

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Resurgence and Convergence: Religion and Development, with a Focus
on Social Capital among Akha in North Thailand

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Philosophy

in

Development Studies

at Massey University, Palmerston North campus, New Zealand

Philip J Pennington

2004

© *P J Pennington 2004*

Abstract

This Masters thesis research aims to contribute to the fledgling body of development industry literature that seriously considers the intersect of science, religion, and development. Religion is gaining recognition as an important aspect of development processes; previous neglect of it has been cited as one reason for the failure of many development efforts. An evolutionary framework would suggest the interaction of the large human movements of religion and the development industry would inevitably include resurgence of religion, sometimes in unfamiliar forms, along with religion's convergence with development, both among societies generally as they evolve into multiple modernities, and through interactions specific to the development industry and religion. This thesis identifies and discusses these trends and interactions with reference to improving development research and practice.

Having demonstrated that religion does matter for development, I go on to show *how* it matters in one instance. This thesis assesses the potentials and limitations of one indigenous religion's ritual practices for creating and maintaining social capital among an indicative sample group of people who have experienced dislocation resulting from development. Fieldwork using primarily qualitative methods was among Akha hilltribe people living in Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand, with a focus, though not exclusively, on those living in slums. Findings indicate that among city Akha, their religious ritual has lost the primary role it previously occupied in Akha villages as a social capital generator. However, further analysis suggests Akhas' religious experience predisposes them to conversion to access the social capital evident among Christian Akha in Chiang Mai, and that through this process is occurring a negotiation of convergence between Akha religion and modernising forces which will affect all Akha. I conclude that both the identified wider trends and context-specific example of religion-development interaction demonstrate the value in development practitioners and theorists moving towards understanding and applying a non-instrumental valuing of religion.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and thank first and foremost all of those Akha people in Chiang Mai and Saen Chareon village, north Thailand, who consented to participate in this research in May and June 2004. As well, special thanks to Molay Choopoh, and Deuleu Choopoh and her extended family. Also, I acknowledge the academic input I received from MPCD/SEAMP director Noriko Higashide, and from Panadda Boonyasaranai at the Social Research Institute (SRI), Chiang Mai University, who kindly provided a draft of her findings from research into social capital among Akha in the city; this was complemented by the survey results kindly provided by A-beya Choopoh. To Emma Phillips, thanks for your guidance and the personal introductions you provided. I acknowledge too the fertile environment provided by my colleagues in postgraduate studies at Massey University's Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in 2003 and 2004, especially the Wellington crew, as well as the guidance and valuable input to this thesis from my academic supervisors at Massey, Dr Manu Barcham and Dr Barbara Nowak. On a personal note, it is only with the full support of my wife Jacqui, our wonderful children, and our wider whanau that creation of this thesis has been at all possible.

Philip Pennington
Wellington, New Zealand
December 2004

CONTENTS

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Religion: important and neglected	1
1.2 Religion: exploring how it matters	3
1.3 Core concepts	4
1.4 Findings	5
1.4.1 Religion matters for development	5
1.4.2 How religion matters for development	6
1.5 Conclusions	6

Chapter Two

DEVELOPMENT, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

2.0 Introduction	8
 Section One - Development and religion	
2.1 Unreformed development	8
2.1.2 Culture and tradition misconceived	9
2.1.3 Religion misconceived	10
 2.2 Alternative development	 13
2.2.1 Culture re-evaluated	13
2.2.2 Culture reconceived	14
2.2.3 Multiple modernities	15
 2.3 Resurgence and convergence	 17
2.3.1 Religious resurgence	17
2.3.2 Convergence of religion and modernisation	18
2.3.3 Convergence of development industry and religion	21
2.3.4 Interactions between development industry and religion	22
2.3.5 Limitations	27

2.4 Quitovac: The complexities of convergence	29
Section Two - Religion and social capital	
2.5 Introduction	31
2.5.1 Social capital in précis	32
2.5.2 Implications and problems	33
2.6 Religion and social capital	35
2.6.1 Religion as evolutionary adaptor mechanism	36
2.6.2 Religion as a source of social capital	38
2.6.3 Positive and negative externalities	39
2.6.4 Differentiation and flux	40
2.7 Religious ritual and social capital	42
2.7.1 Costly-signalling theory	43
2.7.2 Bonding and bridging ritual	44
2.7.3 Connections with ancestors	44
2.7.4 Ritual and religious institutions – shamans	45
2.8 Religious capital and spiritual capital	46
2.9 Religion and social capital in action	47
2.10 Conclusion	49
Chapter Three	
METHODOLOGY	
3.0 Research as convergence process	51
3.1 Ontology	52
3.2 Epistemology	53
3.3 Methodology	55
3.4 Methods	58
3.4.1 Presentation	61

3.5 Fieldwork experience	61
3.5.1 Entering the field	61
3.5.2 Fieldwork itself	62
3.5.3 What worked well	64
3.5.4 What worked poorly	64
3.5.5 Conclusion	65

Chapter Four

FIELDWORK: THE CONTEXT

4.0 Thailand and hilltribe development	66
4.1 Introduction	66
4.2 Development in Thailand	67
4.3 Development, religion, and social capital in Thailand	69
4.3.1 Social capital	69
4.3.2 Buddhism and development	71
4.4 Development and hilltribes	72
4.4.1 Options and constraints	72
4.4.2 Issues for hilltribes	74
4.4.3 Citizenship	75
4.4.4 Land, agriculture, and forestry	76
4.4.5 Education	77
4.4.6 Governance	78
4.4.8 Images	78
4.5 Hilltribe religions	79
4.6 Conclusion	81

Chapter Five

AKHA, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Section One - Akhazang and social capital

5.0 Introduction	82
5.1 Akha religion at village level	83
5.1.1 In general	83
5.1.2 Akha religion	84
5.1.3 Ceremonies	86
5.1.4 Blessing	87
5.1.5 Ancestors and kinship	88
5.1.6 Akha religion: Summary	89
5.2 Akhazang in transition	90
5.2.1 Push factors	90
5.2.2 Pull factors	91
5.2.3 Akhazang ceremonies in one village	92
5.2.4 Ancestor service	93
5.2.5 Water-source ceremony	93
5.2.6 Rice-field ceremony	94
5.2.7 Reflections on ceremonies	94
5.3 Akhazang at village-city interface	96
5.3.1 Connections	96
5.3.2 Trust	97
5.4 Akhazang in the city	98
5.4.1 Akha in Chiang Mai, 1960s-early 1980s	98
5.4.2 Akha in Chiang Mai, 1980s-present	100
5.4.3 Akha networks in Chiang Mai	104
5.4.4 Connections back to villages	105

5.5 Fieldwork: The findings	106
5.6 General attitudes	107
5.6.1 Religion matters	107
5.6.2 Akhazang is valued	107
5.7 City connections around Akhazang ritual	108
5.7.1 Major ritual performance	108
5.7.2 Minor ritual performance	110
5.7.3 Use of religious specialists	110
5.7.4 Trust	111
5.8 Connections from city to village	112
5.8.1 Physical connections	112
5.8.2 Ancestors and kinship	112
5.9 Change in Akhazang	113
5.10 Other religions	114
Section Two - Akha religious ritual and social capital in Chiang Mai: an analysis of fieldwork	
5.11 An immediate analysis	116
5.12 The analysis extended	119
5.12.1 Parochiality and plurality	120
5.12.2 Exteriorised idiom in this context	121
5.12.3 Relativism and conversion	122
5.12.4 Coherence	123
5.12.5 Rituals and trust	124
5.12.6 Rituals and kinship	126
5.13 Christianity and cultural continuity	127
5.13.1 Conversion and coherence	127
5.13.2 Akha-ness reformulated	128
5.13.3 Supporting factors	129
5.13.4 Conclusion	130

5.14 Mediators	131
5.14.1 Institutional resourcing	131
5.14.2 Voluntarism	132
5.15 Conclusion	133
Chapter Six	
CONCLUSION	
6.0 In general	134
6.1 Implications for the development industry	135
6.2 Implications for religion	138
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1: Interview guideline	140
Appendix 2: Interviewee characteristics	143
Appendix 3: Plans for an Akha village in Chiang Mai	145
BIBLIOGRAPHY	146

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Number of articles with reference to the listed keywords, by journal	24
Table 2: Number of hilltribe people in Chiang Mai, by tribal group	101
Table 3: Religious self-identification by Akha in Chiang Mai	103
Table 4: Some major forms of connection back to village among Akha living in Chiang Mai	106
Table 5: Akha interviewees by gender, age, and location of household (Appendix 2)	143
Table 6: Akha interviewees by religion, gender, and location of household (Appendix 2)	144

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Religious NGOs with consultative status at EOSOC, by religion	28
Figure 2: 1994 survey of 51 hilltribe development NGOs in Thailand by ethnicity of administrators and founders	75
Figure 3: Detail of city of Chiang Mai showing fieldwork locations, May-June 2004	102

Note

Reference is made to the baht, the currency of Thailand. While foreign exchange values fluctuate, over the last several years about 22 baht have corresponded to \$NZ1.

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFFECT	Association for Akha Education and Culture in Thailand
CMU	Chiang Mai University
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDRC	Canadian International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMPECT	Inter Mountain People Education and Culture in Thailand Association
LPD	Local Projects Database
MPCD/SEAMP	South East Asian Mountain Peoples' for Culture and Development
MPCD/SEAMP-HRI	South East Asian Mountain Peoples' for Culture and Development - Highland Research Institute
NGO	Non-government organisation
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
SRD	Science, Religion, and Development project
SRI	Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University
TICD	Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development
TRI	Tribal Research Institute (Chiang Mai)
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFDD	World Faiths Development Dialogue
WHO	World Health Organisation

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Religion: important and neglected

Religion remains central to the way many of the world's people understand and act, to how they conceive of and perceive development, and to the resources they draw on to negotiate crisis, tragedy, and inequity (Ribeiro de Oliveira 2001, Wamue 2001:457, Bahá'í International Community 2000, Ver Beek 2000:31, Goulet 1996, Weber 1965, Swanson 1963:1). There has, however, been profound disarticulation between religion and much international development work (Marshall 2001:1-4). Many spheres of the development industry have long neglected religion, principally because it was seen as irrational and an impediment to material and scientific progress, a view which complemented the dominant development ideology which privileged European cognitive systems and reduced wellbeing to a crude materialism (Tyndale 2002:46, Ver Beek 2000:39-40, Spretnak 1997, Goulet 1996).

This is a “monumental omission” (Goulet 1996¹), but one to which the development industry is awakening and responding, as part of the mainstreaming of alternative development theories and practices. At the least, this response prioritises gaining more comprehensive understanding of societies by requiring attention to a “sociology of the supernatural” (Moberg 2002:135), something oddly absent from secular development spheres given Weber's (1965) powerful early argument that religion is of prime causal significance to economic and social development both as initiator and differentiator. The aim of this response might be to enable better instrumental use of religion, such as in its proven ability to ease the dislocation of modernisation by providing identity and community, while inculcating such things as civic virtues (Armstrong 2000:297,192) – that is, in fact, by producing social capital.

¹ Please note regarding this and some other references: Those journal articles which were obtained solely via the Internet, and thus are described in the bibliography as an electronic source, are cited without reference to page numbers where the page numbers do not appear in the online article. However, the journal page numbers are included where possible in the bibliography to aid the reader.

However, the instrumentalist approach to culture by development has a poor track record, and contradicts recent reconceptions of culture, and of religion, beyond an economic focus on them as resources to be tapped to further spiritually-attenuated material development. Religion has historically contributed to the quest to realise possibilities for humanity other than an industrial modernity that represses identities, values, and issues, and renders environments incoherent for large numbers of people (Armstrong 2000:298). Within the development industry there are moves to value religion and engage it at this deeper level (eg, Verhelst and Tyndale 2002, IDRC 2000, Marshall 2000, UN 1995). This is the departure point for this thesis, which in addressing interaction between ritual and social capital demonstrates that non-instrumental integration of religion into development research need not be an esoteric exercise. Chowdhry (2003:2), for instance, focuses on sanitation in an attempt to show the importance of combining scientific knowledge with inner awakening to reduce poverty or advance sustainable development.

It was inevitable that the very modernising forces that are accompanied in many places by religious resurgence and its convergence with modernities, would lead the development industry from an espousal of the value of endogenous development to demonstrating this regards the multiplicity of endogenous religious phenomena (Gumucio 2002:79, IDRC 2000). These phenomena are widely differentiated in content, import, and externalities, but at core they can represent an aspect of the wealth that poor people have (Berger 1969). The industry's reorientation is being fed and pushed from widely varied sources, including two decades of multidisciplinary research that has re-valued religion (eg, Sosis 2004, D'Aquili 1999, Alexander 1987). "The relevant data suggest that most religious behavior is ... associated with good mental health, is sensitive to perceived costs and benefits, and is compatible with scientific training" (Iannaccone, Stark, and Finke 1998:2).

Ultimately, development is about religion, whether or not this is appreciated (Marshall 2001:5); this thesis argues that by being more aware, reflexive, and tolerant, the industry can engage in a way that enhances religion's time-proven adaptive properties for bolstering social order, continuity, and meaning in service of holistic wellbeing, especially where there is dislocation physically, culturally, and psycho-spiritually. This is an imperative because dislocation is the partner of the pluralism that development generates.

This thesis is addressed to development practitioner-theorists to both argue for and set a precedent of taking religion seriously, and draw generalisable lessons from one attempt to do so in a complex fieldwork situation characterised by dislocation and inequality.

1.2 Religion: exploring how it matters

This research was motivated by and designed in light of the need that is apparent for contextualised specific research based on firsthand fieldwork, to answer the generalised negative attitudes to religion in development and to present comparative case studies of the role of cultural and religious values in local development (Stuckelberger 2002, Marshall 2001:7,14, Various 2001:2, Candland 2000:355, IDRC 2000, Ver Beek 2000, Von der Mehden 1986:vii,16). While there is no consensus on how to incorporate religion or spirituality, I concur with Arbab (cited IDRC 2000) that sufficient consensus exists on “the significance of a spiritual dimension to human life to support new approaches to development research” that expand the accepted notion of science and technology to incorporate other forms of knowledge and alternative perceptions of reality.

This thesis is in two parts: Part one (Chapter 2) demonstrates that religion does matter in development by tracing its resurgence across societies, alongside its convergence with modernisation. Part two (Chapters 3-5) shows *how* religion might matter, by demonstrating the potentials and limitations of religious ritual performance for producing and maintaining valuable social capital, among the Akha people in northern Thailand. Information on the Akha cultural-religious system, Akhazang, is derived from anthropological literature from the last 20 years, oral interviews with adherents, and participant observation at rituals.

In the post-paradigmatic environment that now characterises both development (Nederveen Pieterse 1998) and religion (Riddell 1998, Tomlinson 1995), grand theories and meta-narratives are suspect. This hypothesis then is presented not as a claim as to how things are, but as an exploration of evolutionary social processes in local contexts. While a grand theory of religious resurgence and convergence may hold across societies, the dynamics of the multiplicities outlined here indicate any such resurgence/convergence would be so diversely manifested to render the theory of no practical use: Development studies must seek to serve and empower the poor (Edwards 1994:281), so research must begin with grounding in the poor’s realities, in this case, their religious realities.

UNDP estimates are that by 2010 70% of all world poverty will be urban poverty (cited Daniere 1996:374); thus I have sited data collection for this research in slums in Chiang Mai, north Thailand. The dislocation of many Akha urban migrants is not untypical of urbanisation experiences generally. I have focused on religious ritual performance because it is observable, measurable, and has clear affinity with the concept of social capital. I am not concerned with

ritual content, though I agree with Buadaeng (2003:287) that fluctuation and diversity of religious practice is a result of ongoing negotiations of the meanings that make the practices relevant to people's lives. I focus on ancestors' role in ritual because a society's ancestor network is part of its social capital network.

This thesis deliberately avoids addressing as a separate category from secular agencies the place of faith-based development agencies, and the often problematic territory these representatives of the "world" religions inhabit between service and proselytisation, empowerment and paternalism. Significant gaps remain in research about these agencies' roles (Stuckelberger 2002, Marshall 2000:13, Candland 2000:355); however, my concern is with indigenous, minority religions, and the intersect with world religion is addressed from that side. Negative manifestations of religion, such as some fundamentalist forms, are touched upon here but space does not permit in-depth analysis.²

1.3 Core concepts

An evolutionary understanding of human society pervades this research: from the selection of literature, to what has been observed and its interpretation, and the conclusions drawn. Effort has been made to be consistent throughout in recognising the importance for analysis of historical continuity, whether in the development industry, religion per se, Thailand's religious milieu, or Akha religion. This is an explicit counter to a stress in development studies on presumed socio-historical breaks, which are part of a presumption in the social sciences that because modernity is remaking the world, studies of change are what matter (O'Connor 1993:7).

Religion is approached using Durkheim's definition (1972:224 – see page 36) that emphasises collective practice, and interpreted in the vein of social solidarity theorists (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:266). Zinnbauer et al (1999) argue spirituality and religiousness overlap so much in human experience that it is wise to integrate them in scholarly studies; I sometimes refer to religion-spirituality, but am concerned with religion embodied in practices, and not in the subjective processing of that into personal spiritual experience. It is not enough that many development workers are now open to discussing spirituality but not religion (Arbab 2000a:177), given that it is religion that is the "system of knowledge and practice that has played a determining role in the advancement of civilisation" (Arbab 2000a:178). What suits

² Armstrong (2000) presents a strong argument about the close relationship between modernisation and religious fundamentalism.

the personalising relativism of Western idioms of belief would obscure understandings of historically vital religious collectivism and structures.

The concept of social capital also has extensive range; this research focuses on networks - actual connections that result from ritual - and only peripherally on norms, in the form of trust as a subjective variable that results from these connections, or implications that arise for bonding social capital.

While I sometimes speak of “traditional” and “modern”, it is at all times in the understanding that these terms represent highly problematicised processes: I use them for brevity’s sake but also because these terms hold such sway that using them to subvert them is perhaps the best approach to cracking the colonising, dichotomous development discourse.

Three arguments that shaped this research are those by Eisenstadt (1973,2000) that multiple modernities are emerging from non-Western societies’ complex interactions with the forces of modernisation; costly-signalling theory (Sosis 2004, Sosis and Alcorta 2003), that considers religious ritual as a threshold of trust and a foundational cooperation generator in society; and Edwards’ (1999) argument that a basis for development research and intervention is acknowledging that Western understanding of social capital in non-Western contexts is “extremely shallow”, and that supporting an enabling environment of “paths and meeting grounds” for people to make connections is essential..

1.4 Findings

1.4.1 Religion matters for development

Chapter two outlines the literature which suggests that widespread neglect of religion within development is related to misconceptions of culture and tradition, as well as the industry’s ideological bias. A reconceiving and re-evaluating of religion is now occurring within a wider reconception of culture, demanded by the failure of simplistic interpretations of modernisation theory to explain, and of development models to respond to, emerging pluralistic cultural environments.

In many places religious resurgence is accompanying this modification or indigenisation of modernity. As well, a convergence is occurring between religion and modernisation in general,

and between religion and the development industry in particular, evidenced by increasing recent interactions. Many more examples of initiatives at the interface of development and religion were found than I had anticipated, despite suggestions of a dearth of interactions (eg, Ver Beek 2000). One, the Science, Religion, and Development (SRD) project run by Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), was preceded by interviews with more than 180 development theorists and practitioners worldwide, in which the IDRC's Dr William F Ryan SJ recorded an almost universal desire for development initiatives to give more place to the spiritual dimensions of human existence. All interviewees agreed local cultural and religious values should be integrated into development research (Ryan 1995), though the question remains of just how to do that. Also, the pertinent issue of how indigenous religion might matter for development has not been widely researched, and is addressed by this thesis.

1.4.2 How religion matters for development

An attempt to work out exactly how religion matters for development requires analysis of select religious phenomena in interaction with select development concepts or activities. Chapters 3 to 5 attempt this, at the intersect of religious ritual practice and social capital, contextualised in fieldwork among a minority people, the Akha, in northern Thailand. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology; Chapter 4 places Akha in the context of Thailand, its hilltribe development experience, and its own social capital and religious milieu; Chapter 5 presents fieldwork findings and analysis. This analysis postulates that the concept of social capital, recently popularised in the development industry, has a natural affinity with religion as a site of production of social order, continuity, and ultimate meanings, and with ritual that has historically been a prime generator of social cohesion and cooperative behaviours.

As to the Akha, religion is a significant factor shaping urban migrants' activities and attitudes within the pluralistic and marginalising environment of Chiang Mai city. Ritual practice and resultant social capital is severely constrained, a factor favouring Akha conversion to Christianity to access its social networks. For Akha, their "indigenisation of modernity", as Sahlins (2000:48) calls it, includes in its multiple processes a convergence of their own and a world religion to create an Akha-ised Christianity.

1.5 Conclusions

The development industry will be failing people if it does not pursue nascent moves towards serious engagement with religion. That engagement must vary hugely depending on local contexts, with a key determining factor the investigation and analysis of the interaction of religious forms – both of institutions, religious goods, and embodied spiritual dispositions – and social capital processes, beginning with evaluation of existing systems and connection points, as recommended by Anacleto (2002:69) as a stepping stone towards development.

The complexities of interactions between modernisation and cultures require that analysis extends to how external cultural-religious resources are being appropriated by people. Systematic gathering of case studies and comparisons will aid incorporation of alternative epistemologies and priorities into endogenous development approaches, while wider modernising forces of convergence, ironically, favour such diversification alongside homogenisation. This thesis reinforces Cohen's argument (1991) that institutions and processes of religion and modernisation cannot be taken for granted, and Eisenstadt's notion (1973, 2000) that underlying cultural patterns often persist despite surface changes in societies that are best described as unique multiple modernities, rather than as traditional, modern, or in transition to Westernised modernity.

