

บทความวิจัย (Research Article)

## การประกอบสร้างประวัติศาสตร์ความเป็นคนน่านในยุคโลกาภิวัตน์ ผ่านประเพณีการแข่งเรือยาว

### The Construction of Nan Identity in the Context of Globalization through the Festival of Longboat Racing

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ประเพณีการแข่งขันเรือยาวของจังหวัดน่านสะท้อนวิถีชีวิตของชาวพุทธและการเป็นสังคมเกษตรกรรมที่สัมพันธ์กับแม่น้ำ งานศิลปะที่ผ่านมาอธิบาย “น่าน” และประเพณีการแข่งขันเรือยาวที่ขาดมิติที่สัมพันธ์กับบริบทที่กว้างขึ้น จากการเปลี่ยนแปลงของประเพณีไปสู่การแข่งขันทางกีฬา ซึ่งนำไปสู่การเปลี่ยนแปลงทั้งขนาดและจำนวนของผู้เข้าร่วม การเป็นที่รู้จักของประเพณีและการรับรู้ในระดับประเทศ รวมถึงการมีกลุ่มผลประโยชน์ที่เข้ามามีส่วนร่วมกับงานประเพณีเพิ่มขึ้น ทำให้แนวคิดที่ใช้ในการอธิบายแต่เดิมไม่สามารถสะท้อนสภาพการเปลี่ยนแปลงที่เกิดขึ้นในปัจจุบันได้ ดังนั้น บทความนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อเสนอถอดรหัสของการประดิษฐ์ประเพณีการแข่งเรือยาวจังหวัดน่าน โดยใช้แนวคิดการกลายเป็นกีฬา (Sportization) และท้องถิ่นภิวัตน์ (Localization) เพื่อแสดงให้เห็นความซับซ้อนของประเพณีการแข่งขันเรือยาวจังหวัดน่าน โดยเฉพาะในช่วงหนึ่งทศวรรษที่ผ่านมา จากการสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มผลประโยชน์ ทั้งภาครัฐ องค์กรจัดตั้งในท้องถิ่นและองค์กรภาคชุมชน นำมามองคุณค่าและมูลค่าทางวัฒนธรรม ประเพณีการแข่งเรือ่นเป็นพื้นที่ที่ผู้แสดง (actor) ต้องการเปิดพื้นที่เพื่อปรับความสัมพันธ์ทางสังคม ความตึงเครียดที่เกิดจาก การช่วงชิงความหมายและการต่อรองอำนาจในประเพณีเป็นหนทางในการพยายามพัฒนาศักยภาพเพื่อกำหนดอัตลักษณ์ท้องถิ่นน่านใหม่ภายใต้บริบทของโลกที่เปลี่ยนแปลงไป การพยายามให้ประเพณีการแข่งเรือ่นกล้ายเป็นกีฬาเป็นช่องทางหนึ่งในการเพิ่ม “มูลค่า” ให้ท้องถิ่นน่านและคนน่านสู่ระดับสากล

**คำสำคัญ:** การประดิษฐ์สร้างทางประเพณี ความเป็นกีฬา โลกาภิวัตน์ ท้องถิ่นภิวัตน์

#### Abstract

The Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province was the local tradition capable of reflecting the Buddhist way of life and the agricultural society in relation to the river. Past studies did explain Nan and longboat racing tradition, but not in a way that it was analyzed in the broader context. Longboat racing was transformed from festival to sporting events, leading to a change both in the scale and number of participants. Recognition of the festival and national awareness occurred in

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(Received: 4 March 2021; Revised: 2 April 2021; Accepted: 20 April 2021)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14456/psruhss.2023.9>

tandem with an increasing number of interest groups to participate in the festival. Yet, the concept previously used to explain the phenomenon was found insufficient to gain insight of the changes that occur in the present. Therefore, this article aimed to propose a perspective on the tradition invention of the Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province, using the concepts of Sportization and Localization to demonstrate the complexity of the studied festival, especially during the past decade. The insights were obtained from the interviews conducted with the stakeholders; government organizations, private and civil sectors, which led to the finding that Nan's longboat racing festival functioned as the space where the actors were open to improve social relationships. The tension arising from the contention for meaning and negotiation of power to control the festival was a means of developing capacity to redefine the Nan local identity in an ever-changing global context. The effort to sportize the longboat racing festival was one of the channels to add "value" to local Nan and Nan people, which promoted Nan Province to the international level.

