring information, the subtleties of communication can be especially important in the context of maintaining a sense of respect and developing social capital.

There can be a shift in power between agents and principals when technical knowledge creates information asymmetries. This could be further compounded by hierarchical relationships in societies that show a high respect for authority, such as towards teachers and academics. Perhaps the difficulties at early stages of the project with researchers failing to effectively cultivate relationships could be related to their (or their predecessors') positions of authority.[14] As highly respected agents with a good degree of autonomy empowered to act on behalf of policy-making principals, i.e. the government of the greater society, if the principal and agent are from a different society located at the opposite ends of the power hierarchy spectrum, particularly if one values collective sharing and relatively equal internal power relationships[15], it is possible that a cross-cultural barrier could exist.

> "It's very Chinese. [pause] I think people maybe in North America as well, where were you rub people the wrong way, you take away people's agency, but any Chinese culture it's not understood that way. Yeah, you're doing good for this person. And these people

[14] The issue of power and hierarchy was brought up when discussing trust with You-lin Tsai. "[Researchers] take the money, bring it to the community, and treat it like 'This is my money, you have to listen to me.'"

[15] Atayal traditionally place importance on relative equality in power relationships, although it could be argued that this applies less to the Atayal of Wulai who have been in close contact with Han Chinese for decades.

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are maybe culturally backward, but they, you know, say that, I want you to be good in the future." Interviewee 2.

An agent invested with authority from the state does, however, also imply that the status of community leaders is respected, especially when the agent approaches the community leaders, which can be an important factor in gaining the support of local leaders. By managing the power differentials and judicious application of authority through mutually respectful and transparent communication, as well as through behaviors that demonstrate reciprocity, these problems should be able to be mitigated.

Difficulties aside, the impact and importance of humility and respectful communication was also indicated by interviewees as a driver increasing the Lokah team's acceptance by the community. Team members indicated that this required an ongoing level of activity within the community on the part of researchers who spent a good deal of time and effort on personal communications with community leaders. In addition, a more formal communication process that culminated in a quasi-official ceremonial entrance protocol during entry was also seen as important to confirming the team's well-meaning intentions. It was also noted that when funding was withdrawn, another quasi-official event was held. This helped reduce the impression of transience created when earlier researchers suddenly withdrew and disappeared from the community. The importance of communicating intentions through formal program entry and exit could be related another element that was indicated by Ching-ping Tang, namely that words should be backed by a certain level of authority that create a sense of mutual respect for social position that can help bolster the confidence of local leaders who may not be accustomed to working with outside academics or elites. [16] A focus on interaction between higher organizational levels may have implied a respectful institution level cooperation agreement. However, it is less clear if this kind of formal process between higher levels was effective at persuading non-elite community members.

[16] They may show the effects, as one local who worked as a team assistant said, of "learned helplessness and learned hopelessness" that was instilled during the community's long colonial history.

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One possible explanation could be that both generation and communication gaps are at play. Communication between the higher levels of community and university, and between the younger program participants was more open; however, communication channels between hierarchy levels may not have been as effective. According to the Old House volunteer, “Academics might think that working with the leaders would be faster, but that’s just their way of doing things, if you are looking for a different activation, you can try this way.” Thus, while it was relatively easy for volunteers and staff to engage administrative staff, it was not clear that input was reaching higher organizational levels. A Lokah assistant voiced her own difficulties in communication: “But then there's also this mismatch of like okay, so does [the program] really work and is it really respecting the local processes. But I don’t know how to voice that.”

This difficulty in communication may be for several different reasons; existing structural characteristics and mechanisms of both the community and university may not be as conducive to this kind of inter-level communication, there may be cultural barriers to information sharing between hierarchies of youth and elders, teachers and students, and there also exist limitations on time and other resources that impact communication – good intentions notwithstanding, there is only so much time to talk to people when the responsibilities of administration and management are taken into account (fig 4).