This conclusion is supported by analysis of the situation of Akha urban migrants in Chiang Mai, where on the face of it indigenous religion is severely constrained from realising its time-proven potential (in villages) for social capital production, but which further analysis shows is a prime mover of Akha conversion to Christianity; the two religions interact as an evolutionary adaptor mechanism, with an ongoing role for ritual as trust threshold and generator. An ongoing process both of cultural destruction and cultural continuity within the modification of modernisation by Akha is manifest in evolving, syncretised religious forms which for urban migrants may in future be a primary site for both persistence of modified indigenous religion and the hybridising of modernity, as well as of social capital production and maintenance.

The resurgence and convergence of religion and development provide rich ground for what Starkloff (1994) foresees as collaborative analysis that maps out "new cultural systems that will have become symbolic of a certain world 'mosaic' of interacting and collaborative cultures"; and from such a mosaic may emerge genuinely alternative, sustainable developments.

Chapter Two

DEVELOPMENT, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

2.0 Introduction

For many years, modernisation was widely envisaged as an homogenising, secularising, atomising process that would produce similar results everywhere, giving rise to ideal model development theories and programmes. However, this was based on a misconception of culture and tradition as bounded, replaceable sets, and resulted in miscalculations of how modernisation and culture would interact; this has, in actuality, been a complex, dialectical evolution that has birthed multiple modernities, many of them influenced by religion, which in many places is resurgent in adapted forms. One result is a convergence instigated in movements that integrate economic and political with religious elements; another result is that the development industry and religion are being moved towards convergence, evidenced by increasing interactions between the two. This resurgence and convergence is discussed in this chapter's first section.

Having demonstrated that religion matters for development, in the second section the focus is on *how* it matters. The concept of social capital is the field of analysis, which considers religion as an evolutionary adaptor mechanism wherein rituals operate to create thresholds within which trust is generated in groups, and which by emphasising connections with ancestors promote cohesion between kin transgenerationally, and legitimate tradition. The benefits and negatives of the resultant bonding social capital are discussed.

Section One - Development and religion

2.1 Unreformed development

Development has been synonymous with modernisation since the development industry began in 1950. There are identifiable, consistently powerful processes at work through modernisation wherever it progresses: individualisation, rationalisation, and functional differentiation (Lambert 1999, Smelser 1966), and subjectivisation and pluralisation (Berger 1969; see

Spretnak 1997 for a summary of the ideology of modernity). Secular rationalism, the worldview of Western modernity, offers a “disenchanted” reality wherein rational cognition – “logos” - describes everything and nonrational cognition – “mythos” - is an anachronism (Armstrong 2000:xiv-xvi, Cohen 1991:45).

The processes are undeniable, but their results have proven unpredictable, something the dominant development paradigm had not imagined, blinkered by notions of modernisation as a generalisable process of manageable change towards universal ideals centred around the economic and political, and by notions of culture as bounded sets of traditions that could be readily supplanted where they appeared unhelpful. A feature of Western paradigms of development and culture was that they tended to “predominate to the exclusion of other models”, and privileged rapid economic growth accompanied by social injustice (IDRC 2000). A classic example is Rostow’s seminal outline of unilinear, economistic thought, *The stages of economic growth, a non-Communist manifesto* (1960), in which his “traditional” stage of society encompasses “the whole pre-Newtonian world” (Rostow 1960:5), the single destination is a high mass-consumption society of “blessings and choices”, and impetus comes from “external intrusion by more advanced societies” (Rostow 1960:6). An elaboration of how this played out in the development industry has been the subject of histories, comprehensive and otherwise, by many authors (eg, Rist 1997, McMichael 1996, Cowen and Shenton 1995, Crush 1995).

Of most pertinence to this thesis are modernisation’s imposition of rationality and plurality in ever-widening spheres, with industrial capitalism the primary carrier through economic, political, and cultural processes in complex inter-relation (Berger 1976:22-24,189). Rationalisation propagated secularisation, that is, the progressive loss of reality of religious interpretations, so that people’s structures of meaning were altered or smashed (Berger 1969:107-8). Pluralism introduced subworlds of choice, breaking cultural-religious monopolies and rendering any choice relativised and less important (Berger 1969:152).

2.1.1 Culture and tradition misconceived

Culture and tradition were misconceived by development and thus the impact that modernisation would have on them was miscalculated. In the 1960s it was possible for Heilbroner (1963, cited Arbab 2000a:171) to state that poor countries “have no history” and for Hagen (1962:3, cited Kebede 1993) to generalise that traditional society “tends to be custom-bound, hierarchical, ascriptive, and unproductive”. The misconception probably had its

roots in a distorted view of human nature resulting from the Enlightenment's elevation of economic, rational man to a status that eclipsed humanity's spiritual, intuitive attributes, just as logos eclipsed mythos rather than complementing it (see Armstrong 2000, Wilson 2000).

Orientalist definitions had suggested that "modern societies *have* culture, while non-modern societies *are* culture" (Lowe and Lloyd 1997:23, cited Haggis and Schech 2002:xix, italics in original). Culture was a bounded, coherent, and autonomous system (Haggis and Schech 2002:xviii, Bauman 1973:35), with tradition defined as "immobile culture trapped outside the perimeter-fences of modern, metropolitan centres" (Wedde 2004:43). Tradition was undifferentiated: "In development discourse, the word 'traditional' always signals a world of shared and unquestioned beliefs. This is the realm of habit, rather than reason" (Pigg 2002:334). This conception dovetailed neatly with modernisation theory: active, dynamic modernisation was seen as acting upon tradition, the passive receptor. Where unhelpful sets of hidebound traditions existed, these could be replaced, or, with ahistorical essentialism, people could be reduced to objects of help who were "seldom thought to have a religion, a culture, or even a trading system of their own" (Anacleiti 2002:168).

The received Western dichotomy pitted tradition against change, development, and modernisation (Sahlins 2000:49, Gusfield 1971:15), the differences between them due to deeply embedded cultural traits. "Thus the traditional traits of Third World societies were thought to dissolve through contact with modernity" (Schech and Haggis 2002:1). For instance, "in the everyday logic of development practice, 'modern medicine' is positioned as the eventual replacement of existing modes of healing" (Pigg 2002:325), entailing conflict between modern medicine and shamans.

2.1.2 Religion misconceived

Religion was consigned to the basket of tradition, equated with superstition, fear, or unhelpful social controls and stratification. Academics have often been hostile to religion, presuming it to be " 'primitive', non-rational, incompatible with science" (Iannaccone, Stark, and Finke 1998). Von der Mehden (1986:5) lists five negative perceptions of religion common among Western academics: That it encourages fatalism, diverts production (eg, religious feasts absorb resources), is divisive and sectarian, that religious officers are parasitic and conservative, and that religion supports tradition, which opposes modernisation.

Academic theory and attitudes have helped shape development industry practice. Says Beemans (2000:vii): “Most, if not all, development agencies are inspired by a scientific, technological, economic and positivistic worldview.” Practitioners generally see religion and spirituality as private with no place in either their professional lives or public domain (Beemans 2000:viii). Gunatilleke (1979:4, cited Goulet 1995:205) says religio-cultural components are omitted from development strategies because the dominant Eurocentric knowledge system is reductionist to the material and economic. For this reason, development ethicist Denis Goulet has called development experts “one-eyed giants” (1980). Significantly, while Weber’s evolutionary view of society and religion coincided with views predominant in development circles for decades, his major argument that religious orientation was of prime causal significance to economic and social development both as initiator and differentiator (Parsons 1965:lx), which he developed most fully in linking Protestantism with the rise of capitalism (Weber 1958), was not cause for the industry to reappraise religion generally.

Antagonism towards religion (often with justification) was not unusual in the development industry, as illustrated in this not uncharacteristic comment:

“Religion is, of course, crucial, but not the interpretation of old scriptures and the lofty philosophies and theologies ... Religion should be studied for what it really is among the people: a ritualised and stratified complex of highly emotional beliefs and valuation that give the sanction of sacredness, taboo, and immutability to inherited institutional arrangements, modes of living, and attitudes. Understood in this realistic and comprehensive sense religion usually acts as a tremendous force for social inertia. The writer knows of no instance in present-day South Asia where religion has induced social change. Least of all does it foster realization of the modernization ideals. From a planning point of view, this inertia related to religion, like other obstacles, must be overcome by policies for inducing changes, formulated in a plan for development. But the religiously sanctioned beliefs and valuations not only act as obstacles among the people to getting the plan accepted but also as inhibitions in the planners themselves insofar as they share them, or are afraid to counteract them.”

- Myrdal 1972:48-49, cited Arbab 2000a:165

Such antagonism results partly from development's own ideological tendencies – modernisation, in acting like a competing religion, did not recognise transcendence but was ambitious enough to attempt to make the material transcendent. This could work among poor people, for whom “material ends appear to embody happiness, prosperity, well-being, dignity, and achievement, and similar venerated ultimate ends. It is, of course, the wisdom of the rich to know that material ends embody nothing of the sort” (Apter 1968:225).

The ideological nature of modernisation and the development industry has been noted by many writers (Armstrong 2000, Eisenstadt 2000, Kampe 1997:166-67, Rist 1997, Crush 1995, Hinton 1988:34 cited in Kampe 1997:142, Goldsmith 1985:477 cited in Kampe 1997:135, Apter 1968). Armstrong (2000:16-17,370-71) and Eisenstadt (2000) both draw parallels between the aggressive and destructive potentialities of ideological - particularly monotheistic - religion and modernity's fiercely aggressive cultural and political programme. Armstrong (2000:234-35) notes the irony that ideologies are typically intolerant of alternative approaches and especially hostile to other ideologies, yet will often share ideas and passions with competing ideologies since “all derive from the same zeitgeist.”

Rist (1997:77) called development a “new religion” with a salvationist ring that made it both sound promising and defy challenge. Crush (1995:10) says development's proponents portrayed it as a “redemptive power” ordering disorderly terrain. Development “is ... very deeply, the focus of redemptive hopes and expectations ... development is a religious category” (Berger 1976:17). Development's ahistorical attitude has parallels with stereotypical missionary attitudes of assuming that God has not been in a place until they show up. It has been argued (Storey 2003) that modernity has its roots in monotheistic religious ideas: things are either right or wrong, black or white; it's also coercive, and given to unquestioning worship (of technology). Interestingly, the progression in development circles generally from enthusiastic belief (1950s-60s), to doubt and cynicism (1970s-80s), to searches for and integration of alternatives (1990s-), follows the “stages of faith” theory of James Fowler (1995)¹.

¹ Fowler was talking about personal religious faith.

2.2 Alternative development

2.2.1 Culture re-evaluated

The crisis and stalemate of modernisation and Marxism in the 1970s-80s, and widespread failure of development projects, propelled the rise of alternative development theories and practices (Narman 1999, Nederveen Pieterse 1998). These emphasised sustainability, equity, and participation leading to empowerment (Friedmann 1992, Arruda 1994:139). Essentially, this was about giving precedence to endogenous development, based on insiders' values and goals, in place of the exogenous approach which had eroded indigenous society (Kampe 1996:155). Nederveen Pieterse (1998:344,350) suggests that even the term "alternative development" is now itself redundant because mainstream development has embraced the same values, such as cultural pluralism. Responding to manifest cultural diversity at grassroots is now high on the mainstream agenda: The 2004 United Nations Human Development report is about how to secure people's choice of cultural identity, where previously differences were seen as a divisive threat to be repressed (Fukuda-Parr 2004:1).

Amid such diversity, the development industry could no longer insist on universal goals or models (Toure 1994, Nederveen Pieterse 1998:356-57). Models contradict self-determination and creativity (Kampe 1996:161), and their abstraction pales beside the experiential multiplicity of "many globalisations" (Berger 2002), "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt 2000,1973), even multiple rationalities, which Armstrong (2000) demonstrates include such phenomena as barbarism and genocide. Development has become "developments", ideally defined according to insiders' cognitions (Gegeo 1998, Goulet 1995:18), and nonmaterial aspects of it have gained profile - "freedom" (Sen 1999), "human flourishing" (Friedmann 1992), wellbeing (Chambers 1997a), spirituality (Kaplan 2002), even "love" (Edwards 2003).

The alternative development discourse has as one of its fundamentals the notion this diversity of approaches is not only desirable, but may contain the seeds of rehabilitation of industrialised societies that are widely critiqued as resource-stripping and socially-alienating development models. The hunger for alternatives, by its opposition to a purely materialistic approach, regularly assesses spirituality; for example, indigenous people are held up as "living examples of ancient values that may be shared by everyone" (Durning 1992:48).

2.2.2 Culture reconceived

Culture has had to be re-evaluated as a concept because modernisation's interaction with cultures has been so unpredictable. Instead of culture as a bounded set, Waldman (1986, cited Toyota 1993:21) saw culture as a process, a set of symbols for taking strategic action in response to continual change. "Tradition is not a 'given' which is naturally handed down from the past, but can be recognised only through its validation by people in the present" (Toyota 1993:22). Berger (1969:3-28) argues culture is dialectical, being both produced and in turn influencing its own production, whether such culture is labelled "modern" or "traditional". Verhelst and Tyndale (2002:6) frame culture in three dimensions: the symbolic, which includes religion; societal, which includes organisational patterns such as family; and technological. Convergence is about development working its way back, from prioritising the third dimension to the exclusion of the other two, to including the societal – underway since the 1970s – and the symbolic.

Because culture is *a priori* to technology and to economy, the invasion of technological conformity, which is a given, has not been producing cultural conformity (Kebede 1993:121-123). Modernity itself can be seen as a product of tradition (Kebede 1993:115), or seen *as* tradition itself (that is, strategic actions) shaped by people in response to a given historical situation (Gusfield 1971:22). Comaroff (1994:303, cited Buadaeng 2003:285) uses the term "imagined modernities" to argue against a tendency to see modernity as a socio-historical break opposed to tradition. "These dualisms distract us from seeing important similarities in the fabric of all societies – such as the persistent role of ritual and of organisations built on transcendent authority, godly or otherwise."

The given historical situation of the last half-century is one shaped most powerfully by modernisation, and what Berger (2002:16) calls its accelerated, intensified form, globalisation, the penetrating power of which is hard to over-estimate and which has an accompanying global culture that is mostly Western, indeed American (Berger 2002:2). As noted, there are processes and impacts characteristic of modernisation, yet these occur within the realm of cultures that are evolving, interactive strategies, not passive, bounded sets, which results in pluralising modernisation acting within multiple, diverse societies in a dialectical loop that pluralises modernity itself.

2.2.3 Multiple modernities

A result is that almost everywhere there is localisation of global culture, and such modification can advance to the stage of hybridisation and innovation, where sometimes indigenous forms are revitalised (Berger 2002:10-11). Wedde (2004), for instance, describes a five-year programme just begun to develop networks of cultural exchange between southern hemisphere countries (www.southproject.org/) which reflects how diverse cultures are choosing to disarticulate from a modernist, Euro-American cultural axis, to instead promote “newly articulated sites of indigeneity.” Some authors celebrate such hybridisations of modernity and tradition/neo-tradition (Verhelst and Tyndale 2002:12, Sahlins 2000, Gegeo 1998, Escobar 1995). “The project is the indigenisation of modernity,” states Sahlins (2000:48). Not only does this not auger well for the American-Enlightenment aim of a universal civilisation, but it has triggered warnings of technology change and anarchic markets increasing plurality and throwing capitalisms into flux (Gray 1998:216).

It is not so much that the ascendancy of modernity can no longer be taken as a given, as that the development of multiple modernities has become the norm. These modernities share characteristics of the major processes of modernisation, such as pluralisation, individualisation, and rationalisation, yet these processes are shaped and manifested differently in different societies, as can be seen in the case of secularisation discussed below.

Eisenstadt, a pioneer of problematicised modernisation, arrived at his notion of “multiple modernities” (1973) from his analysis of non-Western societies’ varied responses to external forces of modernisation. He found that underlying cultural patterns often kept operating despite surface changes and concluded that such societies were neither modern, traditional, nor in transition towards being modern in a Western sense. Thailand, the site of fieldwork for this thesis, is a prime example of this dynamic, as will be seen in Chapter 4. Eisenstadt (2000:600), in gauging what modernities are becoming, suggests the resurgence and “far-reaching reconstitution” of religious dimensions is one significant feature that transcends the classical cultural and political programme of modernity and the classical model of the nation-state. He concludes that contemporary fundamentalist and communal-religious movements in West and East are indeed modern, and want to dissociate Westernisation from modernisation, so they can have and adapt the latter while opposing the former.

“The de-Westernisation of modernity involves the growing diversification of the visions and understanding of modernity, of the basic cultural agendas of different sectors of modern societies, far beyond the

momogenic and hegemonic visions of modernity that were prevalent in the 1950s.”

- Eisenstadt 2000:609

The combination of religion and modernity often brings out a dark, violent side. “This attests to the fact that the continual expansions of modernity throughout the world were not very benign or peaceful, they did not constitute the continual progress of reason” but entailed the “modern barbarism” of wars, genocide, repressions, and dislocations (Eisenstadt 2000:610). So it is that the emphasis on human resilience to counter what Sahlins (2000:45) calls the “despondency theory” of modernisation, should not obscure the fact that the development industry has done real violence to people’s lives, including by evacuating their meaning systems (Goulet 1992:471). A dichotomous worldview has birthed divisive interventions, such as attempts to sunder systems that historically have integrated economics and religion.

Lansing and Kremer (1995:258-268) recount how, in Bali in the 1980s, the Asian Development Bank sought to modernise elaborate irrigation systems crucial to islanders’ wet-rice farming livelihoods. ADB’s project assumed local-level irrigation associations were autonomous and overlooked the centuries-old coordination role of Bali’s water temples. Farmers complained the temples were being ignored and the project disrupting water scheduling and pest control. “Development agencies, however, were inclined to dismiss the water temples as a purely religious system, with no practical significance” (Lansing and Kremer 1995:259). The project led to reduced rice yields and pesticide pollution. Lansing and Kremer’s simulation model demonstrating hydrological interdependence was important in eventually persuading the ADB that the temples were crucial. In 1988 the ADB’s project audit stated: “It is concluded that traditional value systems should be exploited for productive purposes even when technological innovations are introduced ... and the technological changes should not be introduced in isolation of rituals and traditions which have convincingly proven their contribution to sustained irrigated cropping” (ADB Post Evaluation Office 1988, cited Lansing and Kremer 1995:268). Costly experience moved the ADB from ignoring an integrated economic-religious system, to according it instrumental value.

The Bali example illustrates the point that being able to hybridise modernisation depends on having adequate cultural resources to maintain or construct distinct lifestyles or identities (Berger 2002:4). These resources vary in their instantiation, distribution, and adaptability between societies. One resource is religion, in its many aspects, though for this thesis particularly as an evolutionary adaptor mechanism (see Sosis and Alcorta 2003). Examples of indigenised modernity mixing rational economic exchanges with religious and ritual

components include Cree American Indians using snowmobiles and trucks to increase opportunities for sharing as part of a cosmic cycle of exchange (Scott 1984, cited Sahlins 2000), and highlanders in Papua New Guinea, whose interclan ceremonial exchanges have flourished via a cash economy that has multiplied exchange obligations (Sahlins 2000:52-53, Lederman 1986:332 cited in Sahlins 2000:53).

Societies with fewer resources may struggle to achieve such hybridisation, and one option for them is assimilation. Fieldwork for this thesis was among the Akha minority people of north Thailand, who face just such constraints and threats. Conversely, the spread of multiple modernities only increases the range of exogenous cultural resources a society can draw upon; the possibilities for cultural continuity within a pluralising world for the likes of the Akha are greater than under the hegemonic version of modernity of the 1950s. There are multiple common reference points and communications channels “far beyond what existed before” (Eisenstadt 2000:610); for instance, indigenes can hybridise themselves around modernities based in Islam (Sardar 1991), or even Pentecostal evangelicalism, as that dissociates from West (Gumucio 2002).

One ramification of this is that any analysis of a society’s available cultural resources for development purposes cannot be limited to its supposed internal resources. This was demonstrated during fieldwork when it became clear I could no longer ignore, as intended, Akhas’ interaction with Christianity.

2.3 Resurgence and convergence

2.3.1 Religious resurgence

One multiplier of modernity has been modernisation’s interaction with religion. Early theories of inevitable secularisation via modernisation were mistaken (du Toit 2003) and appear to apply only to Western Europe, says Fukuyama (2001:19). O’Connor (1996:220) states that the West and Southeast Asia differ not in that the former has no religious needs, but that it lacks the inherited forms, the collective representations, to meet those needs well. “It is this poverty, a historically created condition, that sets us apart from Southeast Asia.”

Many writers note how modernisation is often accompanied by resurgent religion (Pigg 2002, Fukuyama 2001, Armstrong 2000:ix-x, Eng 1999, Tozy 1996, Von der Mehden 1996, Berger 1992:28). Keyes et al (1994:3, cited Buadaeng 2003:286) said the thesis that Asian states

would become secularised as they progressed has not been borne out. “On the contrary, as these states have modernised, religion has become more, not less, significant.” In many places modernisation has led to “reaffirmations of religion” (Berger 1992:28): Mulder (2003) outlines religious resurgence in Southeast Asia, Weller (1999:83-106) in North Asia, Tozy (1996) in Africa. Tanabe (1996:19, cited Buadaeng 2003:286) found the number of spirit mediums living in urban Chiang Mai doubled, to 500, between the late 1970s and 1986; fringe cults are multiplying in Brazil’s slums (Clarke 1999); lovelorn teenagers worship Hindu gods at a Bangkok footpath shrine (Sukrung 2004). In the West, New Age spiritualities attained popularity, while liminal forms of “churchless” Christianity engage sociologists (Jamieson 2000).