**Keywords:** The invention of tradition, Sportization, Globalization, Localization

## Introduction

The Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province has long been acclaimed and accepted as the oldest tradition in Thailand. The festival is intricately associated with the lives of people, both in historical dimensions and lifestyle (Naksuk, Y., 2010), economic and policy dimensions (Thongkiaw, R., 2013). Longboat Racing Festival exhibits a unique characteristic that is the identity of Nan Province (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2016). Currently, there are total 339 boats in all sizes registered with the Nan Municipality (Nan Municipality, 2019). The racing venues are organized along the Nan River, which cover the 9 Districts, and the longboat racing festival begins in August and finishes in November (mgonline.com, 2015).

Previous studies on Nan's Longboat Racing Festival in the past (Puangrungsi, A., 2008; Pholsantikul, S., 2013; and Sathian, K. and Sirasunthorn, P., 2013; Thongkiaw, R., 2013) found concerns in 2 issues. The first issue was that the current Longboat Racing Festival in Nan has neglected the importance of the tradition, which links to a ceremony called "**Tan Guay Salak**" which is considered a "merit-making ceremony" in Buddhism, demonstrating a sense of The Sacred. The festival is now orientating to social and political issues or The Profane (Hongswan, P., 2013), responding to or serving as a Secular Tourism Spectacle. The second issue was the direction of Nan's Longboat Racing Festival which is focusing on the competition and the victory. The "root" of the tradition, that is, "local amusement" and local harmony is forgotten. This can be seen from the problem of boat modification, forging boat identity, and forging rowers' identity. Therefore, it seems that the conservation guidelines for tourism, and sportization will be the two strong forces, hindering the potential development of the local "people" in Nan Province.

Since Nan Province has long been in contact with the outside world, the construction of Nan people or identity in each period was subject to different conditions and factors. The view in which Nan's longboat racing festival is immobile or transfixed to a specific area, and a contributor to social equilibrium should be more carefully questioned and challenged in today's society (Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J., 1997: 1-51; Rosaldo, R., 1993; Santasombat, Y., 2008). The longboat racing festival may be used to create the ways and positions of the Nan people, so that they are distinguished in the global system (Friedman, J., 2002), especially in the globalization and in context of cultural tourism and sports, which are the catalysts for "Nan City" to reconstruct its new identity to interact with the outside in various dimensions (Kongsanthia, C., 2013). The tension of the "actors" in the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival reflects the efforts to reconstruct the local Nan's identity under the current context. The researcher, therefore, intends to investigate whether the current Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province is merely a matter of social equilibrium, or it is a reinvention of tradition to fulfill other purposes. And how do the actors who participated in the invention of tradition contend for giving the meaning of the tradition? In addition, has the transitioning process of Sportization affected the Localization of Nan or not and in what ways?

## **Research Objective**

This research study had the objective to examine the invention of meaning for Nan's Longboat Racing Festival, so it becomes a part of the national festival. The research explored the contention for the meaning of Nan's Longboat Racing Festival given by the actors, by analyzing the situation, the bargaining strategies of the actors under changing conditions or contexts of the Longboat Racing Festival. The study investigated the construction of Nan's identity or localization in the age of globalization.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Within the context of the development of Nan Province to become an important tourist and sport destination nationally and globally, more organizations at different levels are joining in the process. Nan's Longboat Racing Festival is regarded as a tradition that is closely related to the history and lifestyle of Nan people, and is included as a part of the development trend. All actors are trying to seize the chance to redefine the festival through all forms of bargaining efforts for their own interests. Modification of unequal relationships under dynamic processes or interactions, or the dialectic between local and global, reflects the struggles of local Nan to dissolve the image that is tied to the past physical and geographic areas, by constructing a new identity within the context of tourism and sport. This article will discuss the concepts of sportization and localization for the analysis purpose.