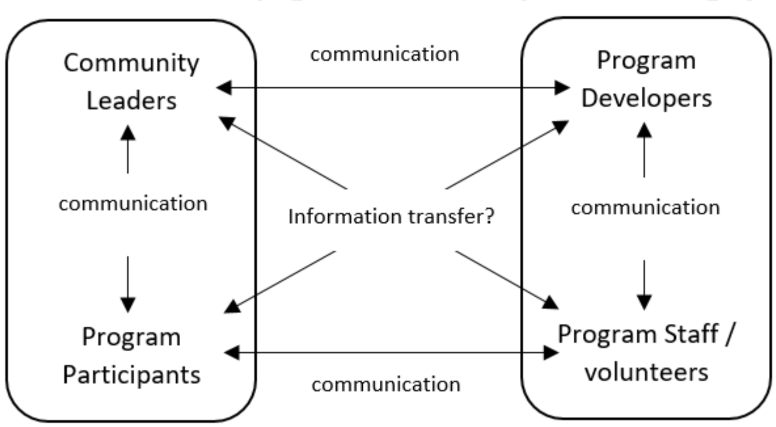

Figure 4. Channels of communication between hierarchical levels.

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This dilemma emphasizes a point often made in action research literature, though less often discussed in detail, of the importance of flexible and inclusive communication strategies. Even though the physical distance between the urban majority and the indigenous community is small, there still seem to exist cultural differences with respect to interpretation of hierarchical relationships that could be taken into account, not only in university action research programs, but that could further provide useful for other principal-agent relationships that exist in a cross-cultural or multicultural milieu both in Taiwan and abroad.[17] (Shih, 2010)

Thus is seems that the Lokah Initiative did make gains in terms of bridging social capital between academia and the community, and bonding social capital within the community increased. Yet challenges still exist in navigating the different levels of agency relationships. A common ground that was found in this study was that sensitive, open, and flexible communication is needed for successful engagement between principals and agents.

[17] For an alternative (and scathing) interpretation of the dilemmas and difficulties of power and hierarchy in the context of university scholarship as well as the "academic colonialism" imposed by international scholars, see Shih (2010): "For non-Indigenous scholars coming from the mainstream society, Indigenous Peoples are better conveniently preserved as 'objects' for the purpose of 'scientific' observations. Within this grandiose and impartial context, Indigenous tribes are considered living museums, while they are presumed to live in historical sojourns … From time to time, Indigenous students, who depend on the support of these supervisors for their degrees and future careers, have to turn deaf ears to confrontations in this research, such as, in the field, determining which community members are qualified to speak as experts between the advisers and Indigenous elders." However, Shih also notes that "Strong community engagement and involvement evolves naturally out of the staff and student networks", implying that despite difficulties of bringing the academic and indigenous communities together, social capital can indeed naturally increase over time when the aforementioned difficulties are addressed.

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Chapter 6 - Conclusion

6.1 Researching Research in Action?

The benefits of inclusive participation in action research programs are commonly discussed in the literature. However, the extra perspective provided by evaluation of an action research that is taken on by an external, non-action oriented third party observer who is not involved in the action or participatory part of the research itself can be useful, though not without its own benefits and drawbacks. It can be difficult to access the social networks that provide information without some level of insider understanding. Yet being too close to the project brings with it questions of bias that are affected by one's own positions, goals, actions, and beliefs that can influence interpretations at overt behavioral and internal psychological levels. In addition, a third party perspective can help to insure that important issues are not avoided due to political or status issues (Blackstock et al., 2007). While biases exist in any researcher, there can be certain advantages to programs being examined by someone outside the project and outside the community who can skirt certain social pressures. The question "Do you feel trust" carries quite a different set of underlying meanings from the question "do you trust me?"

Because the Lokah Initiative was based of philosophical foundations relating to social and solidarity economy, the social nature of social capital, the interpersonal ties, trust and cooperation, and collective action should be considered. Not only do these sustain and give meaning to projects, they also are closely related to program outcomes. "The economy is not a 'separate and isolated' segment of society, but submerged in the everyday social relations, and enmeshed in norms, values, and institutions" (Dash, 2016). Building the social capital that allows economic and political development is a proposition that could have great benefits for all communities, and these may be especially evident in disenfranchised post-colonial communities. Often, these benefits may be more efficiently realized through the application of concerned expert knowledge that comes from intra-community connections. The everyday activities "in the trenches" are what allow these connections to be built, and though the process may be a long one,

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the intangible outcomes are both meaningful and can propel further tangible benefits to appear.