Resurgence is partly a reaction against negative externalities of modernisation – eg, suffering that responds to the religious message of social reform, or individualisation countered with religious collectivisation - and partly a result of the fruits of modernisation, such as education and communications technology, being used by religious people (UNESCO 1996:18). “Since every need for salvation is an expression of some distress, social or economic oppression is an effective source of salvation beliefs...” (Weber 1965:107). It has been widely argued that rapid economic change, particularly the introduction of capitalism, leads to increased beliefs in evil and the devil (see Clough and Mitchell 2000). Research shows that a sense of peripheralisation feeds anxiety and occult discourses (Cough and Mitchell 2000:10-11) - religious creativity ensues, “anchored in locality, influenced by habitat” (Clough 2000:248).

The nature of resurgence differs depending on a society’s religious resources and how these interact with the manifested processes of modernisation. Worsley (1997:249,255) cautions against the great temptation to assume religion has the same salience and scope across all cultures, noting also that within societies many ordinary people do not even know the substance of the beliefs by which they are classified.

2.3.2 Convergence of religion and modernisation

As the discussion of multiple modernities makes clear, it is not just a case of religion being resurgent in familiar forms, but of the interplay of specific religious phenomena with contextualised processes of modernisation resulting in modernities that often have novel religious characteristics. This convergence occurring at the macro-scale of religion-spirituality

and modernisation inevitably alters the relationship between religion-spirituality and the development industry.

A re-valuing of intangibles is evident in many spheres, whether of smarter business management or spirituality in the workplace (Gunther 2001, Neal 2000), science that is accommodating of mystery (Easterbrook 1997), neuroscientists' studies of ritual, trance, and meditation (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999), or researchers allowing for emotion (Bondi 2003). Scientist-philosophers Bohm, Capra, and Iqbal each promote a cosmology that combines religious and scientific perspectives (Baharuddiin 2000:115). Levi-Strauss (1966:22) maintained that mythical and scientific thought are equally valid: Science starts with ideas, mythical thought with events and experiences, which it constantly re-orders to find meaning and "also acts as liberator by its protest against the idea that anything can be meaningless ...". New economic models of religious behaviour are challenging received, distorted wisdom about religion's irrationality (Iannaccone, Stark, and Finke 1998).

North Asia provides an example of convergence, for its religious resurgence is not at variance or peripheral to economics. Weller (2002:38) states: "If anything, the data suggest that expanding markets have actively encouraged religious growth Chinese societies are developing new religious forms, rooted in the past, that directly address the market and the problem of values in market societies." Resurgent ancestor worship has value in energising values of filial piety and meshing individuals into wider social webs useful for doing business, while spreading spirit-ghost worship has an expanded role in Chinese celebration of individualism and competitiveness (Weller 2002:39). In Anxi district, ancestor worship has been the catalyst for cultural and economic revitalisation (Eng 1999), a case that will receive further consideration in the following section because it demonstrates the causative role of religion in producing social capital.

Latin America provides examples of convergence that are primarily political, not economic. Gumucio (2002:69) argues that resurgent, modified indigenous religions, often in forms syncretised with Christianity, are "a profound source of strength, wielding undeniably great influence upon the reconstitution of ethnic identity and the formulation of ethnic claims and principles" by Latin American peasants. The religions are valued for themselves "amid new magico-religious currents, which recognise forms of action that no longer obey Western models" (Gumucio 2002:70) eg, shamanism for its healing powers. An instrumental usefulness to the struggle only raises religions' profile and respect. Shamanic rituals reaffirm ethnic identity – in cities they are a "fundamental part of the process of re-ethnification"

(Gumucio 2002:75) – while a religious emphasis on ancestors helps raise the status of claims on ancestral lands to an almost sacred character.

Modern institutions of State and religion have provided an environment conducive to this, with Latin American Governments in the 1990s recognising legally and constitutionally the rights of indigenous people. Christian mission activity, resulting in explosive Protestant growth, has bolstered capacity by training leaders who share or swap allegiances to support indigenous claims. Also, as Catholics and Pentecostals respond, their own ethnocentric orientation is changing to accommodate more indigenous syncretism. Herein is seen the interplay of internal and external cultural resources within the hybridising process, a process that appears to be one of gradual syncretisation of beliefs and rituals from which will emerge indigenous religious forms drawing on the past but reinterpreted for the present, forming a resource for use in mobilising struggle and contributing overall to recovery of indigenous identity.

“We are concerned here with a constructive project which points toward a multiethnic and multicultural democracy, in which religion forms a part of the global project without being the centre of the interpretation of reality.”

- Gumucio 2002:80

This highlights that development is often a process replete with dislocation, suffering, and struggle, which demand healing, comforting, or cauterising, none of which can be readily provided by rationality or a material cure (Armstrong 2000:xv,370). Development needs its own theodicy, an avenue to access those major cultural resources for coping with suffering found, in practice, in spirituality. Furthermore, if development is about dreams, about awe and mystery (Falk 1979), meaning (Goulet 1995), and happiness (Veenhoven 2002:41), development needs an imagination that can benefit from spiritual resources too. Religion can be a source of theodicy and imagination for development, though not necessarily the only one, as attempts to forge engagement with dreams and pain from non-religious ethics, reflexivity, and love show (eg, Edwards 2003).

2.3.3 Convergence of development industry and religion

The interaction between the development industry and religion-spirituality is evolving within this wider context. That the reconception of culture impels the development industry to reconceive, re-evaluate, and revalue religion is, I argue, obvious, however, this argument implies that the development industry is gatekeeper of its own evolution, when in fact the industry is itself being shaped by modernising processes that would tend to encourage convergence with the spiritual-religious. The simple fact alluded to by Esposito (UNESCO 1996:18), that developing country populations are not becoming less religious but they are becoming more educated and cosmopolitan, must ultimately result in the global mix of scientists, academics, businesspeople, bureaucrats, and educators – who can be prime carriers of modernisation - becoming more religious, rather than less.

Parallel effects, reactions to, and results from modernisation can be seen in religion (and society generally) and the development industry. As to effects, pluralism/relativism have undermined the supposed universal models of both religion and development; individualisation has eroded the status and motivating power of their institutions, whether World Bank or Church; and rationalisation has produced a disenchantment that shrinks the imagination of possibilities, whether of projects or faith. Furthermore, there are parallels in observable reactions to these effects: one is a retreat into fundamentalism, whether in Christian or Islamic isolationism or the ideologically-driven development of a Nasser or Washington Consensus (Armstrong 2000:190-91,235-236); another is a sidestep into another “faith” that provides more coherence, whether secularism or post-or anti-developmentalism; and a third reaction is to move towards integration, a process wherein the convergence considered in this thesis occurs.

Not only effects and reactions but also the results of these impacts are similar between the development industry and religion: In both there is newfound, widespread suspicion or hostility to metanarratives, grand theories, and institutions seen as embodying those (for this trend in religion see Hari 2004, Riddell 1998:104-106, Tomlinson 1995); in both there are occurring re-valuations of diversity in social and cultural structures, values, and beliefs, allied to which is a search for ways to engage crossculturally that are not assimilative or invasive (for this trend in Christianity, see Riddell 1998, Starkloff 1994, Boff 1985); in both there is new emphasis on personal transformation that coheres with professional or religious affiliation, and in both spheres this is regularly referred to as spirituality (for this trend in development, see Edwards 2003,1999a, Kaplan 2002,1996, Chambers 1997a:1743, 1997b:195,210,230).

If these parallels are invented or coincidental they may reveal nothing. I would argue rather that they represent the convergence at the heart of this thesis. The evolutionary nature of human development in its broadest sense includes both religion and the development industry; these both encapsulate a quest for meaning, order, and human fulfilment. Little wonder then, they also share ideologically disturbing features. In evolutionary terms, some religious studies and philosophy scholars suggest that the “disenchantment” of the world through rationalisation and secularisation was only a short stage of post-Enlightenment history, and humanity is now moving into the next stage, of re-enchanting the world by integrating the material with the spiritual-religious (Cousins 1999, Lambert 1999). It is possible, similarly, that “the Western model of development is a short parenthesis in the post-colonial stage of human development” (IDRC 2000).

The development industry and religions are evolving in an environment where people generally have greater awareness of a multiplicity of visions and ontological conceptions - wherein religious and developmentalist categories often overlap and are combined - that these are contestable, and thus there are more options to transform a process of alienation, in which people have perceived their situation as divinely-ordained, or ‘Development Industry’-ordained, into an arena where their empowerment can advance an endogenous agenda.

The ontological shift required to apprehend modernity as “a phenomenon endowed with self-creativity” (Kebede 1993:117) lubricates the convergence of development and religion, for it accepts the creativity of the mind/spirit as causative, countering both the materialism of capitalist and Marxist theory, and the dogmatism of religion. The rise of culture-sensitive approaches spurs unease with a development model focused on materialism (Verhelst and Tyndale 2002:6), reinforced by the affinity between culture and other intangibles: “Culture is in the final analysis about meaning: that is why it is so closely related to spirituality” (Verhelst and Tyndale 2002:13).

2.3.4 Interactions between development industry and religion

If indeed convergence is occurring, what evidence is there of a nascent shift in development meeting religion coming the other way, that is, of development re-evaluating the spiritual just as religion is - as Cousins suggests (1999:218) - challenged to re-evaluate the material? I found many, and sometimes surprising, initiatives that indicate a convergence is occurring, as well as many gaps. I will consider first the literature, then agency-religion interaction.

The three basic approaches to religion in development, apart from ignoring it, have been its use instrumentally to further non-religious goals (eg, Armstrong 2000:192-198, Goulet 1996); its use motivationally within faith-based development agencies to further their often exogenous goals; and its integration into endogenous agendas as a legitimate source of means and ends. Many, varied and combined positions exist along this continuum. In the Bali water temples case, the ADB belatedly revised practice to account for religious structures' instrumental usefulness, before its intervention rendered those structures unviable and implausible to Balinese. Convergence between development and religion turned potential failure into progress – though the fact that convergence was catalysed by Western hydrologists, not protesting farmers, shows scientific bias persisted. I would expect instrumental valuing of religion to be an initial step on a path that inevitably leads to deeper revaluation, and as such instrumentalism is a positive move.

This research topic was originally crystallised for me by a survey by sociology professor Kurt Alan Ver Beek (2000), from which he argues that development literature and practice have systematically avoided the topic of spirituality. Ver Beek surveyed three prominent development journals - *World Development*, *Journal of Development Studies*, and *Journal of Developing Areas* – to find references to spirituality or religion. Table 1 shows the results created by searching the title, abstracts, identifiers, subject headings, and class headings for each of the three journals, for the years 1982-1998, using the *First Search* bibliographic database. The journal search found that the rare reference to religion in the first two journals was as one of several descriptive categories. Not one article in any of the journals had as its central theme the interface of development with spirituality or religion.

Ver Beek further states that the subject of spirituality is unjustifiably missing from subfields of development literature where it should show up: namely, the integrated rural development literature, and literature about indigenous knowledge.² He also asked three major US development agencies – USAID, CARE, and Catholic Relief Services - whether they had a policy about religion. None did; they offered instead generalist statements about their own neutrality regards religion. Ver Beek (2000:40) blames practitioners' scientific/materialistic bias, coupled with a “respect” for religion that effectively sidelines it and results in an imposition of values “just as serious as that of men over women or the wealthy over the poor”.

² These two fields were bridged and very widely popularised in development circles by Robert Chambers (1997,1983); Chambers does not directly address religion.

Table 1: Number of articles with reference to the listed keywords, by journal

Journals: 1982-1998	Keywords				
	Environment	Gender	Population	Spiritual and spirituality	Religion and religious
<i>World Development</i>	83	85	89	0	5
<i>Journal of Development Studies</i>	19	46	38	0	1
<i>Journal of Developing Areas</i>	18	32	43	0	10

Source: Ver Beek 2000:37

“... if development is truly about strengthening people's capacity to determine their *own* values and priorities, and to organise themselves to act on these, then researchers and practitioners must recognise the importance of spirituality in people's lives, seek to better understand it, address it openly, and give people the opportunity and the power to decide how both their development and their spirituality will and should shape each other.”

- Ver Beek 2000:41-42, italics in original

By contrast, my survey found that the development discourse appears open to discussions about the role of religion-spirituality: Witness the 461-item bibliography “Religion and Development” at the Danish Institute for International Studies (CDR 1998) and this thesis’ bibliography. Development practice, of course, is far more diverse than the discourse suggests, and there are numerous examples of religion playing a key role, as examples outlined previously suggest. I also found that Ver Beek’s brief survey missed some important interfaces. Notable among these are the World Bank’s initiative with the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD); research at Canada’s federally-funded IDRC; and United Nations’ moves to include spirituality in summit debates.

The subject of religion is engaging major multilaterals. World Bank President James Wolfenson, after visiting poor people in 60-70 countries, said: “The World Bank’s central mission is to weld economic assistance with spiritual, ethical and moral development” (cited Chowdhry 2003:5). UNESCO’s John Esposito says the growing importance of religion to cooperation and mutual understanding at many levels challenges the development industry, scholars, and religious leaders, among others, to find new frameworks beyond the dichotomies of secular/religious and modern/traditional (UNESCO 1996:19), echoing Tozy (1996:58).

Wolfensohn helped set up WFDD, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1998, as an independent organisation aiming to promote dialogue on poverty and development, in and between faith traditions and development agencies (WFDD 2004; Tyndale 2002:45). It has run workshops on the relationship of Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism to development, and about alternatives to global capitalism. It has made submissions to the World Bank about its World Development Reports³ (Tyndale 2001) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In relation to the Millennium Development Goals, it is identifying faith-based development programmes that could be scaled-up, and linking them to donors.

The Development Gateway, a US independent, nonprofit organisation, has been supporting WFDD to collect and insert data for Gateway’s Local Projects Database (LPD), a tool for better coordination of development projects piloted in five countries in 2004. Data was collected in Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, and Malawi by fieldworkers at faith-based communities who gathered information on 120 activities (Development Gateway 2004).

The United Nations organised a seminar on the ethical and spiritual dimensions of social progress in preparation for the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995. The Slovenia seminar was in response to a perceived moral crisis at individual level and ethical crisis at societal level fostered by the dominant development model (UN 1995:24). Among the many general responses the seminar report outlined for combating alienation and enhancing human dignity, were a worldwide “moral and spiritual” renewal as a matter of urgency (UN 1995:38). At the UN, a Spiritual Caucus was set up in Geneva after the September 2001 terrorist attacks. Now called the NGO committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concern, it includes 26 NGOs and exists to support and explore the link between

³ Part of the WFDD’s submission to the World Bank about its 2000/01 World Development Report stated that: “...the WFDD regrets that some of the main issues raised by the religious communities, such as the importance of values and moral education, cultural diversity and the responsibility of the rich towards the poor have only been very marginally addressed, if, indeed, at all. ... by the *WDR 2000/1*” (Tyndale 2001:2).

science and spirituality, by presenting evidence-based knowledge to demonstrate the causal effect of the spiritual dimension on personal and global change (Stuckelberger 2002).

At the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, a working group of religious leaders set up in 2001, has enunciated a gap in common vision about the interface of religion and globalisation, religion and economy, and religion and technology. It was to explore the possibility of creating a council of religious leaders to give religious, spiritual, and ethical guidance to WEF, the UN, and others (Stuckelberger 2002). The World Health Organisation (WHO) has its own taskforce, Religious Leaders For World Mental Health (World Health Organisation 2004).

A Colloquium on Science, Religion, and Development, which drew 150 participants to New Delhi in November 2000, was described by organisers, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India, as the beginning of grassroots dialogue between development specialists, religious leaders, and scientists. Co-sponsored by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WHO, IDRC, and Indian government agencies, the colloquium drew representatives from the World Bank and UN agencies (UNDP, UNIFEM, UNESCO), among others (Bahá'í International Community 2000).

These initiatives are complemented by research, partly aimed at extending what is accepted as valid development research beyond positivistic methods. IDRC's Science, Religion, and Development (SRD) project has been looking at how development relates to the spiritual and religious dimension of human wellbeing from the aspect of the content of religions, not religious institutions. SRD, presented as one step in propagating "being-oriented" research (Harper and Clancy 1999:73-74), resulted in a publication (Harper 2000) drawn from meetings of four natural or social scientists each from a different faith background – a Hindu, Bahá'í, Catholic, and Muslim - to discuss how religion and development converged for them. Their reflections stress interconnectedness and the need to achieve complementarity between religion and science, to aid harmonious development. Participant Farzam Arbab said: "None of us wished to deal with religion as a mere instrument, either as a philosophical tool or as a social actor that happens to be useful for the furtherance of material development" (Eberlee 2000).

These examples are indicative of convergence, as development donors and agencies begin to consider, if still within strict limits or haltingly, religion and spirituality as factors that influence their work. Development literature reflects this, to a limited extent.

2.3.5 Limitations

There are at least three major constraints on the evolution of the development-religion convergence. First, it remains uncertain how to integrate spirituality-religion into research, theory, and practice; second, the push to do so appears so far to be once more a eurocentric phenomenon; third, religion is complex and differentiated, and has a long track record of producing negative externalities.

First, while moving beyond a materialistic approach enjoys wide support in the development industry (Eberlee 2000, Ryan 1995) it is unclear how theory and practice are to acquire a spiritual perspective (Arbab 2000b:3). Little development research has considered religious issues, organisations and their interaction, or norms, or captured knowledge in a systematic fashion (Stuckelberger 2002, Marshall 2001:7,14, Candland 2000:355).⁴

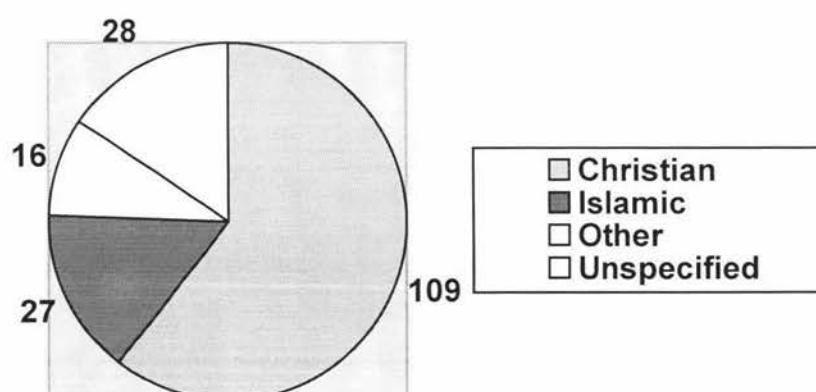
Ver Beek (2000:40) notes two obstacles: a lack of precedent, and lack of models. "...little is known about the role of spirituality in the development process, and little or no guidance is given to development practitioners as to how to address spiritual issues" (Ver Beek 2000:38). There are few accepted tools for analysing values and beliefs for incorporation into social and natural sciences research (Tyndale 2001:3, IDRC 2000). IDRC's Beemans (2000:viii) notes its research was contentious and difficult because the researchers themselves routinely consigned religion to the private sphere, so were unsure how to approach questions or who to ask.

A second weakness is that much of the published critique regarding spirituality has so far come from Western theorists and practitioners, usually coming from a faith-based background, most usually a Christian perspective. The critique does find some echoes among Third World scholars, such as in economics, where models are being formulated on values drawn from Buddhism (Tantirittisak 2001) and Islam. There again, the debate both originates from and tends to be about the world religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism) and development, not about minority religions. Also, the focus so far tends to be on how faith-based organisations can contribute to development (eg, Candland 2000), with less about how faith-infused societies can guide their own development, or on the big question of "what can the faiths offer as viable alternative cultures which will enable people to live life in all its fullness?" (Tyndale 1998:7).

⁴ Researchers historically have conveniently curbed their curiosity. Of all dissertations at US universities on religion, anthropology, sociology, geography, history and politics in Southeast Asia pre-1950, two-thirds were about the Philippines, an ex-US colony (Von der Mehden 1986:21).

Given world religions' colonising/universalising record, minority people have reason to be wary of attempts to invigorate a religiously-attuned development, especially given that at multinational level Christianity in particular has a high profile. Of 2000 NGOs with UN Economic and Social Council (EOSOC) consultative status, 180 or 9% are religious; but 60% of these are Christian (109 of 180); the next biggest group is Islamic (15%); with "others" (including indigenous religions) just 9%; an unspecified religious grouping makes up the remaining 16% (Stuckelberger 2002; see also UN 2002; see Figure 1). WFDD's efforts to secure donor funding for programmes run by faith-based development organisations might end up rewarding the haves rather than have-nots.

Figure 1: Numbers of religious NGOs with consultative status at EOSOC, by religion



Source: Stuckelberger 2002

This alludes to the third tension. The literature commonly emphasises the huge differentiation between religions, and their historical record of producing violence and conflict, as well as social cohesion and meaning. Arbab (2000a:162-3) credits science with freeing people from superstitious and bigoted religion, but suggests that freedom is to pursue a nobler religion, not mere materialism. Goulet (1996) provides a useful distinction, between religious beliefs and practices that increase people's alienation, principally by favouring passive acceptance of a divinely-ordained and ordered universe, and those that promote engagement with the historical task of reform. Religions have different capacities for the latter, in different contexts, and

Goulet suggests there is usually much room to increase capacity as long as strategies reinforce core values.

Also, religion itself has been a bastion of theories of linear progression, from heathenism to Christian enlightenment; sociologists - Durkheim (eg, 1972:227), Weber, Marx – extended the progression to posit the secular society as the ultimate destination. Such simpleminded progression has been problematicised for both modernisation theory and religion, as shown.

Differentiation extends to the salience and scope of religion to the collective and individual (Worsley 1997:249,255), and to contestability between religions or worldviews. When Waikato Maori in New Zealand delayed the extension of a motorway into a swamp where they said a mythical taniwha, or river monster, lived, some Pakeha lamented nonsensical barriers to development (Pennington 2002).