## Research Methodology

In this study, the cultural politics approach was adopted and applied, focusing on the patterns and methods implemented by the actors in an attempt to create the meaning of tradition as per their perspectives. The actors were subject to different circumstances and confronted with challenges when dealing with the power relations of other groups of individuals in the society that existed. There are 3 groups of actors: 1) the longboat communities which can be divided into 2 sub-groups: longboat villagers and private groups; 2) established local organizations which consisted of 3 organizations, namely local administrative organization, organizing the festival, Nan Provincial Cultural Council and Nan Provincial Racing Boat Association; and 3) the central government organizations which consisted of 2 organizations, namely, Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) and Nan Old City DASTA. The tools used in this research were 1) document review, 2) participatory observation, i.e. participating in the longboat racing festival in major provincial tournaments, and non-participatory observation by attending the festival only 3) Focus group interviews and 4) In-depth interviews. The scope of the study of the longboat racing festival was determined to cover the events that had been organized since 2017 to the present, and the events specified in the Nan's longboat racing calendar only.

## Results

### Developments of the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival

When considering the changing appearances of the racing boats and the application of international sport regulations to the competition, this research study can divide the developments of the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival into 3 phases (Kabkham, R., 2006; Phonsantikul, S., 2013), detailed as follows:

**The first period** was the longboat racing for "amusement" that took place after the ceremony called "Tan Guay Salak" had been organized (1816 - 1978). The evidence of this development was found when the boat labelled "Sua Thao Ta Lor," which was the oldest boat, was discovered in 1816. Later, the boat model was modified from the "Rua Khi Khya" to "Rua Hong" in 1978. In this period, the boat was made from a single-piece wood, designed to transport monks and the people who traveled to attend the Salakapat Ceremony held in major temples in Nan Province. After the merit making was completed, the boats were used for racing to boost the festivity atmosphere. The longboat racing held during this period was organized in two ways: firstly, the racing was organized by the Royal Court and the ruler of Nan to welcome the city's important guests. Secondly, the racing was organized by the people, dedicated for the merit-making and fun (Pholsantikul, S., 2012). Rules for racing were not strictly defined, with only the launch point and the finish line being determined. In addition, the prizes were only essential household items in those days, such as the hurricane lamp with 1 large container of kerosene. The competition was indeed the "play" for fun.

**The second period** was the period of sportization (from 1979 - 2006). In 1982, the governor of Nan Province respectfully requested the royal trophies from His Majesty King Bhumibol (King Rama IX) to be bestowed upon the winning large-sized racing boats. In 1983 and 1984, the Crown Prince of Siam then (King Rama X in the present) presided over the closing ceremony of the Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province. On the same occasion, the trophies were given to the winning racing boats, the event which made people active and eager to join the longboat racing for victory and to win the royal trophies. Rua Khi Khaya were modified to Rua Hong, diminishing the number of the old-style boats (Pholsantikul, S., 2013). Later, in 1985, the event organizer adopted the rules of the Department of Physical Education, Ministry of Education, to apply with the racing (Siharaj, 2001). An announcement was made that the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival was the closed-tournament, that is, the racing boats must be crafted by Nan people and the rowers must be Nan people only (Thongkeaw, R., 2013).

**The third period**, the revival of the traditional boats combined with the modern technology (from 2007 to the present), scientific processes have been introduced as part of the boat building process, and the newly constructed boats are considered the "New Innovation" (Pholsantikul, S., 2013). It was found that many villages began to rely on the sport science system to develop the process of rowing training (Sathian, K. and Sirasunthorn, P., 2013). The rules and regulations of the racing were decided by the event organizing committee of each tournament, but, overall, were subject to the Nan Provincial Longboat Racing Association. Nowadays, many sectors are being attentive to the "identity" of Nan's longboats, especially the Nan Provincial Cultural Council and the Special Area Management Organization for Sustainable Tourism (Public Organization), which ran a campaign for the return to the roots or the concept of "nostalgia" by restoring ancient regatta, using ancient boats and traditional ways of rowing (Kabkam, R., 2018: Interview). Such an initiative was to arouse the community to consider using more traditional or ancient boats. Currently, there are 5 categories of longboat racing in the closed tournament, which are general small speed boats, general medium-sized speed boats, general large-size speed boats, general identity boats, and traditional identity boats.