Although this work did not seek to evaluate outcomes of the Lokah Initiative beyond the development of social capital, some observations and comments can be made as to project outcomes. These will be considered based on subproject and a general project overview.

The assistance provided by the team in land rights protests was quite successful in creating a sense of trust in the community. The information they provided was also helpful for the community to bring their grievances to the greater society though media and protests. Although there are ongoing land rights disagreements between indigenous peoples of Taiwan and the state, the debate is becoming more evident to society. The visibility of the debate continues to grow as indigenous peoples are increasingly organized and vocal, and society's receptivity to their concerns grows. There is still a long road to travel towards a land rights agreement that is acceptable to both the community and the government, but the actions of the team were helpful in the greater challenge of bringing indigenous land issues to the public eye.

The "Old House" center was a successful in several ways. First, through visibly creating a base of operations, the team was able to demonstrate commitment to the community that led to higher levels of trust. The care and cultural projects provided using the facilities allowed the transmission of cultural knowledge as well as increasing intergenerational bonding. A connection to traditional culture through access to elder knowledge and community story sharing can be related to increased sense of identity, and the increasing community participation in activities at the old house indicate that identity and network based intangible indicators of success are rising. However, with the use of the facility stalling, there may be a risk of losing some of these gains through the loss of a

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visible symbol of commitment and cooperation as well as through reduced community interactions.

The team's work with the weaving association was quite successful. The weaving group was able to exchange knowledge, link with a cultural tradition, and bridge with the team. The team's assistance in marketing enabled more visibility for the group's products in Taiwan and internationally that culminated the group working collectively to fulfilling corporate souvenir contracts. The weavers' self-confidence grew, their technical skills improved, their products and culture received more public attention, and their ability to work collectively improved.

One of the team's goals was to revive traditional institutions within the modern capitalist setting. Before the work of the team, the traditional self-governing Tribal Assembly that was stipulated in state operated at a low functional level. The team's assistance and community support led a strict reorganization and more formalized procedures. It remains to be seen how this institution will operate in the future.

6.2 Managing Agency Relationships

Interpreting an action research program through agency theory suggests several possible implications. First, by taking into account actor's self-interest and the mistrustful nature of relationships that are assumed by the theory, the importance of clarity in contracts and the formality of obligations can be found, and later adjusted for either before a program is initiated or as part of the action research program's ongoing modifications in order to reduce agency costs. Secondly, while traditionally the transfer or resources that incentivize agents to operate in the best interests of the principal are generally assumed to be financial, the transfer of social capital may also be an important factor. For example, a principal's transference of social capital to an agent through a demonstration of trust can empower the agent within the greater community.

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In their efforts to align goals, agents could benefit from delineating if a principal can be represented as a singular collective entity or as a group of multiple principals. Depending on the interpretation of the principal being multiple or collective, the researchers could focus more on bonding social capital; in the case of multiple principles focusing on structure and networks, or in the case of a collective principal, bridging social capital through developing trust and fairness. However, it may be important to first look to the relational bridging social capital by first approaching the principals separately. Although it takes more effort on the part of the researchers to deal with more people instead of a single leader, bridging between multiple principals and the agent helps to create multiple entry points to the community rather than focusing on a single contact window that may create a block. Communication and sharing information can help create goal alignment between the principals separately, which later could grow into consensus and the move to a solidified collective principal.

The researchers were able to make more inroads into in Wulai after taking a highly visible part in advocating for the community in secondary projects. Creating visibility could be seen as an effective tactic in reducing information imbalances regarding the interests of the agent and principal, and if more of the researchers' work done could be effectively communicated to community members, higher levels of trust could accrue. Indeed, this perception of work done became increasingly positive as the cognitive distance between the individual and the project decreased. Conversely, for community members less directly connected to projects appeared to have lower levels of trust in researchers. This seemed exacerbated by the negative perceptions of earlier non-participative research programs that operated in an opaque manner, and presented as a negative stereotype of all "outside researchers". Perhaps a stronger focus on sharing information about project related activities though a kind of local "public relations" could be helpful by further delineating the new style of research from the old, and by making the work done easily apparent.