Grounds for division present obvious disincentives for the development industry to address religion, however, the potential for conflict has not deflected it from grappling with issues of power imbalances of other types, for instance, of gender. The complexity of religion in development is part and parcel of the complexity of development overall. Relegating religion to an alternative camp outside mainstream development is not helpful, and probably not possible given the forces of convergence. The challenge simply underlines the need for development intervention to fit each specific cultural context, and that requires research with not only appropriate tools (IDRC 2000) but with input from people who are both endogenous to a situation and who are stakeholders in the values, beliefs, and practices that predominate there.

“The central message is that the new development strategies that are taking shape call for much more thoughtful joint efforts that bridge different ways of looking at the world ... There are countless instances of partnerships bridging religious and development worlds, but even more of gaps and missed opportunities”

- Marshall 2000:13

2.4 Quitovac: The complexities of convergence

This thesis' central tenet is that religion is an embedded cultural phenomenon sometimes vital for endogenous-led development. Just how complex this can become is illustrated by

experience at Quitovac oasis in Mexico (Weir and Azary 2001). The Tohono O'odham people in west Mexico, after centuries of affluent subsistence, in 1982 suddenly adopted mono-cropping - and did poorly out of it economically. Earlier studies held this up as an example of modernisation and a global political economy demolishing people's natural economy and culture (Rea, Nabhan, and Reichardt 1983:9, Watts 1983:22, both cited Weir and Azary 2001:45). Weir and Azary's study (2001) refutes this, arguing Quitovaceños consciously adopted strategies to protect and enhance their identity. "We argue that the development efforts at Quitovac are but one aspect of a complex cultural amalgam that centers upon the villagers' spiritual beliefs and Quitovac's role as an O'odham pilgrimage site." (Weir and Azary 2001:48)

Mono-cropping came about as one result of Quitovaceños' efforts to attain legal standing with the Mexican State as an indigenous people with a right to their land, an effort which enhanced their standing with non-assimilated O'odham elsewhere, who thus continued to make pilgrimage to Quitovac despite having previously removed one of Quitovac's sacred objects in protest at the oasis people's acculturation into mainstream Mexican society. So, rather than monocrop alfafa symbolising globalising assimilation, it could be seen as a symbol of adaptive resistance. Weir and Azary concluded that they would not have understood the dynamics at Quitovac had they not appreciated two forms of truth – the in-place experiential knowledge of villagers, and academic rationality. Their findings "run counter to various development theories ... which tend to place material wellbeing in a position of primary importance" (Weir and Azary 2001:50). This points up the complementarity of scientific and religious ways of apprehending reality, and the danger of assuming the cognitive system dominant in development circles is adequate.

Section Two

Religion and social capital

2.5 Introduction

Poor people have limited assets. Social capital theory holds that social capital can be among their assets. Social capital has become a popular concept in the development industry, linking its economic focus with social concerns mainstreamed by alternative development. Since the late 1980s there have arisen multiple definitions and theories of social capital, along with measurement approaches, while more recently some writers have elaborated the terms “religious capital” and “spiritual capital” as subsets of social capital.

Social capital theories are widely contested (Krishna 2002:14-27). I adopt Krishna’s midway stance, which regards social capital as an independent variable with some explanatory power, that is nonetheless reliant for conversion from latent to active capital by mediating agencies; dense social networks with cooperative norms can generate collective benefits that bolster institutions, which in turn foster norms and networks (Krishna 2002:22-26). Krishna’s (2002:9) central conclusion from his study of 69 villages in India is that social capital serves villages well by enhancing economic development and democratic participation, but not automatically. “Investing in the stock of social capital is unlikely to be very productive unless steps are taken at the same time to enhance agency capacity” (Krishna 2002:xi).

In this section I will position myself regards the extensive social capital literature, before discussing religion’s function and potential as a source of social capital, particularly its operation in producing and maintaining intragroup trust within the threshold of religious ritual, as posited by costly signalling theory, with reference to ancestor worship and the role of shamans because these are pertinent to my fieldwork. Supported by an illuminating case study from China (Eng 1999), I will show that religion has multiple, obvious affinities with the social capital concept, begging the question why there is not more research into religion’s potential.

2.5.1 Social capital in precis

Social capital is a term for age-old social bonds, recently popularised because it gives economists a tool for integrating non-market rationality into economic models, and sociologists the hope of influencing economists (McNeill 2002, Edwards 1999b, Warner 1993:1051 cited in Swartz 1996:80). Bourdieu's insight (1986) that diverse forms of symbolic capital can be traded for each other attracts policymakers looking for cost-effective solutions (Portes 1998); Fukuyama's (1995) stress on social capital contributing to the functioning of modern economies and liberal democracies garnered economists' attention.

Some definitions of social capital emphasise norms (eg, Fukuyama 2001) and others networks or ability to access network benefits (eg, Portes 1998); I adopt the combination definition, as in the "social networks and the norms of reciprocity associated with them" (Putnam and Goss 2002:4). Core components of social capital are associability, trust, and attention, eg civic-mindedness (Offe 1997), and individual attributes of sociability alongside the density of "enduring cooperative groups" (Unger 1998:13-14). Portes (1998) distinguishes between three elements: people making claims on social capital; those who agree to these claims (the sources of social capital); and the resources themselves. Major sources include, one, a society's store of written and unwritten rules, and, two, its operation of reciprocity, which generates solidarity and service. Portes further suggests three basic functions of social capital, as a source of social control; of family support; and of benefits mediated through extrafamilial networks. The last is much the most described form.

Putnam and Goss (2002:9-12) outline four complementary distinctions of social capital, in a paired arrangement: thick or thin; formal or informal; inward or outward; and bonding or bridging, with this latter pair most relevant to this research. Groups exhibit different blends in varying interactions in varying circumstances. Bonding social capital brings together people who are similar in key respects (eg, ethnicity, religion) and fosters intragroup cooperation, but is prone to producing negative externalities. Evidence also suggests most people get their primary social support from bonding social capital (Putnam and Goss 2002:11). The bridging form joins people who are unlike each other, and is more likely to facilitate cooperation between groups.

This distinction between what have been termed "civil" and "uncivil" social capital explains why some theorists maintain that only civic involvement produces widely beneficial social capital, and that kinship does not (eg, Offe 1997). Granovetter (1973:1376) contended that "strong" interpersonal ties (eg, kinship, intimate friendship) are less important than "weak ties"

(eg, acquaintance, shared membership in secondary associations) in sustaining community cohesion and collective action. However, Adler and Kwon (1999) sensibly argue it is the contingencies of the task at hand that determine whether strong or weak social ties function better. Thus tasks that require trust and cooperation, say, hillside dry-cultivation rice farming, do better with strong ties; a search for new information, with weak ties.

Social capital produces positive externalities, and/or negative externalities. Benefits are commonly summed up as “trust”. Fukuyama (2001:7-8) says “networks of trust” lead to cooperation in groups related to traditional normative virtues such as honesty, reliability, and reciprocity. Trust is widely applied: it cuts down transaction costs in economic exchanges (Fukuyama 2001:10, Edwards 1999b), as well as allowing parents to let children play in the street (Portes 1998). Social capital can help to build democracy – a strong civil society prevents the State from becoming too pervasive or tyrannical (Fukuyama 2001:11). Social capital can enhance institutional transparency and accountability – antidotes to corruption – as well as levels of social learning and adaptability to support innovation and information distribution (Edwards 1999b). Uphoff, Esman, and Krishna (1998) argue social networks are vital to economic development, while Arrow (1999) says too little trust or too narrow a radius of trust may lead to poverty.

Major negative externalities are group exclusiveness; excessive claims on group members; restrictions on individual freedoms; and downward leveling norms – for instance, teenagers failing exams to be like their friends (Fukuyama 2001, Portes 1998). The flipside of social capital producing a “radius of trust” is its “radius of distrust”, where group cohesion is purchased at the price of suspicion of outsiders (Fukuyama 2001:14). Trust is not an unalloyed good: It can be abused by the unscrupulous (Edwards 1999b), while Unger (1998:16) notes the distinction between inward, communal, and usually intense trust, and outward, less intense trust, with the two often inversely related.

2.5.2 Implications and problems

Social capital has important implications for modernisation theory. It can support celebrations of multiple modernities: Putnam and Goss (2002:16) suggest that simplistic interpretation of the stock-standard sociology theory that modernisation undermines community – a theory much criticised recently for failing to account for important cultural continuities – “drastically underestimated the ability of humans over the longer run to adapt existing forms of social capital and to create new forms to fit new circumstances.” However, it can also support the

idea of modernisation as supplanter: Coleman, for instance, invented schemes to try to replace what he called “primordial” social ties with rationally-devised, economic rewards-based schemes (cited Portes 1998, 2000:2-3). Krishna (2002:6-7) continues in this vein, proposing that Indian villagers are more than ready to jettison traditions and customs in order to activate social capital to achieve economic development.¹

The concept of social capital fits well with multiplying conceptions of development which stress holistic wellbeing over material satisfaction; “...the very large international literature on the correlates of happiness ... suggests that social capital may actually be more important to human well-being than material goods” (Putnam and Goss 2002:8). An important factor in drawing the development industry’s attention in the 1990s was analysis of the economic success of Asia’s newly-industrialising economies (NIEs) which suggested social factors were crucial; in arguments reminiscent of Weber’s thesis that the ethic of ascetic Protestantism propelled capitalism in the West, Confucianism was lauded for fostering cooperative norms and family-based networks (eg, Sheridan 1999, McVey 1992). For instance, Unger (1998:57) suggests a Chinese impulse to affiliate resulted in minority Chinese becoming the dominant commercial force in Thailand’s economic growth.

There is much debate over ramifications, however, some, such as Edwards (1999b), perceive in the rise of social capital a “radical change in development thinking”. Channell (2000) provides an example that summarises this change: The 1970s saw the first systematic effort to evaluate proposed development projects for their social appropriateness. USAID’s Social Soundness Analysis (SSA) considered ethnicity, religion, class, and culture as “obstacles to development that must be neutralized” (Channell 2000:481). USAID’s current Social Mobilisation Approach (SMA) has an explicit philosophy that “considers these micropolitical characteristics as motivations for local participation.” (Channell 2000:482).

Fundamental problems remain in utilising social capital theory in development contexts characterised by flux, conflict, and inequality. One is that it is widely held that social capital is produced in relationships between equals where trust is possible (Edwards 1999b). But inequality characterises development contexts, inequality both within societies and within the developer-developpee relationship, wherein developers in accountable relationships to outside agents such as governments, can be deterred from exercising trust for fear developpees will make compromising mistakes (Kampe 1997:136-137, 1996:156). Furthermore, a core potential

¹ Krishna (2002:6-7) states that customs were “far from being important concerns to uphold” for villagers. When he asked villagers what their principle needs were, only 6% mentioned religious training, temples, or other “traditional” things.

negative of social capital is its capacity to increase inequalities, due to a longstanding correlation between socio-economic privilege and trust (Wuthnow 2002, Baum et al 2000, Putnam 2000:9).

Another problem is Putnam's assumption (1993) that social capital is immutable, built up over long periods and not readily destroyed (contradicted, critics say, by his 2000 study in the US). When even the study of social capital in stable, dominant societies is bedevilled by problems of definition and measurement, what then of assessing it among dislocated societies or displaced people, such as in a slum? What of assessing it among minorities, who in the self-same action may increase their stock of social capital in the dominant culture while diminishing it in their own society? And again, the role of institutional performance is problematic where minorities experience the dominant institutions of the State as alienating.

Edwards (1999b) concludes that despite misgivings and imperfect conceptions, "Civil society and social capital are increasingly-important entries into the international development lexicon, and both will be with us for some considerable time to come. In which case, how do we relate theory to practice in this field in more rigorous and responsible ways?" I suggest one way that can no longer be ignored is to consider religion as a generator of social capital.

2.6 Religion and social capital

Religion matters for social capital production and maintenance in many ways, including as a source of social control, continuity, and meaning, and because religious ritual produces intragroup trust, commitment, and cohesion. Furthermore, the development industry's embrace of the related concept of civil society invites discussion of religion. Nederveen Pieterse (1998:369) suggests the Third World's religious resurgence can be seen as part of the repoliticisation and strengthening of civil society as a cause-and-effect of democratisation. Here, as noted previously, a modernist ideal is seen as fostering religion. Tozy (1996:67) says in Africa, Christian and Islamic groups have made huge investments in civil society which, combined with the "dense associative network" of people's everyday lives, is effective to the point of exposing the inadequacies of state policy. Eisenstadt (2000:599-600) suggests fundamentalist Islamic, Jewish, and Protestant collectivities used "intensive social networks of an intra-religious or inter-religious character" to rise to international prominence, outdoing transnational ecological movements. Gardner (2002) says there is strong potential for religious groups to give weight to ecological movements through the collective moral force they apply to mobilising adherents.

2.6.1 Religion as evolutionary adaptor mechanism

Religious phenomena are extensive, and the interaction of religion and society is vast.. This thesis narrows the focus to one religious phenomenon, the practice of religious ritual, and one concept current within development theorising, that of social capital, to analyse the interaction between the two. Preparatory to discussing that, a guiding definition of religion is given, religion's evolutionary aspects and its function during stress are noted, and an analytical tool is described.

There are many definitions of religion; Durkheim states (1972:224): A religion is "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things ... which unite into a single moral community ... all those who adhere to them." This definition captures religion's behavioural and emotional aspects, as well as stressing its collective, social nature, important to religion's interaction with social capital. Other definitions emphasise belief in the supernatural but not behavioural or social aspects (eg, Lambert 1999, Swanson 1963:29). To appreciate the potentials of religion, it is necessary to apprehend it in this, its vital form, rather than its degenerative form, common in the West, which Whitehead (1985[1925], cited Baharuddin 2000:113-114) described as "a decent formula wherewith to embellish a comfortable life."

Anthropology has confirmed that religion is universal to humanity, and changes over time (Weber 1965:1-19). Evolutionary explanations of religion face the challenge of generalising about religious phenomena that are incredibly diverse and have undergone dramatic changes. Most pertinent to this thesis is religion's efficacy in promoting group solidarity and cooperation. Steadman and Palmer (1994:174) note that several authors have suggested that the inheritance of religious traditions is the basis for cooperative human behaviour and transkin altruism (they cite Hefner 1991, Alexander 1986, Burhoe 1979, 1986).

"Irons [1996] posits that the primary adaptive benefit of religion is its ability to promote cooperation and overcome problems of collective action that humans have faced throughout their evolutionary history, including cooperative hunting, food sharing, defense, and warfare"

- Sosis and Alcorta 2003:267

The powerful agency of religion to forge connections - between people, people and gods, people and ancestors - is a primary emphasis in definitions of blessing cults (O'Connor 1996:214), ancestor service (Steadman, Palmer, and Tilley 1996), and of spirituality in general (Durkheim 1972:250). Ironically, it is the very efficacy of religion at this that leads the

development industry to be wary of it, with some reason because of the propensity for religion to generate social capital that exhibits the negative externality of exclusiveness, which can lead to division, hatred, and conflict.

The concept of religion as an evolutionary adaptor mechanism must be held in tension with that of its role as a powerful agency for social alienation (Goulet 1996, Berger 1969:87), from which perspective it functions as Myrdal's bastion of inertia (Myrdal 1972:48-49, cited Arbab 2000a:165; see this thesis, page 11). Herein, religion encourages people to think the society they dialectically produce is a given, divinely ordained, so choice is replaced by fate. Weber (1965:166-183) distinguishes between mysticism/resignedness, and ascetism/mastery, the one seeking escape, the other to radically transform the world. Because religion's dialectical relationship to society allows it to act on and modify the societal base, religion has occasionally legitimated dealienation by encouraging institutional reform (Berger 1969:87-100). This both/and aspect of religion makes any analysis problematic. "... religion can be expressions of both reactionary, repressive and destructive forces as well as of positive, liberating and progressive ones. And religion can actually represent and contain both types of situations at one and the same time. A most extreme example is Chile, where the Pentecostalism supports Pinochet's dictatorship *at the same time as* it nurtures poor people's resistance to the same regime" (CDR 1998).

One of religion's prime functions is to legitimate marginal situations – such as death - in terms of an all-encompassing sacred reality (Berger 1969:42-44). Religious legitimations almost always come to the fore when groups encounter huge stress, eg, war, social upheaval, or dislocating development. For minority people groups, often their entire situation can be marginal. Pluralism crucially alters this dynamic, introducing choice into people's construction of meanings, so that they must continually choose what to believe and do (Berger 1976:185,191), removing pre-modern obligations and threatening collective and individual security, which carries with it "the constant threat of isolation as well as meaninglessness", a critical stress (Berger 1976:23). Thus religious change becomes a source of stress which religious legitimation is consequently less able to assuage.

Verter (2003:159-160) identifies three forms of spiritual capital: Embodied, objectified, and institutionalised, derived from Bourdieu's forms of cultural capital, and which I will extend to analyse religion and social capital. Spiritual capital, says Verter, and I add, religious capital, exists in an embodied state – a person's position and disposition regards religion, including their knowledge, abilities, tastes, credentials; these can be summed up as the *acts* of consumption of cultural/religious goods. It exists in an objectified state – the symbolic and

material commodities of texts, clothes, liturgies, ideologies, and theologies, which are the *goods* themselves. And it exists in an institutionalised state - the power of religious organisations to legitimate an array of goods, and promote demand and supply demand. Cultural/religious capital in the objectified state is largely dependent on possessing such capital in the embodied state – you must possess the means or tools in order to consume or produce the objects (Verter 2003:159).

2.6.2 Religion as a source of social capital

Religion has been identified as a primary source of both the norms and networks which constitute social capital (Putnam 2000). Social capital and religion are of overlapping importance in giving people anchorages in meaning, particularly as these centre around their place among family or wider kinship structures. Fukuyama's definition of social capital as instated informal norms - such as reciprocity - that foster cooperation (Fukuyama 2001:7-8), leads him to emphasise religion and large cultural systems such as Confucianism as sources of social capital (Fukuyama 2001:16-17).

Inasmuch as religion fosters social order, continuity, and meaning, it produces and maintains these norms. Sociologists identify religion as historically a major source of social order and continuity, and humanity's primary means of maintaining a meaningful reality (Durkheim 1972, Berger 1969:26,36,100, Weber 1965, Parsons 1965:xxvii-xxviii). Berger (1969:40-41,191-192) says that social order is maintained by reminding people, often using costly or bloody (symbolically or actual) religious ritual, of what behaviours, orthodoxies, and ideas are acceptable. Durkheim's instrumentalist view of religion stresses that it arises from sociability, is always the function of a group, not individuals - unlike magic - and requires regular collective reaffirmation (Durkheim 1972:220,224). "It is through religion we are able to trace the structures of a society, the stage of unity it has reached and the degree of cohesion of its parts" (Durkheim 1972:250). However, under modernisation, individualisation increases the autonomous participation of members of society in constructing social and political order, and autonomous access to these orders (Eisenstadt 2000:594).

Another core human need, for continuity, is met by religion's promotion of people's role in maintaining cosmological order within a non-random universe (Berger 1969). This aspect is very evident in the central place in many indigenous religions of cyclical patterns and repetitions that hold creation together, and in whose maintenance people participate through exercising customs and values (Little Bear 2000:81, Chatwin 1998). The Western rationalistic

worldview typically is much more future-fixated: “The whites were forever changing the world to fit their doubtful vision of the future. The Aboriginals put all their mental energies into keeping the world the way it was” (Chatwin 1998:123-24).

Religion is a bulwark against anomie by providing ultimate meanings that can encompass all of life’s eventualities, especially ultimate frustrations, without core values being rendered meaningless (Bellah 1957:6-7). Meaning is produced primarily as a collective exercise: Berger (1976:183) describes every human group as a meaning-giving enterprise. “A society cannot hold together without a comprehensive set of meanings shared by its members ... all material advances are pointless unless they preserve the meanings by which men live, or provide satisfactory substitutes for the old meanings” (Berger 1976:184). Taylor (1989:112, cited Csordas 1994:165) suggests all humans inhabit a space of moral issues regarding identity and how to be, and ideas of the sacred help negotiate these.

There are multiple overlaps between concepts of religion and social capital. Unity and social cohesion are central generated attributes of religion, and of social capital. Social solidarity theorists place trust, which facilitates mutually beneficial cooperative behaviour, at the core of religious ritual (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:265-66). Proponents do the same for social capital. Another shared primary concern is kinship, as will be discussed later. As for the response to crisis, as noted, religious legitimations come to the fore, and crises also generate social capital by creating “shared interests and shared identities” (Putnam and Goss 2002:18; see also Durkheim 1972:113).

2.6.3 Positive and negative externalities

Research in Western countries has found religion produces social capital with both negative and positive externalities. Putnam (2000:415) states that, in general, religion in the West has given rise to institutions that favour less privileged people and bridge social and economic cleavages, yet his findings in southern Italy (Putnam 1993:175-76,107,109) were that devotion to the Catholic Church detracted from civic engagement. By contrast, Offe and Fuchs (2002) found religious commitment in Germany was a strong predictor of membership in social service institutions, surmising this was because of theological emphasis on helping neighbours. Foley, McCarthy, and Chaves (2001) found that religious participation in the US was less affected by socioeconomic position than almost any other form of social behaviour, and that along with social networks and an environment of trust and acceptance came benefits of

services and resources of especial benefit to poor neighbourhoods that other social institutions had abandoned.

A study in Australia (Cox 2000:344) found religious belief did not contribute to social trust, and that declared atheists had higher levels of trust than believers. Radiuses of trust can shrink where people identify the sacred with their particular community, as fundamentalists are prone to do. However, Wuthnow (2002:85) notes that in the West at least, people are becoming more inclined to switch faiths and value other faiths; they are “less territorial in their sense of the sacred”.