### **Construction of the History of the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival in the Modern Age**

There are possibly two approaches to constructing the history of the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival which has begun from 2007 to the present, both of which are overlapping significantly. **The first approach** would be the health dimension as illustrated in the first Alcohol-Free Tradition being organized in Thailand. According to the 2004 Ministry of Public Health's drinking rate survey report, Nan Province is the number one of alcohol consumption rate in Thailand (Office of the National Health Commission, 2014, p. 32). As a result, the Nan Provincial Health Assembly, together with the Nan health network community, worked in concert to run a campaign for resolving such problem. Later, the governor decided to integrate the campaign into the Nan provincial development plan.

MOU between Nan Province and the racing event organizing hosts, the government organizations, the private sector, and the participating communities was made. Furthermore, ThaiHealth and the network partners joined in to support the festival and "promote" Nan Province as the first alcohol-free boat race course in Thailand, which becomes a model for other similar racing festivals. In essence, the invention of new meaning for Nan's Longboat Racing Festival was a social practice (Hongsuwan, P. cited in Na Thalang (Editorial), 2015), magnifying the longboat racing tradition that was tied to "merit-making" or "Tan Guay Salak" Ceremony, which was the Nan's worldview based on Buddhist traditions. Therefore, the approach of reinforcing the alcohol-free tradition bridged the spirit of the traditional Nan people with Buddhism. The central government organization, ThaiHealth, and the network parties have, therefore, played a role in inventing a successful Nan's Alcohol-Free Longboat Racing Festival, by making it the first alcohol-free longboat race in Thailand (Hobsbawm, E. 1983). **The second approach** was the use of cultural capitals for the community's tourism. This approach was to upgrade tourism in Nan Province to a world-class tourism, through the operation of Nan Old City Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration. The foundation of the longboat racing festival was changed from cultural capitals to community's tourism; financial supports were given to the communities to ensure that the boats displayed unique identity rather than ordinary racing boats. The "value" of the longboat racing festival was accentuated in such a way that the festival was to serve the community, to meet the regulations of budget allocation of DASTA. To achieve the standard of world-class tourism cities, it is incumbent upon Nan Province to adjust its community resources accordingly. An interesting observation is that although the boats are the community resource and a local organization established, i.e., the Nan Provincial Racing Boat Association, and the Nan Provincial Cultural Council, to supervise the boats' standards, the power to establish the boat as a cultural capital for tourism belongs to Nan Old City DASTA. This clearly affects the structure of the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival, as the types of racing boats and the standard relating to the appearance of the boats have to be adjusted (Radio Thailand Nan, Department of Public Relations, 2017).

#### **The contention for the meaning and bargaining for power in the Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province**

In this article, the researcher has divided the interest individuals in the festival into 3 groups, namely, the longboat community, the established local organizations of Nan Province, and the central government organizations. Each group is in competition for the chance to redefine the meaning and negotiation for power within the group and between the groups.

The longboat communities can be divided into 2 main groups, namely, the villagers' team, which was managed by the community funds and private team (Mae Pom Team) which relies on the private funds and is closely tied with some educational institutions and some parts of communities. Both groups have mutually benefited from the participation in the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival. They are trying to win the championship and acceptance, but they are competing

against each other in terms of management potential. The private team excels their rowing abilities and some members were accepted as the athletes in the national team. They won the local and regional championship (Ti Ni Muang Nan, 2019). The questions: "*What is next for the rowers once the boat reaches the finish line? What is next if they lose the race?*" (Saisung, A., Interview. 4 April 2020) stimulate the Mae Pom Team to enhance the potential of the whole team in all aspects, including the boat building, rower training, off-season tournaments, and the effective team management. It is the boat racing team that fully sportized longboat racing. As a result, some athletes are accepted to attend higher education based on their sport ability, and develop longboat sport as their career, as the boat rowing athletes representing Nan Province. The differences in the development of the potential of the two groups lead to the bargain of the villagers, to create the new regulations, such as defining the types of longboats, determining the number of rowers of the Mae Pom Team in some tournaments. In the meanwhile, the longboat community is attempting to exert a bargaining power with local organizations, which organize the events, by setting the conditions for participating in the festival. The conditions they set up are closely associated with the budget and resource allocation, and the opportunities to win championship

Locally established organizations in Nan Province consist of Local Administration Organization, the Nan Provincial Racing Boat Association, and the Nan Provincial Cultural Council. These agencies or actors are the official and authorized organizers of the events, coordinating and synchronizing the interests of all parties that participate in the longboat racing festival. They are given with more power to oversee the standards and regulations of the competition, the power which was approved by the longboat communities throughout Nan Province. Therefore, such power is exercised to negotiate with other interest groups, through the introduction of regulations with which the longboat communities have to comply. In the meanwhile, these local organizations are willing to compromise in order not to lose their local political stability. Within the local context, these organizations are trying to balance their power and establish their political power bases.