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Within the greater society, there remains some resistance to the idea of supporting indigenous peoples out of a sense of fairness. Although some work, such as done in the Lokah Initiative, has been done to build a sense of equitable interaction with indigenous peoples, it is not clear how well this is internalized by urban residents. In some conversations with non-indigenous peoples about similar development projects, the concept of support out of fairness to make up for long-lasting post-colonial issues was met with could be generously described as lukewarm ambivalence[18].

From the perspective of aligning interests, increased interactions with society and indigenous communities (through increased tourism, for example) should increase understanding of the other side's perspective. However, a chicken and egg conundrum arises; without a sense of fairness, how reciprocal can social interactions be? Would contact between the two groups then end up as an objectification based on purchasing a stereotypical "native" experience, as has happened in indigenous communities around the world? Reducing the information gaps of urban residents regarding indigenous communities remains a challenge, but bridging the two communities through market interactions that contain a stronger focus on the inter-cultural educational element could prove useful. This would further increase bridging social capital between the two groups.

Government funding brings with it the risk of opportunistic capture by self-interested agents and principals. These actors may be non-indigenous capitalists or individuals from the local community, and may operate in concert when their interests are aligned. Although some strains of social and solidarity economy assume these actors are looking for strictly capitalist gains rather than for any social benefit, and traditional economics assumes purely selfish interests, it seems more likely that opportunistic behavior is meditated by a wide range of social and individual variables. That is to say, not all actors

[18] For example, there is resentment among some urban residents regarding educational affirmative action programs that provide bonus points on university admissions test scores and tuition waivers. When discussing the issue in New Taipei City, several informal conversations indicated that this attitude extends to development assistance, though the strength of these attitudes and their presence within society at large is unclear.

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are operating from pure greed; they may instead lack awareness of other parties' positions, or they may be countering past experiences with negative reciprocity. However, because these actors appear to be behaving through bounded self-interest rather than simple economic "rationalism", the negative behaviors that result in agency costs could be mitigated by controls such as informal monitoring at the community level, or through a modification of the bad actor's perspective based on aligning interests through long term and sincere negotiations. While truly bad actors do exist (sometimes requiring legal sanction through strong institutions), it seems that a great deal of interest alignment could occur through ongoing relationship building at the micro and meso levels without first requiring major institutional overhaul.

This work reiterates a point found throughout literature on action research, agency theory, and social capital: namely that communication is necessary to a developmental program's success. Cross-cultural environments with low levels of common experience and the possibility of conflicting values create a particularly difficult challenge: "In the first place, everyone, scholars, government officials, and aboriginal people alike, agrees that the cross-cultural negotiations involved in co-management and knowledge-integration are exceedingly difficult and complex" (Nadasdy, 2003). A common theme across almost all interviewees was the importance of communication; which should be sensitive, open, and flexible, and with perceptions of genuine interactions being integral to trust building on both sides.

The creation of social capital during the Lokah Initiative was made possible by showing commitment to the community and developing respectful two-way communication. Demonstrating a belief in social fairness, creating a shared vision, and by developing reciprocal relationships through sharing expertise and information were seen in instances where social capital gains were greater. These activities interacted synergistically, but there is also some indication that differences in communication expectations, for example in terms of how power hierarchies influence communication, should be considered in the

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future negotiations of project or sub-project goals.[19] Further attention to this kind of increased participative communication could be beneficial for interactions between the team and their internal agents, and between the team and community members that can facilitate social capital creation, exchange, and transfer.

However, limitations when applying agency theory should be addressed. First, there is some difficulty in applying a theory that tends to fare better with bilateral relations to a situation in which multilateral and multifaceted networks exist, such as those that exist in any community. Beyond a multiplicity of layered agency relationships, the theory begins to suffer from a narrowness that has been criticized as missing some of the complexity of real-word situations as multiple principal-agent relationships and roles begin to overlap. Although agency theory has difficulties in these situations, using the theory to examine principal-agent relationships and their shortcomings can serve as a valuable tool that can benefit a range of interested parties in action research programs.

From the perspective of a university based research team acting as an agent and because academic work is characterized by information asymmetries (Kivisto, 2008), using action research principles such as clear, flexible, and open communication can serve to improve the agency problems of monitoring, interest alignment, and information asymmetry. From both the government and the community principals' perspectives, taking into account agency theory's emphasis on formal and informal monitoring and contracts could reduce agency costs. Together with the focus of action research on clear, flexible, and open communication, taking into account agency theory and agency relationships should help improve the performance of agents. By accounting for an exchange in social capital.