Research at the overlap of religion and social capital is less common in the Third World. Candland (2000) assessed conditions under which religious institutions could generate helpful social capital in four developing countries in Asia. He concluded that religious NGOs are effective at generating social capital among members but use this capital very variously, largely determined by whether the State has appropriated religion to justify its own programmes. In Thailand and Pakistan the State’s promotion of a civic religion “tends to undermine the ability of religious organisations to engage in community empowerment activities” (Candland 2000:365). Candland argues that faith can be a form of social capital, as it enables believers to trust each other without needing repeated face-to-face interactions, and generates goodwill to fellow devotees beyond formal responsibilities (Candland 2000:370).

“Social capital arises in a variety of manners – as a response to the perception of a common threat, as feelings of duty, respect, and loyalty, or as norms of solidarity or service. Given the affective character of many of these social bonds, it is somewhat surprising that little attention has been devoted to faith as the basis of social capital formation. Few studies give detailed attention to the origin, expression, or maintenance of religious norms or to the relationship of public policy to religion.”

- Candland 2000:355

2.6.4 Differentiation and flux

The research examples noted above indicate religion’s potential to generate different types of social capital; the focus in this thesis is on the bonding/bridging types. The often inverse relationship between the two, as noted by Unger (1998:16), is clearly evident in religion that

fosters intragroup trust but intergroup exclusiveness. This negative externality is identified as a reason for the Church's decline in the West (Riddell 1998:8-10,57-71). In terms of Offe's (1997) conception of social capital, which sees it composed of trust, associability, and attention, religion fosters the first two of these within a group, and can, as in the German case, extend these beyond the group; however, religion's alienating propensities would appear to count against it producing attention to this-worldly matters, or civic-mindedness. It is instructive, then, that the religious resurgence described previously is, in many places, accompanied by a social activism that contradicts this (Taylor 2001, Riddell 1998:168-171, Tozy 1996, UNESCO 1996, Schober 1995).

Here again it is necessary to differentiate. Weber (1951:235-6) contrasts Protestantism's propagation of one internal measure of value under a transcendental goal – which in relation to a “sinful” world seeks to separate from it and change it – with Confucianism's lack of any transcendental anchorage of ethics; its rational ethic seeks adaptation to a “good” world as it is (Weber 1951:228). Stark (2001:620), drawing upon Swanson (1963), argues that only religions from complex societies have moral implications because their gods are that way inclined, and that any notion that gods care what happens to humans is largely lacking in supernatural conceptions in Asia, and in animism and folk religions.

Weber notes that popular redemptory religions revolving around magic “were usually quite anti-social” (1951:225). People made individual sacrifice to a god or requested a personal invocation from a magician. Such belief systems tended to regard disease and misfortune as supernatural wrath justifiably visited on someone, inhibiting sympathetic emotions originating from “the we-feeling of salvation religions” (Weber 1951:233). It could be surmised that a magico-religion would generate less trust and associability than an empathy-affective religion, and this is indeed the case with resurgent individualising religions of ghost worship and spirit medium cults in Taiwan (Weller 1999:88-91); within their counterparts in China, ritual “has become increasingly utilitarian and less tied to old community and kinship moralities” (Weller 1999:91).

It is clear that different cultures will bring different resources to bear on development, including religious ones (Krishna 2002:56). The operation of faith as a basis of social capital will be different where, for instance, empathies between people, and groups of people, are of a different character, as has been suggested is the case between the West and China (Weber 1951). Religion can be seen as akin to the market – it can produce meaning via dictatorship, but most people prefer freedom (after Sen 1999:27). Any assessment of its role in social capital must consider whether religion contributes not only to meaning and cohesion but also

to freedom, of both participation in decision-making and opportunity to achieve valued outcomes.

An evolutionary analysis must appreciate that all sources of social capital are themselves in flux. In the West, religion could be expected to diminish as a source of social capital because of a steady decline in church attendance (Putnam 2002:408), though shifts towards informal faith networks (Jamieson 2000) might slow or reverse this. Given that societal trends in the West have tended to influence development theories and policies, it would be cautionary for the industry to watch that its attitude to religion everywhere is not steered by trends in Western religion, especially given the religious nature of many modernities.²

Societal trends also alter the form of social capital production. Putnam (2002:412) suggests newer forms of social capital may be more liberating but less solidaristic than older forms – eg, gym memberships as opposed to sports leagues – and this feature is identified as a potential weakness of churchless faith groups (Jamieson 2000:179-181). Given the complex interactions of modernisation forces and cultures, these trends and their resultant impacts on the religion-social capital interface would benefit from analysis on a case-by-case basis.

2.7 Religious ritual and social capital

Humans have engaged in ritual behaviour for 100,000 years (Sosis 2004:166); “A good case can be made that the oldest religious expressions were always ritual in character” (Berger 1969:40). Weber (1965:152-153) associates ritualism with non-rational activity, however, rituals not only reiterate sacred formulas, but also ground religious ideas and recall traditional meanings embodied in culture and its institutions (Berger 1969:40). Ethnologists and anthropologists agree ritual is patterned behaviour designed to communicate (Sosis 2004:168), though there are contrasting theories about whether it communicates mutual honest intentions to cooperate, or is a deceptive strategy individuals use to exploit groups to gain competitive, evolutionary advantage (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:265-66).

Religious ritual is important to social capital because of its widely noted efficacy in promoting bonding and stability in social groups, which facilitates intragroup cooperation (for an

² For that matter, the established trend in a generational shift away from mass participation in the primary institutions of work and politics in Western democracies, towards informal shifting affiliations (Putnam 2000:399), has not turned the development industry off politics and work as tools. So why treat religion differently?

analysis, see Sosis and Alcorta 2003). Durkheim, Rappaport, Burkert, and Deacon all maintain ritual is “the foundation of the human social contract and enables the extensive reciprocal relationships that make human life ... possible” (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:272). Durkheim (1995) states that ritual sacralises religious symbols to unite groups around ultimate values and goals; thus it delivers both social cohesion and meaning. It is significant that ritualised generation of intragroup trust coincides with what is claimed for the beneficial operation of social capital.

Portes (1998) says the sanctioning capacity of group rituals inserts individuals in a common social structure, into which transactions are embedded and therefore encouraged. A donor, or possessor of social capital, can expect returns for their gifts not directly from a recipient, or because they personally know the recipient, but from the collective – say, in honour, status, or approval – while the collective acts as guarantor of any debts. This describes Candland’s observation (2000:370) that religion generates trust apart from face-to-face contact, an especially important capability in what Unger (1998:33) calls a typical, modern “open” society where multiple, broad interactions between individuals are not the norm – or in a situation of minority people dislocation, such as through urban drift, which is the occasion of my fieldwork.

2.7.1 Costly-signalling theory

Social solidarity theorists have maintained that rituals as a collective signalling activity facilitate clear communication, and so enable a primary function of religion, the promotion of group solidarity (Smith 1979). Various researchers have suggested that rituals act as costly signals of commitment to a group and its beliefs and practices, thus weeding out free-riders and guaranteeing group members’ honest intentions of cooperation (Sosis 2004, Irons 2001, Alexander 1987). Believers are considered trustworthy partners, whether in business or social life. The more elaborate the ritual, the costlier the religious obligations and therefore the higher the threshold for anyone wanting to either get into a group, or deceive its members about their intentions. The theory is that higher thresholds mean greater member commitment, including, typically, to in-group altruism, which can lead to greater intragroup trust. “... trust is enhanced among group members, which enables them to minimize costly monitoring mechanisms...” (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:267). Recent empirical research has largely supported costly signalling theory (Sosis 2004, Sosis and Alcorta 2003:268-271, Esminger 1997).

Religious ritual appears to be both more effective and more enduring in creating long-term trust than secular ritual, which may be because the claims which members assent to (such as promises about an afterlife) often can be verified only emotionally, not rationally, and emotional verification is both highly psychologically engaging and resistant to upset from contrary evidence, such as has eroded socialist, secularist kibbutzim in Israel where claims about economic benefits have not been realised (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:268-270). This points up that to offset the costs of ritual observance, there must be gains, or membership will become a marginal exercise. As societies evolve, the mix of costs and gains alters to the detriment of some religions and the gains of others, or of secularism, as will be demonstrated forcefully in my fieldwork analysis.

2.7.2 Bonding and bridging ritual

Ritual that reinforces bonding social capital implies its potential to also foster a wide radius of distrust of outsiders. It is understandable then why ritual can be important to minorities in precarious, oppositional relationships to dominant societies; for such groups, ritual can assert ethnic identity or claims. In Kenya, resurgent indigenous religious rituals are central to political resistance to perceived globalising forces of consumerism and Christianity (Wamue 2001). Evidence that ceremonies continue to be performed by new or modified religious cults has been key to many land claims by Aboriginals in Australia (Layton 2000:59-61), and ritual undergirds land claims and emerging minority identities in Latin America (Gumucio 2002).

However, bridging social capital may be produced by ritual. Hayden (1987) has proposed that religious behaviours cement bonds *between* groups, and this mechanism is selected by human evolution as a way of coping with resource shortages.

2.7.3 Connections with ancestors

Foundational among religious rituals are those to do with ancestors (Steadman and Palmer 1994:177-78). Steadman, Palmer, and Tilley (1996) argue that “ancestor worship” is universal, driven by people’s desire to communicate with their kin. They revisit the ethnographic data in the classic work by Swanson (1963) to show that across all of Swanson’s people groups there is evidence of claims of influence between living and dead people. The spirits of the dead are typically kin, and rites “are not rites of worship but methods of communication” (Abraham 1966:63). This connection, whether through ritual or generalised respect for ancestors

(Steadman et al 1996:64), not only fosters kinship – generating trust - but strengthens traditions, which many cultures regard as inherited from ancestors (eg, Eng 1999). Leepreecha (1998) outlines how kinship and ritual are inextricably intertwined among Hmong hilltribes in Thailand, as well as kinship's impact on “cooperation and segregation in their daily lives” (Leepreecha 1998:4). Akha describe ancestors as the joints linking a body (Alting von Gesau 1995:23).

Ancestor-oriented ritual then, can produce social capital, and more besides - as Durkheim (1972:113) says: “To the extent that familial society is more or less cohesive, tightly knit and strong – man is more or less strongly attached to life.”

As for social capital theorists, Coleman (1988) and later researchers put much emphasis on families in their near-universal, formative role as sources of social capital, especially when they extend child-rearing out to other adults in a process called “community closure”. Putnam (1993) notes that kinship ties have a special role in resolving dilemmas of collective action, and that bonding social capital is where people find most of their personal support and meaning (Putnam and Goss 2002:11), and this is what kinship ties produce. However, as noted, primary relationship networks producing strong interpersonal ties are regarded by some as less important than weak ties in secondary networks for sustaining cohesion and cooperation (Granovetter 1973).

2.7.4 Ritual and religious institutions - shamans

The embodiment of the ritual objects of religion is commonly carried out in popular religion by the institution of shamans, or their equivalent, who are perhaps the original religious practitioners. Shamans have other functions which align them with Krishna's concept (Krishna 2002) of mediating agents who are the crucial conduits for making latent social capital active, particularly as it pertains to community peace-making. “...shamans ... actively maintain social cohesion in their communities by solving disputes and easing tensions among conflicting parties” (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:271, citing McClenon 2002). “The essential job of the shaman is to encourage cooperation” (Steadman et al 1994:185).

Steadman et al (1994:179) suggest shamans perform public rites which encourage cooperative behaviour or repair social disruptions. They commonly utilise a dual knowledge: one, of general values inherent in religious traditions; two, of particular social relationships. This could account for shamans' typical training in memorising not only mythology but genealogies

(Steadman et al 1994:180). Shamanic healing of relationships supports McClenon's theory that religion evolved because complex ritual is therapeutic (cited Sosis and Alcorta 2003:270).

Of course, mediating agents can act destructively, as Cronk (1994) notes of religious leaders generally. Shamans have been known to exercise fear or competition in ways that erode social cohesion (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:271).

Shamanic rites often centre around connecting with ancestors, who as noted are primary referents for kinship and tradition (Steadman et al 1994). The ancestral link sanctifies shamans' claims and supports the threshold of trust established by the ritual. Where shamanic claims are unverifiable, emotional verification is enlisted to generate long-term cooperation. The ancestor-kinship link increases shamans' capacity to resolve relational disputes (for a fascinating example see Steadman et al 1994:183-84).

2.8 Religious capital and spiritual capital

The processes of production and maintenance of social capital within religions can be illuminated by Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, as extended by Verter (2003) to apply to spiritual capital, which is one form of symbolic capital. Bourdieu emphasised that acquiring social capital requires investment of material resources and cultural knowledge to form relationships, and that this capital is fungible (cited Portes 2002:2). Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital revolved around formal educational qualifications, and of religious capital around clergy and the Church institution. Verter (2003) broadens this to include laity as mediating agents of spiritual capital.

Verter also extends Bourdieu's core concept of fields of competition, change, and conflict to the notion of interaction between fields, say between religious and economic fields. From this, he suggests that spiritual capital may be valid currency in fields other than religion, and capital accumulated in other fields may contribute to spiritual power (Verter 2003:164). Its reconversion potential means "spiritual capital is a valuable asset that, when strategically invested, might bring social and economic advancement" (Verter 2003:168).

Verter (2003:159) argues spiritual capital's value is continually in flux because it is parochial: a change in societal context encourages exchanging one form of spiritual capital for another. Its value is much more stable in a closed, homogenous society than an open, pluralistic one. This implies minority people who must cross deeper cultural lines to be mobile in response to,

say, economic pressures, will suffer from unstable spiritual capital and be prone to changing affiliations. As with capital generally, one choice precludes other choices: Acquiring virtuosity in more than one religious creed is likely to involve high cost, while disassociation from a group that demands a lot – ie, has a high ritual trust threshold - “represents a substantial sacrifice of accumulated spiritual capital” (Verter 2003:167). Verter’s emphasis on change, and Bourdieu’s emphasis in cultural capital theory on conflict, make their contributions more useful to development studies than theories that see religious capital as essentially static, such as those of Stark and Finke (2000) and Iannacone (1990), whose models of religious capital which revolve around attachments to tradition explain stasis but not change.

2.9 Religion and social capital in action

The example that follows illustrates the positive consequences of social capital generated in religious contexts according to Portes’ (1998) trio of manifestations: social control, family, and extrafamilial benefits. Eng (1999) demonstrates how religious rituals form the basis for generating diverse types of social capital in the Chinese emigrant district of Anxi, Fujian. The return to Anxi of Singapore-based Fujianese on a cultural-religious quest has sparked economic, sociocultural, and religious revival among rural Chinese, who in turn have created a moral economy based on past ancestor worship to intensify and maintain the relationship.

Eng (1999) says that Singapore Fujianese have achieved economic security but, perceiving an identity threat from the modern system they inhabit, are seeking cultural roots. One could argue this is an example of the homily: “Man does not live by bread alone, especially if he has plenty of bread.” Fujianese see ancestors as sources and transmitters of culture; reconnecting with them requires reconnecting with ancestral villages where rituals are most efficacious. The emigrant quest coincided with and aided the Anxi villagers’ own push to forge a distinct cultural identity in the face of rapid social transformations under China’s open economic policies.

“For these two groups, in their quests for a cultural identity, claiming a common ancestry and reinstating ancestor worship have become important facilitators to renew kinship ties, re-establish social and structural continuity, and revive lineage organization as an important Chinese social institution.”

– Eng 1999:107

Instrumental use of religion occurs, as the Chinese and Singapore governments both encourage emigrants' emotional reconnection, and revival of ancestor worship and lineage, to release economic benefits. Also, emigrants' visits are partly motivated by investment possibilities (Eng 1999:102). Yet Eng argues the linkage is primarily socio-moral between people themselves.

The result is new social norms and networks of cooperative behaviour with widespread benefits for Anxi Chinese - comprising greater status, community cohesion, and wealth, better infrastructure, and a more educated and cosmopolitan population, cultural revival, and better political ties nationally and internationally (Eng 1999:125). Emigrant visitors build lineage ancestral houses which serve as physical markers of cultural identity, a focus of participative activities, and emanators of traditional community-oriented moral values that promote the use of wealth for social deeds. Thus religious institutions are central not only to the intense relationship between villagers and emigrants, but also to the spread of spending on schools, roads, etc. Also, the physical acts of building lineage houses require great trust between Singapore and Anxi Chinese. Religious rituals encourage cooperation and social interaction in villages; individuals rekindle religiosity, even where they rationalise ancestor worship as non-religious.

Resurgent religion here provides the base for the agency of villagers and emigrants to generate both bonding and bridging social capital. While ancestor service acts initially to bond kin, both living and dead, and ensure genealogical continuity, its performance serves to bridge the social gap between emigrants and villagers in relationships which underpin a much wider expansion of networks of opportunity for Anxi Chinese.

Religion both works to deliver change, and is itself changed. In Anxi the process of cultural reproduction has permitted both Singapore and village women to become primary reproducers of religious rituals within a once male-dominated village social structure. The larger picture is of "a transformation of everyday moral practice that may hold larger significance in understanding where China is headed" (Eng 1999:100). Weller (2002:38) says China's new religious forms show a rough correlation with gender: Men favour a Confucianist interpretation of texts, and women give stronger support to social action.

Eng's example is one where it is impossible to disentangle social capital from institutions in order to argue which is causative; structuralists could argue institutions of religion and kin were pre-eminent; but the religious motivation is based around ancestors, which suggests

norms of a communitarian ethic – particularly relevant since these are Singapore Chinese returning to Anxi - incubated and birthed the cultural-religious resurgence.

2.10 Conclusion

The very act of performing religious rituals creates social capital because it is an ongoing collective exercise by groups of people revolving around shared ideas and symbols of the sacred that are appropriated in a quest to order reality meaningfully, as well as an effective means of enhancing group cooperation and barring free-riders. It functions thus regardless of belief or what the practice is: Real human sacrifice performed these functions for the ancient Sumerians as much as symbolised human sacrifice does for contemporary Catholics. The merits of various ritual practices as they affect social capital could be valuably researched elsewhere. Similarly, while the manner of religious ritual must shape beliefs and values, and by extension the nature of social capital, given its dialectical relationship with society as a cultural form, this dynamic is beyond the scope of this research.

Religious ritual thus is a site for reproducing social order, continuity, and meaning, and so forms a basis for what Fukuyama (2001) calls instatiated norms of cooperation and reciprocity. The ritual trust threshold protects and rewards the social network within, with members regularly, collectively signalling their commitment to the group. Ritual practice produces bonding social capital (whatever other forms of social capital its different manifestations may produce, directly or indirectly), which increases group cohesion, and may have positive externalities, such as generating intra-group trust, and/or negative externalities, such as generating distrust of outsiders. Ritual can produce bridging social capital, though this potential appears constrained. Ritual is part of religious capital, which is individually appropriated as spiritual capital; such capital is fungible, parochial, and vulnerable to changes of societal context.

The Anxi example (Eng 1999) shows that religious rituals and institutions, far from being peripheral to economic and social development, can be central to the emanation of collective benefits that result from the norms and networks that comprise social capital. A case study such as this demonstrates both the complexities of change processes that, as von der Medhen stated (1986:vii), defy efforts to formulate overarching theories that integrate religion and modernisation; illustrates how religion is contributing to multiple modernities within which the material and spiritual converge; and reinforces the need for welldefined concepts for making comparisons across varying political and religious cultures, based on contextualised fieldwork.

I have suggested that the development arena is routinely one of crisis; in such a situation, religion may well be called upon to legitimate people's experience of marginality, by suggesting both ultimate meanings for that experience, and responses that draw on ritual goods, acts, and institutions, to try to reassert cosmic, and thereby cultural, continuity. The impetus is always to make meaningful reality out of marginal situations. Doing so collectively becomes difficult where a group erodes in quantity or quality; it becomes more costly to practice regular, reaffirming ritual, while the benefits of staying within the ritual threshold diminish. It may be that greater gains are more readily available by exchanging spiritual capital, in minorities' case perhaps for capital more coherent with a surrounding, dominant society. The presentation and analysis of fieldwork data in Chapter 5 will revisit these issues, pertinent as they are to the experience of the Akha minority people group, especially in their newfound urban environment.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research as convergence process

This thesis was born of my conviction that religion-spirituality is essential to development, because current strategies to reduce poverty (eg, World Bank 2002, CWS 2004) cannot apprehend the symptom without considering the causes, among them greed and fear residing deep in the human make-up beyond the reach of material treatments, and because the quest for alternative developments will benefit from integrating a spiritual component. Development interventions appear to be evolving to where many take seriously what Berger (1976:149-206) called people's twin calculuses, of meaning and of pain; researchers have a duty to help find ways for people to have their spiritual and religious realities included in the mix.

This is value-based and value-led research which has a goal. I engage with this topic intellectually, spiritually, and politically, because I advocate integration of the best of religion in the cause of people's, and especially the poor's, co-liberation. I am not a disinterested researcher, an anthropologist intent on descriptions, or a sociologist intent on explanations; rather, this empirical study seeks to provide insights into a specific religious dynamic in order to generalise about practical ramifications for the religion-development interface. As Islamic scholar-activist Farid Eysack has said: "I knew too that religion is a powerful weapon, one which I believed should be used in favour of the poor. I didn't want to leave it in the hands of obscurantists, fundamentalists and chauvinists" (van der Gaag 1997:31). Both religion and development are narrowly defined for the purpose of reaching conclusions without being lost in semantics.

The assumption in approaching religion as a Western academic is that one comes at it from a position of non-belief (belief being an interiorised state of conviction). I wish to remove belief from the equation altogether, regards my own relationship to religion, and that of research participants; this is appropriate for Akha considering their historical way of relating to tradition is via an exteriorised idiom that codifies practices and is disinterested in belief (Tooker 1992). I adopt this exteriorised idiom to relate to religion in this thesis, so that I can state I value some of the practices of religion as conducive to beneficial social capital, regardless of what I may or may not believe. I am concerned then with practice, not belief.