The involved central government organizations include ThaiHealth and its network partners, and Nan Old City DASTA, all of which have tried to integrate Nan's Longboat Racing Festival into the nationalized element (Antolihao, L., 2014; Wongyannawa, T. 2013: 276). This seems to be achieved by adopting the concept of "*participation in a bottom-up*," which means the selecting a group of conformed people, such as the local leaders, or interest coordinating groups. These people are chosen for the purpose of power negotiation, so that they can enter the "formal platform for constructing the meaning" to justify the establishment of the meaning and to ensure that in the interests belong to the communities, who are the true "owners" of the culture. The invention of Nan's Longboat Racing Festival, based on the dimensions of health and cultural capitals for tourism development, therefore, became a self-chosen way that the communities use to maintain the benefits for themselves. The central government organizations are supposed to support the mechanism only. But when analyzing the situation more deeply, there are tensions and disharmony

that arise from Nan's Longboat Racing Festival, which reflects how each interest group struggles for its own space amidst the unequal power relationship. The central government organizations also announce their identities through the organization of the festival, causing discomfort to other interest groups.

The Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province is a forum where all stakeholders, from the longboat community level, the event organizing groups, and central government groups, are expecting to debate and discuss for power relations to adjust the balance of the relations. Bargaining for power is achieved by compromising, competing, coordinating of interests, and creating new options. All these are expressed in 3 forms: 1) creating new regulations to apply with the competition. The regulations must be approved as the resolution of the longboat communities, 2) adding types of competition to meet all target groups, and 3) creating a new arena truly dedicated for sports.

#### **Sportization of Nan's Longboat Racing Festival**

There are attempts to modify or alter the types of racing that should occur in Nan's Longboat Racing Festival, in order to meet all interest groups. First, the sport-oriented group set up the three designated speed boats (small-sized, medium-sized, and large-sized). Then, the longboat groups try to maintain the tradition of Nan's longboats, which are Nan's signature boats and ancient boats. Each category has its specification that is approved by the Nan Provincial Racing Boat Association, together with the Nan Cultural Council.

Although the sportization of the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival can be traced back to the second period, in which the regulations of the Department of Physical Education were applied in the competition. Yet, today, the sportization of the festival becomes more concentrated, as seen from the efforts made by many racing teams to incorporate science to improve both the longboats and the rowers. This is considered by many people as a "*new innovation*," which creates a fear for other teams of being inferior. As a result, the other teams have to seek knowledge resources to uplift their team potential for the next match.



**Figure 1** Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province

A team from private sector, such as Mae Pom Team, is well-known as a perfect longboat team in Nan Province. It supports the rowers participated in the festival to become the rowing athletes of the Nan Sports Association, bringing success and fame for Nan Province. This shows an admiring effort to transform the local festival to the international sensation. The Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province is, therefore, a local tournament, organized to select potential athletes to represent Nan. However, the process of adding "the value" of such festival seems open to an argument from the group that focuses on the conservation of the boats' appearance and traditional practice, as there is a fear of losing the identity of Nan's longboats and the ritual related to the "religious" system. The conservative group rather reduces the feeling of the competition and highlights a sense of "fun" between the communities.

The Longboat Racing Festival in Nan province today reserves a space for sport, albeit the universal sport system has not yet been fully adopted. The festival remains to be the closed-tournament and most of the viewers are Nan people. With tourism and sports being promoted in Nan, there is a demand for adjustment or adaptation of the festival to attract more outsiders to visit the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival by organizing the open tournament, with conditions. For instance, the longboats must be Nan-made, but the rowers from other places can be allowed (Kabkham, R. 2018: Interview).