As well, there exists a possibility that government development initiative goals may be opaque, unclear, or covert, making both interest alignment and incentivizing problematic.

[19] This implies the possibility of creating a third-level subproject related to inter-cultural communication skills workshops that could be applied in both communities and research groups.

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Taken together with government control of the funding that makes programs possible, a lack of understanding of the principal's true goals limits the agent's autonomy to act. If, for example, the government principals can make program funding decisions less opaque and less fragmented, and apply agency theory to creating, and understanding, applicable performance incentives, agent performance can be expected to further improve.

6.3 Future Directions and Long Term Outlook

Continued improvements in land use relations would be highly salient to the locals. Modifying the regulatory environment is complicated by issues of exclusionary environmentalism, a lack of understanding of traditional ecological knowledge, and government attitudes ranging from paternalism to disinterest. The reality of agents serving the interests of two highly disparate principals who are at odds makes balancing the interests of the community and the government quite sensitive when both sides have the ability to unilaterally withhold project support. This reinforces the long term nature of the endeavor of land use negotiations that have been moving forward incrementally since the 1980s. Finding a common ground – aligning the interests of the two highly disparate groups – without alienating either side is a challenge that will take time and a careful attention to processes that increase the possibility of finding common ground.

Addressing health care issues in Wulai could go a long way for community capacity development. Although the topic was reported to be a sensitive one, it was also seen to be of high importance. The usefulness of an open, participatory approach with community input to health care projects from minority and indigenous groups has been shown in other countries, for example Canada (Maiter et al., 2008), and the United States (Oetzel et al., 2018). Although immediately attacking sensitive issues such as alcoholism it may not be feasible in Wulai, other issues determined through community input could be used to begin reciprocal action – leveraging expertise to develop social capital that can be used in future projects. As Wulai does suffer from reduced health outcomes compared to urban

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locations and because it has been shown that social capital can indeed be increased, approaching community health could be a fruitful direction for projects under the Lokah umbrella.

As has been mentioned earlier, the benefits of developmental programs may take significant periods of time to be fully realized. In fact, the concept of a static “successful” endpoint can be seen as problematic, as any community, indigenous or otherwise, is a constantly changing entity. The case of Wulai shows the difficulties faced as a community tries to break free of its multigenerational colonial history. Building the relationships of trust and reciprocity requires long-term and sincere involvement on the part of both outside actors and participants, and just as other forms of capital can degrade over time, so can the social capital that bridges researchers and the community. The Lokah Initiative has indeed shown that foundations of an ongoing, long-term project can be built. It is hoped that policy makers can consider the importance of foundational elements in order to help break the cycle of well-intentioned but ultimately less effective projects by taking into the account the importance of intangible indicators and the long-term nature of sustainable capacity building.

6.4 Returning to Social Capital

Over the period of time since the Lokah Initiative was first instituted, modest yet important gains have been made. Exchange of social capital allowed the program to take shape, and social capital has increased that bridges the academic community with the Atayal of Wulai. Evidence from literature review and the case study support the idea that increased social capital as indicated through proxy variables arose from activities and communication that were respectful, participatory and inclusive of ideas and respected community members. Visible demonstrations of commitment to the community on the part of the research team through time and action were important to counter a perception of self-interested outsiders, and inclusionary interactions with open and respectful two-way communication mutually increased perceptions of trust and reciprocity. This social

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capital that has been created and remains as an advantage for continued action within the community. The general impression was that the Lokah project's successes were a step in the right direction, though room for increased action and improvement remains. While high level institutional change may still lie in the future, the foundations for further expansion of social action from the micro to the meso levels and beyond has been made. This path, however, is not yet set in stone, and the social capital that has been developed will need attention and cultivation to continue to grow rather than dissipate.

6.5 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although this work has provided some insight into the development of an action research program, some limitations do exist. Firstly, findings presented represent a static temporal snapshot of the state affairs at the time of writing that includes reflection on past events. A longitudinal ongoing look at the Lokah project over an extended time frame could provide further insights.