My experience of postgraduate development studies is that typically courses do not address religion or spirituality adequately, if at all, and my concern at this neglect was crystallised by Ver Beek's (2000) argument that spirituality is taboo to development. Postgraduate diploma research I did in 2003 concluded that a sizeable minority of development students valued religion-spirituality, whether as a motivating factor or for contributing to development practice or understanding; as well, most students self-identified as religious in some way, with only 25% self-identifying as "no religion". I suggested trends in the development industry towards valuing personal development would favour such motivations and values being made more explicit, and professionally valued.

The intended audience of this research are development practitioner-theorists, to argue they need to engage religion seriously, and to concretely demonstrate the complexities and rewards of doing so, because the usefulness of research depends significantly on its "effectiveness in changing attitudes among elite groups in a direction that will ultimately enable poor people to think and act for themselves," otherwise research can perpetuate inequalities (Edwards 1994:123).

3.1 Ontology

Objective realities are subjectively processed by individuals in groups, which dialectically reproduce their realities, and research is part of, affects, and is affected by this process, as is religion. This research makes no suggestion whether religion's manifestations are a response to a transcendental reality, or a result only of humankind's projected needs for security and meaning; it starts from the empirical fact of the manifestations themselves (Goulet 1996), specifically the observable practice of religious ritual, which has been fundamental to religion and to social collectivism generally (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:272). Investigation of subjective processes is limited to using subjective indicators to assess how ritual impacts on trust between people.

Who I am influenced my choice of topic, methodology, method, all fieldwork interactions, interpretation, and analysis. "Not only do we affect what we see; we affect it by the way in which we see it ... what we perceive will always be a function of what we bring to it, of who we are" (Kaplan 2002:177). My origins in secular education and evangelical Christianity, combined with personal dissatisfaction with the inadequacies of materialist approaches to being human, predisposed me towards looking for an "authentic" indigenous alternative life-way, and trying to apprehend that intellectually to draw lessons for my situation, and to

reacting negatively to signs of Christian incursion on it. I sought to balance this reactionary romanticism by engaging in fieldwork as a learner, interviewing as and where I found Akha, and recording everything rather than being selective; in analysis, I became open to other interpretations of Akha Christian conversion.

Relating religion to social capital was partly motivated by my internalisation of the judgements made in development circles about what is important – economy, money, gender – and my need to legitimate study of what is left out – religion – by allying it to a concept with economic and instrumentalist connotations. My wariness of being seen as a flake may skew my analysis towards an instrumentalist interpretation. However, Reason and Hawkins' statement (1989:80) that "when we partake in life we create meaning; the purpose of life is making meaning" suggests it is a valid exercise for me to explore my own field of meaning through this research. Given that many development workers, secularist or religious, are crusaders, missionaries, or partially out to fulfil their own needs for meaning and purpose, it is little wonder I am not so different, and this does not invalidate what we do.

During fieldwork, frequently interviewees asked me if I was a Christian; they equated Western with Christian. They often expressed surprise or puzzlement when I would say no - which was true and not true, but there was not time or shared-language to explain. I wanted to be upfront about my own position, given what I was asking about theirs, but how to acknowledge my appreciation for my religious origins, my wariness at the paternalistic legacy that entails, and the complexity of my present orientation as a religious humanist? Yet I wanted straightforward answers about interviewees' own religious self-identification, to aid categorisation.

This points up possible disjunctures in employing researcher-and-results-driven methodologies to pursue insights into highly complex human phenomenon. The compromise entailed being aware that categories may aid understanding but do not describe reality, asking questions about interactions between categories, and making this process clear in the research presentation. It was convenient that Southeast Asians are used to self-identifying about religion, and Akha themselves consistently categorise people as practising this or that cultural-religious code.

3.2 Epistemology

Despite the apparent difficulties of studying religion, and generalising from it, there are commonalities in religious experience that allow for objective study, such as external rites of purification that accompany internal spiritual experience (Baharuddin 2000:116). I decided to

adopt measurable material indicators of social capital, in terms of the occurrence of religious rituals, to verify the religious sources of social capital for Akha in slums, and only secondarily looking at the consequences of that social capital, specifically the benefits of bonding social capital for Akha from religious networks, and effect on trust/distrust between Akha.

This research can only attempt to be a legitimate analysis of Akha religion from an exogenous viewpoint; it is an explicitly Western analysis of an indigenous religious phenomenon, not a crosscultural analysis, which might imply, as Duran and Duran argue (2000:87), that other cultures do not have their own valid and legitimate epistemological forms. I can only describe from within my own epistemology, and have no ultimate way of describing what I came across. Eurocentric thinking has been described as linear, singular, static, and objective (Little Bear 2000:82). I respond to these limitations by discussing in this thesis' first part a wide articulation of modernities and religion within an evolutionary framework, but avoiding grand theorising, and presenting in the second part insights into Akhas' experience, but avoiding claims of "...and that's the way it is". I struggled to express what I apprehended, and some things I may not have understood at all.

I placed my research where I believe development should start, by talking with marginalised people; I wanted to privilege endogenous experience, apprehension, and construction of reality. Postcolonial research theory (eg, Duran and Duran 2000) would suggest development researchers are tempted to begin with what they are expert in, which reinforces their superiority, but could move towards according critical authority to other knowledges by beginning instead with what they don't know, for instance, by considering a society's deepest aspects, rather than technical aspects, so that complexity and mystery become apparent, leading them towards caution and humility (Haggis and Schech 2002:xxi). An emic view with participants' input can enable a "non-normative assessment" of a culture (Slikkeveer and Dechering 1995:437). My experience of trying to design research into matters of such depth is that it is difficult to imagine how to take account of language and idea gulfs, and how to measure subjective variables, but that this attempt is valuable in itself.

So, I went to Akha, in slums, I asked them a few questions which over time became more pertinent; I trusted in my Akha translator, and recorded what he relayed, along with what I observed. I based myself throughout fieldwork among Akhazangists so that I was exposed to their ways and could check with key informants about interviews. It was a far cry from cultural immersion yet sharpened my sense of my own socialisation as a Westerner – essentially secular, individual, rational, making ready sense of what appeared to be the individual

optimisation of satisfaction, and struggling with the opaqueness of what was more attuned to a communitarian ethic – and aided apprehension of this different world.

This thesis is not a scientific document that uncovers some objective truth. The filters of knowing it has been through are significant: my grasp of the literature fashioned research tools that depended on the translation and interpretation of questions and answers by an Akha man who perceives reality differently than I do, who was interpreting answers from others who see it differently. This qualifies any conclusions, yet enriches them too as data collection, at least, was a shared process. While I attempted to be rigorous and systematic, it was always in the context of a messy reality, whether of heat, dodgy stomachs, or homesickness, that impacted on my perceptions, the translator's perceptions, interviewees' perceptions, in interviews that could only ever, given the time constraints, be one-offs.

In interviews, rather than attempt, positivistically, to be “neutral”, as per Patton (1990:316-317), I readily identified with people's frequent expressions of loss and grief regards their culture: and I wanted to communicate my encouragement for them to grapple with these issues. I wanted to be seen to demonstrate enthusiasm for their religion as a Westerner, to counter what I see as non-Westerners' general perception that Westerners care little for such things (unless they are trying to convert you). For my translator, at least, the fieldwork offered the suggestion that religion generally, and Akhazang in particular, are fascinating and relevant.

My position in the field was as a fence-sitter, in that like many Akha, I value religious ritual, yet was very much outside their world. While my hope is that my research helps the propagation and maintenance of Akhazang, yet I also recognise people as their own agents. My analysis of Akhazang's interaction with Christianity in Chapter 5 flows from this recognition that while I may wish Akha to hold on to “authentic” Akhazang, and I may regard Christianity as essentially destructive for this possibility, Akha themselves are negotiating religious change within the wider processes of modernisation. This thesis' analysis attempts to communicate something of that negotiation, which for Akha involves Christian conversion.

3.3 Methodology

I have struggled with how to make any generalisable knowledge claims in the area of religion-spirituality where even definitions are diverse and problematic, and people's idioms for expressing religious matters differ. Acknowledging the limitations of Masters research for accessing the subjective religious experience of Akha, I early on chose to limit myself to

establishing objective realities about ritual: did it occur and in what context, who was connected by its performance, and how was this changing? The literature suggested how ritual affected social capital in villages, and I extrapolated from that about what to expect of ritual in Chiang Mai city. Yet I was unable to hold to these limits when I became cognizant of the impact of Christianity on Akha religion, and of the social capital dynamic in Akha Christianity itself.

In my methodology I attempted to fit an insight into the role of religion in development, my desire to privilege the voice and experience of poor Akha, and my own motivation to explore this topic to better apprehend my own world, with the realities of a Masters project short on duration and resources; there was, as well, my preference for participatory research tools in which knowledge is co-generated and shared with the aim of empowering participants (Chambers 1997b). My methodology also needed to answer my chief ethical concerns about the power imbalance inevitable in fieldwork relationships.

I settled for compromises all-round: Largely qualitative methods were used to collect data in collective settings, but I then individually extracted that data for evaluation and analysis, as in old-style, positivist research. I positioned myself in the field as a fence-sitter, and curtailed any suggestion I would be empowering participants. My difficulty finding a translator turned into a bonus regards power imbalance, for the translator I eventually got, a young non-professional Akha man, exhibited such passion and curiosity for the research that I believe it came to be his research too; so every interview was a sharing of knowledge, with him getting the lion's share verbatim and myself the translated scraps.

Measuring social capital had its own complications: there is no universally valid measure because norms matter and norms depend on context and context varies (Krishna 2002:56,64-65, Fukuyama 2001:15, Putnam and Goss 2002:11); there are numerous disagreements about what networks to consider (Krishna 2002:64); and empirical referents will differ as different cultures manifest social capital differently (Krishna 2002:56). I endeavoured to gain some understanding of how Akha manifest social capital and what their cohesion factors are from the literature, from basing myself with Akha my whole time in north Thailand, and from living in village for a week. For this research, both the endogenous and religious focus meant my focus was on Akha-to-Akha connections in Chiang Mai, which are in networks that are by default informal, small, and weak.

Of the two broadly accepted measurement approaches - measuring networks or measuring norms (or these two combined) (Krishna 2002:57-62) - I prefer the combined approach, but in

this case, because it was most straightforward, I concentrated on measuring the Akha religious ritual network, on the assumption of a norm of reciprocal, cooperative behaviours behind the network, based on what the literature said about Akha customs and society. Krishna (2002:64) insists norms must be investigated independently for each network. Given I concur both with studies that show norms influence networks (Brehm and Rahn 1997, cited Krishna 2002:58) and those that show networks influence norms (Putnam et al 1993, cited Krishna 2002:58), I focused secondarily on gauging the impact on trust and distrust in Akha relationships related to the religious network.

I assent wholeheartedly to Edwards' statement (1994:281) that "the purpose of research is to promote the development of poor and powerless people ... Second, in order to be relevant and useful in this task, research must involve its subjects in some way and at some stage in constructing both process and output." My initial research proposal and information sheet for distribution in the field, reflected this, but were largely misleading as I was not able to secure participants' involvement except superficially. To suggest as I did, for instance, that all participants would be informed of and able to access a written summary of the project findings within one month of data collection was patently unrealistic.

I endeavoured to involve my subjects early on in contacts from New Zealand with the Akha NGO, MPCD/SEAMP, by requesting feedback on my topic and my tentative research plan; while NGO staff were unfailingly helpful, they did not provide such feedback. Once in Chiang Mai, I discussed the topic and approach with Akha key informants, however, once again I encountered enthusiasm but little to add to the construction process. The most fruitful relationship was, as mentioned, with my translator, although the power imbalance, and the fact I paid his wages, was very evident in his reticence to critique what I was doing. I began with a long list of questions which were quickly whittled down to a few key question areas (see Appendix 1) from reflecting, with my translator, on how interviews had gone.

The process of data collection was the only point at which there was meaningful Akha contribution, and that at my discretion. While I favour collaborative approaches if possible, this thesis is my own work, down to identification of the issue, as well as evaluating, interpreting, and presenting data. I was constrained by time, resources, language, and the nature of my transient relationships with all interviewees, from going beyond a methodology that essentially comprised data extraction and analysis in an office back home. In this context, to even have attempted to use a PRA methodology would have promised what I could not deliver, and resulted in instrumental use of methods aimed at intensifying people's participation, but in the service of gaining me a Masters, rather than empowerment. As a

novice development researcher it was important I not leave interviewees thinking I could do anything to change their situation.

3.4 Methods

My aim with my methods was “to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others” (Patton 1990:335). My unit of analysis was the household, both for practical reasons and because the most common Akha religious rituals are ancestor services performed in households, and because city Akhas’ connections back to village kin for larger ceremonies tend to be maintained at household level (Choopoh 2004a:7, Buadaeng et al 2003).

I arrived in Chiang Mai in mid-May in the hot, wet season. I spent 4 weeks gathering primary data: 5 days living with an Akha family at Saen Chareon village, 50km south of Chiang Rai, and 3 weeks interviewing Akha from poor households in Chiang Mai. I talked with about 60 Akha. I spent a further week gathering secondary data at libraries in Chiang Mai and Bangkok. I began by spending five days in an Akha village, to witness how religious ritual forged connections between people in a reasonably cohesive group setting, to help me identify and interpret these connections in the more dislocated city context. In the village I was an observer as participant (Rountree and Laing 1996) throughout, including at three religious rituals, which given their pragmatic observance provided many openings for questions and discussion.. In the city I stayed with Akhazangists, helped with house maintenance work, and conducted small, informal English-language lessons at an Akha NGO compound, where I was able to trial two participatory data collection exercises.

I had intended my main method in the city to be participant observations, however, I was unable to stay with an Akha family in a slum as anticipated. Instead, I relied upon extended, semi-structured interviews which among slum Akha always took place in loosely formed household groups of between 2 and 6 people, of mixed genders and ages, in impromptu gatherings most often connected with work, particularly craft making (see Appendix 2 for interviewees’ characteristics). This worked well for practical reasons – people were most available in mornings and afternoons, in informal work situations; attempts to interview Akhas wage-labourers at work failed as they appeared not to feel free to talk. It had the added advantage of providing some measure of methodological triangulation as people could debate what each one said.

Fortunately, Akha women are generally forthright with their opinions, and they consistently had as much if not more to say than the men. I did not perceive any social desirability bias, for instance, Akha in a group reluctant to identify with a particular other group or custom. Frequently Christian Akha joined in interviews at Akhazangist households, without any noticeable acrimony. I was aware that for some Akha, their responses to me might be in part shaped by their stance towards modernity generally and how they wish to be perceived by a person they perceived as “modern”, as Pigg (2002) describes of her encounters in Nepal. It was interesting that the only interviewee claimed to have “no religion”, and he later reversed this by admitting a heartfelt affiliation to Akhazang.

Use of informally-constituted small groups was my conscious contribution to attempt to provide a series of forums for slum Akha to share views about religion and Akhazang with one another, potentially, I like to hope, contributing to or even catalysing an ongoing conversation which might well contribute much more than this one piece of Western-derived research. Feedback indicated they had few opportunities to discuss these matters otherwise.

I also conducted extended interviews with seven elite Akha in the city, five of them keen Akhazangists, and four of those five with widely extended social networks in both the city and, in most cases, beyond to villages. One other interviewee was the leading Akha Christian church pastor, and another an Akha worker at the hilltribe NGO IMPECT (Inter Mountain People Education and Culture in Thailand Association) in Chiang Mai. As well, in extended, semi-structured interviews with six individuals in Saen Chareon village, four were with those in elite positions within the village social order which enabled them to interact with many other villagers and have wide knowledge of attitudes and actions. Further brief interviews with four other villagers focused solely on whether they maintained any connections with Chiang Mai to do with ritual.

I approached this topic determined to keep the focus on indigenous religion and ignore the world religions, as this is where I identified a gap in the literature. While I succeeded in limiting my research to considering only social capital connections between Akha, not Akha and other hilltribes, or with Thai, and in general considering only bonding social capital, I quickly realised while in Chiang Mai, through what both Akhazangists and Christians told me, that I had to consider to some extent the interaction of the indigenous religion and Christianity, because as my analysis will show, I believe this interaction is fundamental to how Akhazang is evolving. This was a major complication, one I managed by canvassing all interviewees about Akhazangists' attitudes to and experience of Christianity, and Christian attitudes to Akhazang. I relied on the literature, particularly Kammerer (1983,1988b,1990,1996a,1996b) for

information about Christians' experience of Akhazang; and Boonyasaranai (2004a), Choopoh (2004b), Buadaeng et al (2003), and Pastor Nikorn Lechoe¹ about Christianity's production of social capital among Akha in Chiang Mai.

My secondary data collection in Thailand was generally successful; however, I failed to locate a key report on oral contributions about cultural preservation to the 1996 Hani/Akha international conference (Kukeawkasem 1996); failed to arrange translation of video of a 2002 meeting of pimas to discuss modifying Akhazang; nor was I able to contact Thailand's Community Organisation Development Institute for confirmation of what A-beya Choopoh (2004b) told me about the plan for an Akha village in Chiang Mai. None of these omissions compromise this research to any extent.

Analysis of the primary data was conducted by grouping respondents according to their expressed experience or attitudes within categories related to Akhazang ceremonies, connections with other Akha including kinship ritual connections, experience of other religions, change within Akhazang, and attitudes to city or village or Christian or Akhazangist Akha. The rough percentages and breakdown by gender and residential location this provided presented an indicative picture of the experience of religious ritual according to, for instance, how many women and how many men, or how many slumdweller or elite Akha, observed rituals regularly, occasionally, or never, and so on. Within these categories themes emerged for analysis, such as of trust or distrust, and of loss or desire to reconvert, within which I identified general attitudes among Akha and specific experiences of individuals, whose responses provided direct quotations that were illuminating or representative. I forsook an initial approach to collate this using SPSS software in favour of manual constructions on paper, as this was more flexible, and the limited data did not lend itself to extensive cross-tabulation.

My samples in village and city were small, and my findings are indicative only. The main analytical categories I have used are between the views expressed by Akha who live in slums in Chiang Mai, and the other Akha interviewees; and between those Akha of different religious affiliation, whether adherents of the Akha cultural-religious system herein termed Akhazang (so, Akhazangists), Buddhist, or Christian. Given the small size of the sample, I did not attempt to correlate data to make comparisons between Akha by gender, age, or outlook.

¹ Identified with his consent in this research.

3.4.1 Presentation

Regarding use of direct quotes, I quote extensively from interviewees to allow their direct voice to come through, attempting always to preserve context. Translation is an imprecise art, and I have sought to correct unnecessary impediments to understanding created by this process, such as incorrect grammar, which would not have been an issue in the interviewee's native tongue. I have been mindful to let a range of interviewees have their voice, such as women and men, young and old, while giving more space to Akha living in slums than from elsewhere. All interviewees are anonymous, except Pima Asaw Choopoh, A-beya Choopoh, Pastor Nikorn Lechoe, Saryo Phubeku, and Billy Doerners, all with their individual consent. Other interviewees are identified with a "W" (woman) or "M" (man) followed by a number for village interviewees (eg, W6) or a letter for city interviewees (eg, MG).

3.5 Fieldwork experience

My five weeks in Chiang Mai, north Thailand, in May-June 2004 was my first development research fieldwork experience. The following is extracted from a summary of my experience which I circulated on a Massey University development studies intranet site to aid and consolidate my own reflections, and in case it might interest other development students.

A tough overall lesson was that my preparation for fieldwork was inadequate. I did not ask enough questions of my contacts in Chiang Mai about the nature of the situation, and did not tee-up a translator, assuming one would be easy to find. I learned that an entry to the field is likely to blow imaginings away, at which point it was vital to be flexible: placing myself in the way of Akha people meant in the end things fell into place; I learned that using a translator can be frustrating, but also rewarding; I learned there is no substitute for having enough time - even so, I gathered valuable data. The primary lesson was that the biggest aid to fieldwork is likely to be the local people, especially key participants who know who lives where and how things work.

3.5.1 Entering the field

A friend who did Masters fieldwork among Akha in north Thailand in 2002-03 provided introductions to an Akha NGO – MPCD/SEAMP - and a key academic at Chiang Mai University. Plans to base myself in an upland village changed to a focus on Akha living in

slums in Chiang Mai, to explore developmental displacement linked to the growing global issue of urbanisation. As it turned out, there was no readily “bounded” slum to stay in – poor households were quite scattered about, usually full to bursting, with people busy working all day, and the language barrier would have been huge – and there was faint prospect of securing a translator.

Preparation seemed daunting: “The hardest thing is starting,” I wrote on April 19. However, ethics approvals were straightforward, and MPCD/SEAMP issued me a written invitation which helped me get a research visa though I lacked the pre-requisite invitation from a Thai university. Journal notes betray my nervousness. “Will I be a complete idiot?” I wrote on April 13. “Will it mean anything either way?” The Akha themselves speak of researchers they see for a season and never again. Strangely, on the ground, achieving legitimacy was less of an issue: Akha seemed interested in what I was asking; I was able to teach some English; and best of all my Akha translator expressed how much he was learning. One rewarding moment came when a 38-year-old woman respondent said, unprompted: “This is exciting – I’ve been living here five years and before now no one ever asked us about these things [to do with Akha rituals].”

I added to this sense of legitimacy with the notion that my research was an expression of valuing Akha culture. As Tyndale (1998) puts it: “...increasing people’s awareness of the richness of their culture, of the resources to be found in their faith and of the value of their own identity is one way of enabling them to find hope in a world where hopelessness is often one of the most visible results of the so-called ‘developmental’ process.”