The sportization of the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival appears in many ways, such as the racing tournament organized in important moments. Participants in the racing must be professional and be officially selected. With highly formal management regulations, all participants must adhere to the same rules and regulations and must be screened intensively by Nan Boat Racing Association. The athletes, the communities, and supporting organizations are under pressure for winning the championship, and the results are very important that the game cannot be treated as ordinary competition. In other words, championship and dignity are the ultimate goal of the racing. Sport, in this sense, becomes a serious work, not just playing. The most important element is the media, which generates marketing benefits (Frey, J. H. & Eitzen, S. D. (1991).: 507-511).

In addition, the process of sportization of the Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province can be explained through the relationships between the longboat communities both inside and outside of the local Nan. They aim to create the international relations or "*Interdependency Chains*" (Maguire, J., 1999). This results in the development of boats and potential rowers catered specifically for sports. The relationships include the bargaining for power of the longboat communities, using all forms of strategies and with limited resources, to defeat the opponents.

The sportization of the Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province allows us to see the interdependency chains of the Nan's local communities and other local areas, the exchange of resources in terms of the longboats and the rowers, or even the strategies used to negotiate, which occur inside and outside of Nan Province. Analyzing the sportization of the festival shows the struggling for adaptation, in which both internal capitals and local capitals are combined. The identity of the Nan's longboat racing festival can be maintained by transfixing it to the space, making it possible to monitor the movement and local adaptation. However, the festival that is restricted in the scope of Nan can be added up with "value" through the sportization. The longboat racing festival is therefore a forum for searching, screening, developing the potential of the Nan people, catering for "*labor export*" and "*cultural export*." The festival also attracts the Nan local people who have sport potential to return to their hometown to support the rowers of the next generation and to advance the longboat racing to international sports.

#### **Nanization: Construction of Identity Based on Tradition**

The perpetuation of the Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province has confronted the alteration of elements and structures of the festival as described above. These alterations reaffirm the value, the importance, and the meaning of the festival as perceived by Nan people (Hobsbawm E. and Ranger, T (eds.), 1983); wanlipodom, S., 2000). The community sector is a group that is most involved in the longboat racing festival, as it has the spiritual value, aesthetic and unique value, historical and cultural value, and educational value (Phonsantikul, S., 2013). The participants in the festival should be supported to become the athletes in the national and international sports, which will promote the local identity of Nan to a wider public.

Local communities in Nan Province try to construct the "*New Image*" under the development of tourism and sports, and health. The image of Nan in the past was tied to the geographic meaning that Nan was the "Hazardous Area," "Remote Area," which were the negative connotation. The Nan's Longboat Racing Festival reflects the local perspective and efforts to find the ways to develop the local potentials, and to present Nan Province to the wider society. The development of youth rowers so they can become the national or international athletes is compared to the "labor export" and "cultural export. This proves that Nan people constantly "*redefine*" their local potential.

Being a closed longboat racing tournament implies that restrictions and the "root" are applied to control the local people. The concept of "*Nan's longboats are for the Nan rowers only*" clearly reflects the essentialism in which the tradition and sport are transfixed to the space (Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J., 1997: 1-50; Rosaldo, R., 1993). The sportization of the longboat racing festival, in connection with the globalization, has impacted the Nan people in a way that they choose to maintain the traditions and their roots, emphasizing more strongly the sense of community. The local people have to consider and analyze the "emergence" when it occurs in the communities. The longboat racing festival functions as a forum for the Nan people to create the acceptance and "joint agreement" to maintain "Nan identity." Therefore, "the longboat communities" hold the true power to determine the direction of the longboat racing festival in Nan Province. On the other hand, although the closed longboat tournament is tied with restrictions that the boats and the rowers must be of Nan Province only, it encourages the exchange of resources within the province. Boats, equipment, rowers are borrowed. Some rowers are hired and knowledge of longboat racing festival is circulated within the province. When the resources within the province are not enough, or not effective enough for the festival, attempts will be made to import and exchange resources with the external communities, through the network of Nan people living outside the area, or through the longboat racing organization around the country (Kittiasa, P., 2003). Conflicts and problems in the local area (boat modifications, boat identity forge, rorer identity forge) can be found as well. This seems to be the result of the two forces in motion; one is the desire to step into modernity and westernization, the other is the intention to seek the uniqueness and maintain the traditional Nan (Suveeranon, P., 2011).

The tension caused by the competition and bargaining for constructing the meaning by the actors of various groups stems from the efforts to find space to define the identity of the local Nan. This reconstruction of such identity may arouse other communities to search and express their potential as well. In addition, the opportunity in which different voices can be expressed and heard shows that the local Nan respects diversity.