An advantage of qualitative research to capture intangible information is clear; however, the focus on quantitative interviews in this study could benefit from supplementary quantitative data. Survey data, for example, could be used to assess levels of community wellbeing[20] or on the state of other aspects of capital assets, such as infrastructure, educational attainment, or skills.[21] Other tools that could be complimentary to quantitative interview data in case studies would be community level data gathered might include community surveys such as the World Bank social capital assessment tool or other tools that attempt to measure community wellbeing. A mixed methods approach would likely prove fruitful.

[20] Although as noted earlier in this paper the relationships between wellbeing and economic development projects are not always clear (Vining 2016). However, using a survey instrument such as a community wellbeing index would give a more robust picture of tangible community assets.

[21] For one promising framework for this type of inquiry, see the capital assets framework suggested by Bennet et al, 2012. While it is a rather large framework, it could be modified in part to assess natural, physical, financial, political, cultural, and human capitals in addition to social capital.

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There exists a difference in hierarchical relations between the Han and Atayal cultures. The Chinese culture has a long history of Confucian respect and deference to authority, while Atayal culture is traditionally more egalitarian. Many younger Atayal in Wulai have high exposure to Han culture through education, media, and physical proximity to the bustling Taipei metropolis. One indicated she was "raised almost as Han", yet there was still some indication of an underlying difference in culture that manifested itself as certain cognitive or perhaps emotional distance from projects instituted by outsiders. Lack of input that may have come from deference to authority found in some Asian cultures may have resulted in some perceptions of tokenism. This cultural difference in power hierarchy could investigated in following studies from several perspectives: using the social capital dimension of linking social capital specifically addressing power differentials, or using a focus on action research processes that attempt to create balanced cross cultural communication and understanding. Both approaches could prove fruitful lines of inquiry.

Finally, in appreciation of action and participative research methods, it is likely that other important data could be collected if in the project design phase for this work more input from the local community could be included, which in itself could help to build social capital by increasing mutual interactions, trust, and norms of reciprocity between the academic and local communities.

6.7 Final Thoughts: The Risk of Reversion

For those who are accustomed to measuring projects successes in concrete financial terms, the Lokah Initiative's successes may seem yet to be realized. However, the strides made in developing trusting relations of reciprocity are important steps in creating a long term and community spanning improvements in both tangible and intangible assets. Rarely do tangible gains occur without intangible ones accompanying (or more likely preceding) them, and even in situations where tangible gains are realized first, intangible

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aspects of community wellbeing do not necessarily follow. The increases made in social capital that bridges the community of Wulai with the university, and by extension with academia and greater society in general are in the beginning stages of a long-term process. This process is a delicate one, and the improvements that have been made are not guaranteed to persist. They can be built upon, but this requires ongoing participation and support for the project. Perhaps the biggest success of the project is the social relationships between the two groups, the researchers and the community members. But as a team member and Wulai resident said, "Keeping the trust is the biggest issue. [As researchers we] don't go back to the previous image." There remains a danger that the levels of social capital could revert back to pre-project levels, and to prevent this, negotiations for relationships of reciprocity should be supported.

"It's a long process. It doesn't take just one year. We are all contributing to a change." (Lokah assistant)

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview outline

Section 1: Clarifying your involvement

1) When did you first become involved in the project?

    Specify approximate date, and at what part of the program.

2) Why did you become interested in the Lokah Initiative?
    Probes: Did you volunteer or were you invited? What did you understand to be the purpose of the program?

3) What was the nature of your involvement? How did you participate?
    Probes: What did you do in the program? How much time did you give? Were you happy with your level of involvement? What encouraged you to be involved at this level?

4) Are you still involved? Why or why not?

Section 2: Building relationships

1) Is there community willingness to engage in market economy?

2) Is there a local consensus on what is best for the community?

3) Are there welcoming attitudes and behaviors towards researchers?

4) Is there sharing of information between researchers and the community? Is it clear, flexible, open, transparent? Is the sharing reciprocal?

5) Do researchers and community members have a different level of trust and quality of relationships?

6) How did relationships change over time?

Section 3: Managing the process: What are the project's outcomes?

1) What positive results came out of the program so far?

2) Is trust building between the researchers and the community?
    Do you see this as improving? What happened to increase trust? What kinds of reciprocal actions took place?

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3) How successful do you think this project is? What do you think would be long term impacts of the program? What could make it more successful?

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