3.5.2 Fieldwork itself

On previous travels I have tended to hop off planes and ad lib. I suffered from this and from people’s tendency to say “yes, yes” in pre-fieldwork emails, but then not arrange anything concrete. Flexibility is vital, which meant allowing arrangements to evolve slowly, without stressing – but is best combined with sufficient preparatory organisation. Interviews were all about fitting in with respondents: it took 3 days to interview the village reciter, or pima, because the first 2 days he was tired or didn’t show. One man wanted to talk for 20 minutes about his boxing magazines. “Not being an extension officer, I can’t admonish, cajole, threaten or bribe,” I wrote on May 22. “There simply is *no* way to incentivise effectively, except by showing manners and interest, and relying on goodwill.”

Though I ended up staying with people allied to the Akha NGO, I benefited from not relying on either that NGO or on academics to mediate relationships for me. Dealing direct with Akha meant I was not continually referring or deferring to other outsiders. I also experienced how the slow accrual of contacts – while weakened in research terms by “snowballing” – had advantages over the “Call a Community Meeting” of strangers approach. By chance I got to Saen Chareon village on the eve of ancestor ceremonies in preparation for rice-planting; when organisation is lacking, luck sometimes steps up.

As with many minorities, Akha orient to the dominant language, in this case Thai, and as a consequence few speak much English. One cannot assume a translator will be on hand when dealing with a small people group scattered widely in a city. The translator search led to me going to the Akha village, an optional extra I expected to exercise at the end of fieldwork, but which proved a boon to experiencing the connective power of Akha rituals, as well as turning up a young man who had some English and some time spare. However, he was not fluent, and questions had to be kept simple, which limited discussion of religious concepts. I got the firm impression from interviews that had I used as a translator a high-profile city Akha – say, someone from the NGO - it would have biased responses.. The absence of commercial translation services put me in a relationship much more dependent on the goodwill of a local speaker.

Translation-based interviewing was slow (at least 90 minutes per interview), tiring, and frustrating. I was attempting to broach complex subjects using simplified questions. Often a one-sentence question was translated into a 10-sentence question, followed by a five-minute response relayed back as a two-sentence reply; I was frequently unable to identify who had said what, and where this occurred recorded the response as a group response. I rued how much was being said I was not privy to, the undercurrents I missed, the tangents I failed to explore. Without a running commentary on any debate, much rich information was lost. However, I take comfort from at least having initiated a forum for Akha to discuss their religion. One further drawback of conducting interviews with household groups, was that household power balances were entrenched, eg governing who would say how much, and group dynamics favour extroverts.

I was fortunate that my research topic provided questions that engaged everyone we talked with, many quite animatedly. My taking English-language sessions with Akha allowed me to experiment with 15-minute participatory exercises at the end of each session. People’s

responses to a question, say, “What’s good or bad about living in Chiang Mai?” went up on a big sheet and then people “voted” for them using green stickers (1 vote) and red stickers (5 votes). The fact that half the respondents were children limited these exercises’ practical usefulness, and it was difficult to elicit responses to the questions. On the plus side, people quickly got into voting with stickers.

A participatory approach to fieldwork underscored for me the myth of objectivity. “ I like them [Akha respondents] and want them to like me,” I wrote on May 24. During my village stay, I couldn’t go hopping house-to-house yet my closeness to the one household I stayed with inevitably biased who I met and what people told me. Staying removed from a survey group might allow for more objectivity but at the price of depth.

3.5.3 What worked well

My emailed offer to the Akha NGO of taking English sessions resulted in three informal 2-hour sessions with about a dozen people. Making a small contribution in this way is an approach more researchers could take. I was alerted to the possibility by a New Zealand NGO which said it was considering getting researchers to agree to provide English-language tuition if they wanted to collect data within its projects.

The scattered pattern of Akha residence in Chiang Mai put paid to my idea of living in a slum. Rather, my translator and I took to walking through poor neighbourhoods, where there were few fences and people made crafts, cooked, and minded children in front of or under the house. We were welcome to sit with them and talk. Only at one household out of a dozen did we get the impression we weren’t welcome. Taking fruit to share with respondents and their children worked well. Householders would frequently fetch water or tea for us. In the village I shared briefly in tasks of rice-planting and food gathering, and there was huge goodwill generated by doing those simple, but sweaty, things.

3.5.4 What worked poorly

I was tempted at the start to suggest to interviewees my interest in buying their crafts. I felt guilty sitting there talking while they worked – and I didn’t want them to think I wanted something for nothing. I felt the pressure of the role of being the rich Westerner who can bestow favours. Fortunately, I resisted these urges. At the end of my time, when I went back with money to buy some crafts off interviewees, immediately the relationship shifted to a

seller-buyer one, made tense by the fact that in one household the 6 people were all in business for themselves, so I risked favouring one over the other with my purchases. It was probably a questionable exercise even then; should I return I may be remembered more as a customer than as a sympathetic knowledge-seeker.

3.5.5 Conclusion

When it came time to leave, I was unclear if I had sufficient material or had covered all the bases; more preparation might have allowed for a clearer structure to ensure there were no glaring holes. Subsequently, as I have formed the thesis, I have felt reassured that my data collection was adequate within the given constraints.

I emerged from fieldwork aware I'd had the privilege of exploring a personal subject with some strangers who were gracious to me, and of just how little I know – and yet having to employ that little in the creation of a sensible thesis. Fortunately my topic was narrow enough to feel I got some kind of handle on it.

One challenge analysing data in a quiet room before a clean screen in New Zealand is to remember the contrast of the collection process – the heat, the work, the digressions, the misunderstood questions, the dodgy stomach. “How to keep the messy reality in there is a core issue,” I wrote on May 31. Fieldwork provides for me not just data, but a context to approach the production of knowledge in a way that respects Akha. It also provides grounded memories as a check upon my academic aspirations, a reminder to seek the good of the people who produced the knowledge. The Akha I met are still out there, under a hot sun weeding rice on a 45-degree slope, or sitting on their concrete stoops sewing up bamboo bags one by one.

Chapter Four

FIELDWORK: THE CONTEXT

4.0 Thailand and hilltribe development

4.1 Introduction

The operation of religion in production and maintenance of social capital will vary according to which society is considered, and which part of which society. Among the variables are religion's salience and scope for a culture (Worsley 1997:249), and a society's endowment of social capital (Unger 1998:15), further complicated here by the insertion of this research at the juncture of a minority and a majority culture, and of multiple religions.

My primary research focuses on Akha hilltribe people in northern Thailand, specifically those Akha living in Chiang Mai city, therein with a focus, though not exclusively, on poorer Akha in slums. The concerns and options of the poor are increasingly linked to growing urbanisation, with its attendant problems which include slums (UN 2004). This chapter places Akha in the context of development in Thailand, as a modernising, industrialising process with intertwined religious and social capital aspects. Religion has been used instrumentally and largely ineffectively to advance integration of hilltribes into a Thai society characterised by low levels of social capital (Unger 1998). Urban Akha are severely dislocated from their former way of life, by development that shapes their needs for social capital as well as their capacity and resources for building social capital.

Thailand's development path follows the global trend from economic fixation, with widely mixed results, to serious consideration of social development, but as-yet limited consideration of minority peoples' positions. The following short account of this path, with emphasis on religion and hilltribes, risks reinforcing the stereotype of hilltribes as passive traditionalists wilting under modernisation's blast, when they are in fact active producers and reproducers of their societies in complex interactions with wider, exogenous forces. These interactions are context-specific; how Akha have responded through religious forms is detailed in Chapter 5.

4.2 Development in Thailand

During the colonial period there was a marked increase in unevenness of socio-economic development in Southeast Asia (Dixon and Drakakis-Smith 1997, cited Dixon 1999:240), and marginalisation of peasant societies in remote areas (Henin 1996:180). Among these peripheral people are indigenous and tribal people who, generally, are “among the most disadvantaged ... under-privileged” and vulnerable of the world’s people, and who seldom participate meaningfully in national policy-making (ILO/UN 1997:1). Hilltribes in Thailand have, since the 1950s, been in a continuous process of adaptation to a largely deteriorating environment - ecologically, economically, politically, socially – but one that through integration with non-local and State structures offers increasingly varied livelihood options and opportunities (Kampe 1997, Henin 1996:180, Ritchie 1996, McKinnon and Bhruksasri 1983).

Thailand, a semi-industrialised, lower-middle-income country of 60 million people, is “one of the most successful cases of economic development in the post-war era”, much of it driven by Thailand’s sizeable Chinese minority (Unger 1998:183). Its recent history is one of increasing integration into the global economy through trade and financial operation liberalisation, industrialising, often environmentally-damaging development, and growing income inequality (UNCT 2002, Dixon 1999:11,240,249, Bello, Cunningham, and Poh 1998). This occurred alongside integration between the centralised Thai State and its peripheries, encompassing northern hilltribes (Ritchie 1996). Connors (2003:60) says the 1950s saw an unparalleled “incursion by the pioneers of order, extending to unconquered rural peripheries” as technical and strategic aid flooded in under Thailand’s deepened alliances with the United States, prompted by geopolitical insecurity related to the spread of communism. Opium eradication justified subsequent incursions.

Development was roughly equated with industrialisation from the 1950s: the 1970s ushered in three decades of economic growth among the world’s fastest, at an average 8% from 1986-1991 (Dixon 1999:1), based first on, import-substitution manufacturing, then on export-oriented manufacturing (Dixon 1999:3-4, Bello et al 1998:6). Local measures put poverty incidence nationally at 11.4% in 1996, from 32.6% in 1988, though income disparities are widening: In 1988-89 the top 20% of earners made 57% of income, compared with 49% in 1975-76 (Danieri 1996:378). Some suggest Thailand has the most unequal income distribution in Asia-Pacific (TRI 1995, cited Dixon 1999:22). Poverty is mostly a rural phenomenon (UNCT 2002:38), although 1.4 million of Bangkok’s 7 million people live in slums and slums are growing in other cities (DPF 2001-02).

Industrialisation of the labour force has fragmented communities as young people left for towns (UNCT 2002:41), though Thailand's urbanisation level remains relatively low, reflecting reasonable, if lessening, access to agricultural land (Dixon 1999:20-21). In 2003, 20 million people or 32% of Thais lived in urban areas (16.5% in 1950; a forecast 47% in 2030) (UN 2004:25-26). Metropolitan Bangkok, a leading example of urban primacy, contains 69% of the Thai urban population (Daniere 1996).

It was not until societal inequalities were exacerbated in the 1997 Asian financial crisis that the Government reoriented State planning to be more people-centred, partly resourced through a social investment fund supported by a \$US120 million loan from the World Bank (Buadaeng, Leepreecha, and Boonyasarnai 2003:6, UNCT 2002:8,42-44). It is now in its Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006); however, it is widely held that State planning has been weak and ineffective (Dixon 1999:242, Unger 1998:21-24). Core strategies of the Ninth Plan include strengthening social foundations by building grassroots capacity, promoting good governance, and restructuring the economy for "sufficiency"; core priorities include restructuring rural development to emphasise community empowerment and participation, "along with sustainable urbanisation" (UNCT 2002:9-10).

The rhetoric fits with the development reorientation some critics have called for (eg, Bello 1998:9), and aligns with popularisation of bottom-up development globally. Thailand's record for realising the rhetoric remains patchy: For instance, "local wisdom" (*phume panya*) has since 1981 become the catchphrase around which many State and non-State efforts have attempted to protect, propagate, or commercialise forms of indigenous knowledge, as through the widespread One-Tambon-One-Product (Otop) scheme, but these efforts are often criticised as artificial or superficial (Chinvarakorn 2004).¹ One example of the State partnering minority people - in a plan for an Akha "village" within Chiang Mai - is outlined in Appendix 3. Aside from State moves, the many examples in Thailand of endogenous development include a convergence of socially-reformist Buddhist and ecological movements (Nozaki 2003, Ekachai 1994).

Commentators range from those who regard Thailand as an exemplary model of modernisation to those who call it a disaster. Thailand is considered to have important lessons in development to offer Asia (UNCT 2002:5), and even a new model of development for the whole Third World (Castells 1991:iii, Handley 1991:34-35, both cited Dixon 1999:1,2). Its economic growth in a context of huge foreign investment and much less State intervention than in the

¹ "What's missing in the process is a sense of warmth, sacredness, moral and spiritual values," medical anthropologist Komatra Chuengsatiansup is quoted saying (Chinvarakorn 2004).

north Asian NIEs (Dixon 1999:2) made Thailand a neoliberal cause celebré, but the 1997 crisis revived doubts about its stability (King 1999:203-229).

Criticism centres on economic growth being given precedence, damaging the environment and polarising society (UNCT 2002:38,40-42, Dixon 1999:4), with problems exacerbated by poor governance and corruption (UNCT 2002:42). Advocates of sustainability highlight not just ecological degradation but infrastructural and human capital inadequacies (Dixon 1999:246-252, Bello et al 1998:175-206). Critics, echoing dependency theory, see Thailand in a dependent peripheral relationship to the central international economy, and Thailand's own peripheries, including hilltribes, in a dependency relationship to a central State-business partnership (eg, Bello et al 1998). Some writers say the Government's economic management remains poor (Dixon 1999:244) or biased to favour large corporations (Delforge 2004). "Government attempts to promote a more egalitarian and dispersed pattern of economic growth have been limited and largely ineffective" (Dixon 1999:263).

4.3 Development, religion, and social capital in Thailand

4.3.1 Social capital

Modernisation to both majority Thai and minorities has been associated with "becoming Thai" (Leepreecha 1998:4), with unification around the central concept of "national identity" progressed through the institutions of bureaucracy, transportation, mass media, education, and Buddhism (Unger 1998:27-47). During its formative modernisation years, Thailand has been run by an oligarchic elite distant from rural workers, and whose state-building project had an ideology of the "national interest" and good citizenship (Connors 2003, Dixon 1999:259, Meer 1981:35-36). "Nation, Religion and Monarchy" remain the triumvirate of social-organising concepts, making suspect other socio-political loyalties (Connors 2003, King:1999:211).

Unger (1998:27-47) outlines a wide body of scholarship which describes how Thais, though exhibiting a strong sense of nationality, are predisposed towards autonomy and individuality, and limit conflict by limiting contacts. Unger argues this has resulted in low levels of associability, reciprocal obligations, and a low incidence of regularly constituted groups, which are major sources of social capital (Unger 1998:28,32,36). These traits have been reinforced by modernising influences which encourage open social networks in which interactions are specific and limited, and which cannot operate sanctions (Unger 1998:33). This provides Unger with the basis for his theory that Thailand's economic development was

critically shaped by a political framework evolved in a context of the failure of cohesive groups and interventionist strategies, which predisposed policymakers to adopt market-led development.

Unger's picture (Unger 1998:27-47) presents many contrasts with Akha society, notably: Thai society has limited ability to sanction free-riders (interestingly, this is a key function of religious ritual); it has limited evidence of ritual kinship or ritual feasts emphasising equality (eg, Akhas' blessing feasts); and horizontal social networks are lacking, while there is little loyalty in Thais' common vertical, patron-client relationships (Unger 1998:34). By contrast, Akhas' strong horizontal networks between equals emphasise egalitarianism (Alting von Geusau 1983:246,267). A shift for Akha into an urban environment dominated by Thais thus presents many disjunctures.

Social capital as a concept has been popularised in Thailand since 1998, under the Government's new emphasis on social development; in 2000 it published three guideline publications about strengthening communities (Buadeang et al 2003:6). An ongoing (2003-06) study of social capital production and maintenance among six hilltribes in Chiang Mai, through Chiang Mai University's Social Research Institute (SRI), in itself indicates concrete official interest in social capital as an analytical tool for assessing the position of marginalised people (Buadaeng et al 2003).

Modernisation has had some seemingly predictable impacts on social structures, yet the complexities of analysing its processes have split sociologists broadly into those who stress Thais' adaptability to radical sociocultural changes - for instance, O'Connor (1983:95-113, cited Jonsson 1996:185) argues that modernity has replaced Buddhism as the most powerful ideology in Thailand - and those who emphasise the persistence of age-old traits beneath superficial change (see Cohen 1991). Cohen (1991) argues that both understandings hold, depending on the observer's perspective and fixation.

Modernisation regularly undermined local elites and created new elites (Dhiravegin 2518:3). Family support structures have generally become smaller and the family's functions narrower and less economic (Limanonda 1995). While the State has been ineffective as a social mobiliser (Unger 1998:39), since 1980 civil society has strengthened: Unger (1998:15) notes an increase in civic and business groups, though the military continues to be politically destabilising, highly influential (McKinnon 1992), and widely trusted by Thais (Inoguchi 2002:380), with the felt need for security a likely factor.

4.3.2 Buddhism and development

Many commentators maintain religion remains important to Southeast Asia's development, and that modernisation has modified and even invigorated religion, though its manifestations can be antithetical to developing a socially-reforming civil society (Mulder 2003, Keyes et al 1994:3 cited in Buadaeng 2003:286, Von der Mehden 1986). O'Connor (1996:229) says Asians' assumption is that "everyone needs some religion" and "Southeast Asians have a religious form to meet every need. Their repertoire is rich and accessible" (1996:221).

Thais only ongoing cooperative groupings are the Buddhist hierarchy and nuclear, rather than extended, family (Piker 1973). Theravada Buddhism operates as a basic uniting force through its vast influence over societal organisation, demonstrated in the predominance of vertical social networks characterised by a formalised superordinate-subordinate relationship, in keeping with Buddhist teachings on the principle of hierarchical order (Limanonda 1995). This patterns the subordination of minority ethnic groups to the Thai majority.

Buddhism through its daily rituals has a central role in forming national culture and offering means to legitimate new social activities, though at national rather than local level (Wijeyewardene 1967). The State made Buddhism the civic religion, gradually centralising a relatively non-hierarchical institution under the Sangha ruling body (O'Connor 1993, Tapp 1985a:3): Partly in reaction to this, Thai Buddhism appears to be becoming less communal, more individualistic (Mulder 2003, Wijeyewardene 1996), though Unger (1998:45) suggests its institution remains generally decentralised. It will be seen later how the State used religion instrumentally among hilltribes.

The resurgence-convergence streams central to this thesis are apparent in Thailand's religious milieu: Buddhism's homogenising power has diminished since the 1990s (Unger 1998:46) due to eroding reverence for the institution, accompanied by growing movements of "re-enchantment" of religion by charismatic monks (Wijeyewardene 1996) and of personally-applied Buddhism with a socially-reformist edge, especially among the urban middle class (Schober 1995). Taylor (2001) argues that the rise of two contrasting Buddhist religious movements - Mahaa Bua's 'Thais help Thais' and the "hyper-modern urban" Thammakaai - are responses to largely economic forces of globalisation having profound ramifications for Thai social life.

Mulder's interpretation (2003) of religious change in Southeast Asia posits religion producing bonding social capital with negative externalities. He associates religious revival among the

middle classes, manifesting in Thailand as individualistic Buddhism, with a patrimonial perception of society, distrust of critical analysis, and elite interests, because modified religious forms are more often intrinsically inward-looking rather than socially reformist. "...it does not seem that religious revival is stimulating the spirit of universalism and the brotherhood of all" (Mulder 2003:172).

Various movements seek to apply Buddhism to development (see <http://www.sulak-sivaraksa.org/network21.php>, Nozaki 2003, Tantirittisak 2001, Puntarigivat 1998), including the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD) which set up a data centre to systemise information concerning religion and culture (Sivaraksa 1993). Some Buddhism-development proponents display a rationalist bias: "While in my Optimistic Scenario Buddhism will endure and grow stronger, spirit worship will gradually assume an ever less important role in the lives of our people, since it is quite clearly counter to a scientific way of life" (Ketudat 1992:74).

4.4 Development and hilltribes

4.4.1 Options and constraints

The upland-lowland relationship in northern Thailand has always involved ritual and cosmology, as well as economics and politics. Upland and lowland worldviews were similarly animist until the arrival of Buddhism and Hinduism, and uplanders have been open to borrowing from or converting to Buddhism, which complexitises a relationship some early scholarship presented as a simple one of lowland=Buddhist, upland=animist. Today, there is no strict demarcation between hilltribe religions and Buddhism, and in varying ways they all address ancestors (Renard 1996, Tannenbaum and Kammerer 1996). However, there are differences between Buddhism and some hilltribe religions that have far-reaching effects on the social order: Buddhism has as a core idea merit-making, which has a principled correlation with fundamental ranked stratification in a society; whereas blessing as a core idea correlates to absence of ranking (so, in general, less hierarchical societies) (Lehman 1996). Akhas' blessing cult will be outlined later.

A discussion of hilltribe development is confronted with a corpus of development literature that frames it as, to borrow from Jonsson (1996:4), "a dichotomous struggle between modernity and tradition, between the 'state' or 'capitalism' and the 'indigenes'..." Such a presentation fosters "despondency theory" (Sahlins 2000:45) – the inevitable demise of

cultures due to globalisation - and impedes understanding of what are complex interactions where no one is merely a tribal victim, capitalist invader, nor cornered convert. Jonsson (1996) argues that the State has always been part of the articulation of the upland-lowland relationship shaped by a regional political economy which provides Mien, and other hilltribes, with options and constraints that vary across place and time. Hmong, for instance, have employed modernisation to strengthen their identity, by mobilising transkin cooperation to realise business opportunities (Leepreecha 1998:17-18).

The Thai State is very influential but not omnipotent nor monolithic. Buadaeng (2003:287) notes that since 1997, some State agencies have been genuinely attempting to revitalise local knowledge and participation. While it is true that changes in the regional political economy since the 1950s have often prejudiced rural livelihoods, hilltribes are not cornered (Jonsson 1996:16), as Vatikiotis (1984) demonstrates in his against-the-tide finding that uplanders in Chiang Mai were, in the early 1980s, adapting radically well and doing better than northern Thai. Vatikiotis emphasises the importance of shifting relations between hilltribes, particularly Thai-born and Burmese-born, between hilltribes and Thai, and between hilltribes and other groups, such as Akha and Yunnanese Chinese. This thesis is an attempt to explain the agency of Akha in improving their society with religion as the major referent, rather than State.