## Discussion and Conclusions

So far, there have been concerns that Nan's Longboat Racing Festival has overlooked the essence of the tradition, which is in connection with the "Tan Guay Salak Ceremony," a Buddhist "merit-making ceremony." There is uncertainty in the direction of the festival; the longboat racing festival may be overly oriented to the competition, championships, and sports that the "roots" of the tradition may have been forgotten. Nowadays, led by monks, a group of individuals called Rak Rua Nan (Love Nan Boat) develops the idea of reviving the ancient unique boats and encouraging the longboat communities to build and remodel their boats in this style. Support and promotion were given by the tourism and sports organizations in Nan Province, such as Nan Old City DASTA,

whose viewpoint is that Nan boats are a crucial "resource capital for community tourism." The communities can use this capital to create economic "value" for community sustainability

The sportization of the Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province was developed from the racing tradition of "fun," and inserted the moments of serious sporting events into the tradition since the second period of the longboat racing development. Now, this emphasis is more intense, which can be seen from the relationship between the longboat communities both inside and outside the Nan Province, which are aiming at the international relations called "interdependency chains" (Maguire, J., 1999). This results in the development of boats and rowers specifically for sport purpose. The efforts to bargain for favorable strategies to defeat the opponents with limited resource capitals were also found among the boat communities (forging boats identity, forging rowers' identity, building new boats, buying the rowers).

The Nan's Longboat Racing Festival is considered to be the foundation where the development towards excellence in rowing sport was forged. The closed tournament provides an opportunity for boat teams and rowers of Nan Province to gain experience simulating the actual racing, promoting the rowers to participate in a national and international arena. When considering certain parts of the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival, it is undeniable that the festival was transformed into a modern sport. The organizational management and the protocols within that festival are those of a "*modern sport*," rather than a "*play*." That is, the regulations and penalties for entering and exiting the game are clearly designed; the focus is given on the scheduled time in the race; the competition is officially organized, with a strict screening for rowers' qualification; the generalized or standardized regulations are established; and, importantly, there are various local and national "media" channels that play a key role in "promoting" the competition to feed the tourism market (Frey, J. H. & Eitzen, S. D. (1991): 506-511). In addition, the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival is the forum for socialization among the rowers, especially the male youth. The festival allows the young rowers to be introduced to the value and beliefs and helps them cultivate the desirable characteristics of good athletes, such as self-discipline, sportsmanship, and dedication towards goals or success. In other words, longboat racing festival prepares them to be efficient enough to adhere to the regulations of international sports in the future.

The sportization of the Longboat Racing Festival in Nan Province reveals the interdependency chains within the local communities of Nan and with other communities. This connecting process is viewed by Anthony Giddens (1991 cited in Kittiasa, P., 2003: 43) that it is "the dialectic between local and global. In this process, interactions that occur in various events at a local level are linked with the changes that occur in a global level. The efforts to maintain the identity of Nan's Longboat Racing Festival, along with the sportization for excellence, creates the opportunities for Nan's identity to be recognized at a national and international levels. Apart from the development of sport potential of Nan people, the new invented identity or image of Nan is widely known by other localities. Nan is perceived as the locality which always struggles to adjust itself

under the ever-changing context, and refuses to be submissively controlled by the external society. Therefore, it can be said that the combination between the unique longboat racing festival and the international sportization, essentially, is the crux of tourism and sport development in Nan Province.

## Suggestions

### General Suggestions

The findings in the article were obtained from the study on the Nan's Longboat Racing Festival scheduled in the annual calendar of Nan Province. Tournaments in the community level were not included.

### Suggestions for further studies

1. Further study should consider incorporating voices of people in the local areas into the study. Those voices can be those of tourism entrepreneurs, private organizations, or Hug Muang Nan Foundation Network, all of which contribute to deeper understanding of Nan's current circumstances.

2. Further study should consider the topic of the acquisition of capitals for running activities of the longboat racing festival, both the internal sources and the external sources or hidden capital. It would be helpful if a study was conducted on the acquisition of resources from Nan people who reside somewhere else to be incorporated in the festival. The understanding of the capital movements may lead to a clearer picture of fundraising organized by the communities during the festival.

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