That said, hilltribes have increasingly had to submit their endogenous agendas of self-development to lowlanders' agendas, incursions, and desires. The uplands have been treated by the State and lowlanders generally as an exploitable resource and frontier zone, with the Thai approach to hilltribes shaped by older cultural and historical positions, influenced by modern ideas about progress and nation-states (McKinnon 1989:303). Alting von Geusau (1988:215-16) says Akha were a "perennial minority" first to valley kingdoms then to predatory nation-states. The State has exercised its defining power to cast hilltribes as "problem" people occupying strategically valuable land (Sturgeon 1997:135); and a "people in transition" (TRI 1991:48), presumably towards being "good ... Thai citizens" (TRI 1991:32). Development from 1950-1980s was to an explicitly exogenous, imposed agenda, which hilltribes sometimes resisted violently, but more often adapted to, while gaining some benefits from government efforts at reforestation and infrastructure building while mostly avoiding the misery of neighbouring hillpeople in Myanmar and Laos (Walker 1979-1980:441-42). From the 1990s, the State has sought to identify and implement bottom-up development approaches, with varying success (ILO/UNDP 1997).

4.4.2 Issues for hilltribes

The total hilltribe population in Thailand's northern uplands is around 850,000 and growing (MPCD/SEAMP-HRI 1992/2002). The six main tribal groups in order of size are: Karen (almost half of all hilltribes), Hmong, Lahu, Akha, Yao, and H'tin. Some have lived in the Mekong uplands for centuries, others, such as Akha, migrated from the 19th century on, many from southern China (MPCD/SEAMP-HRI 1992/2002). Semi-subsistence agriculture in upland villages remains the most common livelihood, in recent decades mixed with varied sources of income, from trading to tourism, which together still puts uplanders' average per capita income below Thailand's poverty line (Aguettant 1996).

The uplands were of little concern to Thais before 1950, whereafter State intervention spread rapidly related to US pressure, a perceived communist expansionary threat, and anti-narcotics campaigns (Buadaeng et al 2003:39-40, Connors 2003:60, Aguettant 1996, Meer 1981:194). The State strategy until the 1970s was one of modernisation and assimilation, advanced by the cash economy, and extending control by both the military and development bureaucracy, through infrastructure building – especially roading, often linked to logging concessions – radio broadcasting, health services and education using Thai language, and proselytising Buddhism (Buadaeng et al 2003:2, Bello et al 1998:180-81, Cohen 1992:165, Tapp 1979:36, McKinnon 1977). However, Bhruksasri (1989:230,244-45) argues while hilltribes were sometimes patronised, Thai policy from 1976 was positive, aimed at making them “self-reliant, Thai citizens”.

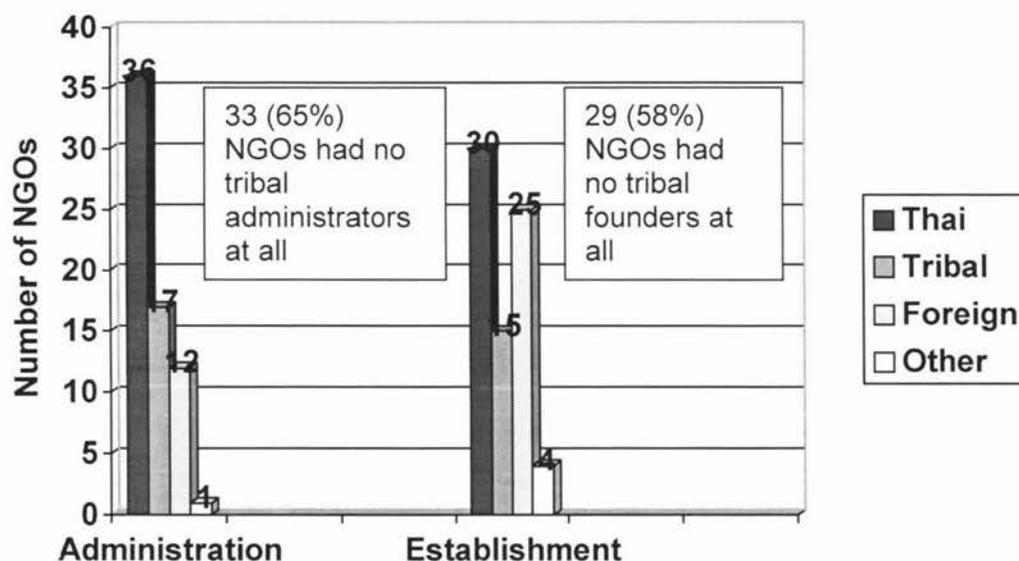
Attempts at forced resettlement led to armed conflict in the 1970s (Meer 1981:195, Tapp 1979:3-4), and the Government switching to a strategy of integration with cultural autonomy (TRI 1991:32), though the line between the two can be “notoriously thin” (Tapp 1979:33). Cohen (1992:165) says “Thaification” continues, which Aguettant (1996) puts down to increasing numbers of uplanders assimilating themselves. It is as Pigg (2002:329) noted regards Nepal, that development generally “has intensified the influx of nonlocal ideas and things into hill villages” (see Buadaeng et al 2003:154-159).

Tirrell (1972:230) suggests that the most significant force of assimilation and acculturation is accessibility by uplanders to Thai settlement, while duration and intensity of contacts determine the influence that access has. Evidence for these shifts include use of Thai language, rejection of tribal customs, and acceptance of Buddhism; as to the last, at the time Tirrell was writing he could note (Tirrell 1972:118): “...tribal people seem to be more reluctant to make

any modification ... in their religious belief system than to modify ... any other element of tribal culture.”

Research into uplander issues has in the 1990s overcome some of the indifference Tapp (1979:30) says was long common among Thai scholars, though in 2004 the 39-year-old Tribal Research Institute (TRI) was closed, raising fresh doubts. NGOs have proliferated in north Thailand: within development projects, hilltribes generally have encountered unequal relationships, whether with State agencies, or development agencies and Western NGOs (Kampe 1996,1997, Naess 1995) (for example, see Figure 2).

Figure 2: 1994 survey of 51 hilltribe development NGOs in Thailand by ethnicity of administrators and founders



Source: Kampe 1996:158

4.4.3 Citizenship

All issues with hilltribes are complicated by their often precarious status with the Thai State: 90% of uplanders say getting citizenship is top priority, because it provides access to land ownership, education, jobs, and unfettered mobility (Aguettant 1996). The Government, largely due to national security concerns, has a record of reluctantly legitimising uplanders, while periodically subjecting them to resettlement or repatriation efforts (Kammerer 1988a, McKinnon and Bhruksasri 1983). By 2004 about 75% of hilltribe people had citizenship (IJM

2004) compared with half of the 500,000 officially surveyed in 1985-88 (Aguettant 1996); 520,000 people – including many uplanders - who migrated after 1985 have been staying on a year-by-year basis (Hutasingh 2004). Pressure on the Government began rising in the late 1980s (Kammerer 1988a:9) and in the 1990s it made more efforts on citizenship (Aguettant 1996). This struggle is the most-publicised issue to do with hilltribes in the Thai media.²

In 1991, the Tribal Research Institute (TRI 1991:23) put the percentage of Akha with registered Thai nationality at under 10%, Lahu next at about 20%, and most tribal groups above 60%. In 2004, it was estimated 75% of Akha in Thailand had citizenship (IJM 2004), while a sample survey of 180 Akha in Chiang Mai found 83% had citizenship, while 90% had a Thai ID card of one kind or another (Choopoh 2004a:1).

4.4.4 Land, agriculture, and forestry

Most hilltribe people historically practised swidden agriculture on land held in informal, often collective tenure; some still do (Sturgeon 1997:139). Once all natural forests were vested in the administration of the Royal Forestry Department in 1899 (Bello et al 1998:191), formal ownership and control of uplands became an imperative of the State, often leading to hilltribes' exclusion from conservation reserves or loss of good land to lowlanders, and widespread exploitation of upland resources (Chinvarakorn 2004, Bello et al 1998:183,192, Sturgeon 1997:136, Kammerer 1989:281-290, Meer 1981:170). The extension of formal land title has extended State control, and favoured those with access to non-local resources (Ritchie 1996:280). A second pressure came from lowland Thai, responding to population pressures (Panjaphongse and Tiensong 1976) and technological incentives, moving in seeking new resources for farming and forestry. The influx is put variously in the millions from the 1960s on (Bello et al 1998:179-80).

Swiddening's portrayal as a threat has been encouraged by Western ecological lobbies (Kammerer 1989:288, Meer 1981:197). Hilltribes have been long blamed for deforestation and damage to watersheds, but their part in this, while real, is relatively minor, and the suspicion is that the claim is an unjustified slur encouraged by the Government to support prejudicial policies such as resettlement (McKinnon 1989:315-319).

² My archive research shows the Bangkok Post newspaper published approximately 80 stories about this issue from 1996-2004, much of it sympathetic to hilltribes (eg, Bangkok Post 2002).

Farming has gradually become less viable, and availability of jobs in towns draws young people; hilltribes' strategy for claiming resources may mean they eventually move away from the land altogether (Buadaeng et al 2003:159-160,164, Sturgeon 1997:139-143). Urban drift is associated with loss of customs (TRI 1991:27-28). Official figures about urban migration by uplanders are lacking (Buadaeng et al 2003:41), though much of it has been into Chiang Mai, where some uplanders secure comfortable livelihoods and others struggle, often residing in one of the city's at least 10 small slums (Buadaeng et al 2003:169). Akha NGO, MPCD/SEAMP-HRI (1992/2002) says 20% of younger villagers have moved to Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, and Bangkok since the late 1980s, and estimates Chiang Mai's uplander population at 100,000; another unofficial estimate puts it at 6,730 families, and yet another at 6,346 people total (Buadaeng et al 2003:41). Buadaeng et al (2003:163,165) attribute hilltribe integration into global, State, and Christian development initiatives as the main push-factor behind their urban migration, and education as the main pull factor.

Kammerer (1985:65) notes that some Akha have moved to cities, while others who move to non-Akha villages as wage labour live "abject" existences divorced from their identity markers.

4.4.5 Education

Education of hilltribes has both been about improving their knowledge and skills, and shaping them ideologically to fit the Thai nation's concept of good citizens; accordingly, minority languages are completely ignored in public primary and secondary schools within a system that generally treats hilltribes as inferior (Leepreecha 1998:11-12).

Buadaeng et al (2003:2,163) say State-provided education designed to provide labour for an industrialising economy has been the most significant force for change in hilltribe society. It introduces children early to a plurality of lifestyle choices, including religious choices. Though Tirrell (1972:233) downplays the acculturating/assimilating influence of primary schools, this does not take account of the later stages of education. Schools not only take Thai to villagers, but take villagers to Thai: In the uplands, the Border Patrol Police built 452 primary schools from 1953-1976, where education is in Thai language and Thai curriculum (Tapp 1979:8-10); in addition, many hilltribe teenagers receive secondary education in Thai language in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, mostly linked to Christian or Buddhist agencies (Buadaeng et al 2003:97,158,168). This intense, direct, frequent cultural contact by tribal children is of the sort Tirrell (1972:235) says facilitates "complete assimilation". Chiang Mai Catholic lay worker

Billy Doerners³ (2004) said it was difficult to teach hilltribe children at his Catholic school about their own culture “because we are trying to prepare them to enter Thai school, so they have to practice speaking as much Thai as they can.”

The more exposure to Thai education and to development projects that hilltribe youth have, the more likely they are to desire non-farm occupations, and the longer they are in the city the harder upland life appears (Buadaeng et al 2003:4-5,163, Shinawatra 1985:156, Vatikiotis 1984). Kampe (1996:161-62) says, in general, hilltribes’ attitude to education is that it is a State-provided thing; transmission of indigenous culture is not regarded as education.

Akha have generally lagged among hilltribes in accessing formal education. TRI (1991:21-22) put the percentage of Akha with “no education” at 90%; most other hilltribes had 60-80% in this category. Akha also had the lowest percentage who could speak (30%) or write (>10%) Thai language. The H’tin and Khamu were near-100% literate in Thai. The pattern of Akha teenagers leaving for secondary school in cities was repeatedly mentioned by Akha to this researcher as a primary cause of cultural erosion.

4.4.6 Governance

Besides the Department of Public Welfare’s (DPW) Hilltribe Division, originated in 1959, the far most important State entity in the uplands has been the Border Patrol Police (BPP), who since 1953 have enforced national security, conducted political indoctrination, and built much infrastructure (Tapp 1979:8-10). DPW has been reorienting its approach among hilltribes to bottom-up participatory development, including disseminating best-practice case studies around development players and hilltribes (ILO/UNDP 1997).

4.4.8 Images

Hilltribe people and their customs have long been stereotyped in mainstream Thai society as primitive and inferior, and among officials as insurgents, opium growers, and forest destroyers (Sturgeon 1997:35, Kammerer 1989:281-84,288-89, Meer 1981:196, Tapp 1979:45). Though social stratification is real, sometimes intense (McKinnon 1977:13), this typecasting downplays hilltribes’ agency in their centuries-old interaction with lowlanders, the equilibrium

³ Billy Doerners is identified with consent in this research.

of which was upset by development of the Thai nation-state (Bamrung 1998:2, Tapp 1985a:1-3, Alting von Geusau 1983).

The following quote from a Thai government official responsible for tribal development for 23 years reflects prevailing attitudes:

“The traditional lifestyle of the hill tribes provides an obstacle to development ... they know only how to hold out their hands to get what they want ... their conscience is still not developed to a satisfactory level.”

- Kampe 1997:137

Meer (1981:40) remarks: “...most likely the traditional cultural roots are the real bottlenecks for efficient modern administration.” Stereotypes and State policy especially on citizenship have combined to constrain or damage many uplanders’ livelihood opportunities, wellbeing, and their expectations about being able to function well in changing environs without becoming more like Thai.

4.5 Hilltribe religions

Religion has been presented as both fundamental to hilltribes’ daily lives and institutions (Kirsch 1973), or secondary to political and economic structures (Leach 1954). Hilltribes per se are a problematic unit of religious analysis given major differences in cosmology and practice (Tannenbaum and Kammerer 1996). However, many writers note the centrality of religion to many people’s lives in northern Thailand: religious behaviours articulate with each other and with cultural mores to produce blends, which often centre around rituals and which, whether in popular Buddhism or various hilltribe religions, commonly ascribe crucial cosmological influence to ancestors (Kammerer 1996,1988b, Renard 1996, Ekachai 1994).

O’Connor (1996:221) says such an “ancient pluralism” characterises the Southeast Asian religious environment, where people have a “rich and accessible” repertoire of religious forms to meet diverse needs, and act as religiously empowered agents who never doubt religious ends are worthy and attainable, only if the ritual means will suffice; and “they wield the inherited form pragmatically, not reverentially”. Hilltribe religions share many of these characteristics though Akha have been constrained from accessing that plurality by their stress on cultural-religious consistency. As hilltribe religions often orient around spirit worship or ancestor

service, it is common to describe uplanders as animists who believe in pervasive spirits (Anderson 1993:31, 169), though this can be inaccurate.

Jonsson (1996:12-14) states that structurings of hilltribe social life have until recently concerned access to religious ritual, but that was only after the peaceful conditions of the colonial period shifted concerns from warfare to competitive ritual feasting, financed in the 1960s-70s by opium trading. Renard (1996:180) says accounts that ignore multireligious phenomena risk missing “the essence of life” in northern Thai cities: “The pace of change is accelerating, but as it does and people look for a constant, many find the city’s [Chiang Mai’s] ancestors a refuge.”

Religions occupy contested territory in the uplands. The cliché that “to be Thai is to be Buddhist” (Ketudat 1992:70) glosses a powerful assumption that enabled, in the 1960s, the Thai State to co-opt the Sangha, employing monks under the Thammaricik programme to propagate Buddhism among hilltribes with the explicit goal of winning their support for State and monarchy, to build national unity (Connors 2003:60, TRI 1991:31,33, Tapp 1985a). Monks taught uplanders to make merit, quite different from their own feasts of blessing (see Kammerer and Tannenbaum 1996), and development projects were promoted among Thai as “merit-making” (Tapp 1979:33). Thammacarik ordained 150 tribal youth a year (TRI 1991:45); accessing Thai education remains today a motivation for hilltribe youth to become monks.

Thammaricik failed in its assimilative intent (Tapp 1979:35), partly, suggests Tapp (1985:5), because it relied on “a distinctly modernist” interpretation of Buddhist philosophy and largely because it was about “the legitimising, self-justifying ideology of a dominant ethnic group, offered to its ‘inferiors’ as the means of their salvation.” However, Thammaricik may have had an unintended consequence: Candland (2000:365,371) argues from research of faith-based development NGOs, that in Thailand and Pakistan, because the States promoted a civic religion and coopted religion, this has tended “to undermine the ability of religious organisations to engage in community empowerment activities”; generally, “government promotion of religion may inhibit faith-based social reform.”

Widespread conversions among hilltribes to Christianity last century have caused social friction (Kammerer 1996b,1990, Kesmanee 1985, Tapp 1985b), despite a State policy of supervising other religions’ activities to forestall conflicts (TRI 1991:31). Activity is largely by Christian groups, moreso Protestant than Catholic, and has not only promoted material development and won many converts, especially among the Karen, but been a major

mechanism for introducing cultural-religious pluralism into largely homogenic villages. Akha NGO MPCD/SEAMP calls Christian mission “a main agent” in the destruction of highlanders’ traditional knowledge, morality, and customary law (MPCD/SEAMP-HRI 1992/2002, see also Alting von Geusau et al 2003). Tapp (1985b:221) says Catholic mission had more success by “working with the beliefs of the people they seek to convert, and building upon them ... [which] contrasts strongly with the culturally more radical approach of the Protestant missionaries, who encourage the burning of altars and shamanic equipment even today.”

4.6 Conclusion

Hilltribe society is being increasingly interpenetrated by lowland society at every level. Uplanders exercise their own agency in response to this, including religious agency, in which they are very experienced. Major effort has been directed at negotiating a largely top-down development strategy emanating from the Thai centre, conflated with lowlanders’ resource-led agendas and incursions at local level, but in some respects this effort has left hilltribe people better equipped for Thai society yet less equipped for upland society (Buadaeng et al 2003:164, Kampe 1997:180, McKinnon 1977:4).

Chapter Five

AKHA, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Section One - Akhazang and social capital

5.0 Introduction

Religious change anywhere is an ages-old process shaped by political and economic phenomena such as war and migration, as well as by religious missions, and any study of it must weigh in this fact or risk presenting modernisation as some kind of break with history, just as it has been erroneously presented as a break with tradition (Comaroff 1994:303, cited Buadaeng 2003:285). As Lambert (1999) asserts, modernity itself can be analysed as a “new stage in the religious history of humankind”. Data collection and analysis is approached with this in mind.

Religious change characterises the environment of Akha in Chiang Mai city, Thailand, the site of this thesis’ fieldwork. This chapter presents fieldwork findings and analysis about interaction between Akha religious rituals in Chiang Mai and social capital. Consideration of Akha religious ritual historically, and in interaction with processes of modernisation, provides a basis for attempting to grasp its operation among urban migrants, particularly slum-dwellers, based on primary data collection. Close-up analysis considers the potential and limitations of ritual performance for producing and maintaining social capital, while wider analysis considers ritual performance from a standpoint of religious evolution.

Akha religion cannot be described or analysed separately from the religio-cultural system it anchors and inhabits, a system that is part of a regional political economy that is in turn part of a world capitalist economy, wherein all societies are subject to historical forces of stasis and change. Care must be taken to avoid presenting Akha religion as a bounded, ahistorical entity of traditions, yet also accurately communicate its internal coherence. The description here is based largely on perceptions and interpretations from Western academics, and thus is partial and subjective.

This chapter moves from considering Akha religious ritual and social capital in the context of the village, to the village-city relationship, to the city itself. Akha’s religio-cultural system,

Akhazang, exhibits the problems of systems that are more fragile by virtue of greater internal coherence. Gumucio (2002:79) states that cultures deeply anchored in local contexts may struggle to accept when traditions do not survive intact. In villages, where Akhazang has historically anchored social cohesion and cooperation, its role is being eroded; in Chiang Mai, urban migrants have largely forsaken performance of rituals, constrained from observance or innovation by fear of negative consequences from inadequate performance. Subsequent erosion of the Akha collective encourages urban migrants to convert to Christianity, largely to access its beneficial social capital networks.

These findings can support either answer to the question of whether, in a context of rapid societal change, Akha religion serves to alienate Akha, or encourage them in what Goulet (1996) terms the historical task of producing a better world. My analysis posits that while Akhazang has inherent limitations as an evolutionary adaptor mechanism, which severely constrain any contribution by Akha ritual to social capital in Chiang Mai, yet a core Akha religious principle - which is to seek to live harmoniously with locally experienced phenomena (see Desan 1983) - is assisting a reformulation of Akha identity in Chiang Mai, and this is expressed in religious change and ritual practice that does generate significant social capital. The conclusion is that Christian conversion contains the evolution of Akhazang into a syncretic religious form central to which is the production of social capital from collective rituals. These findings are of most relevance to Chiang Mai Akha, but have implications for how change is being negotiated by Akha villagers and by other hilltribe groups, urban and rural, and for how development initiatives might better resource bottom-up development.

5.1 Akha religion at village level

5.1.1 In general

Akha are Tibeto-Burman-speaking uplanders who number about half a million living in villages scattered among other ethnic groups in northern Thailand, through parts of Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, and into southwest China (where they are known as Hani), from whence it is thought they originated, though Akha are not nomadic but rather have practised shifting upland cultivation which required periodic village relocation to fresh land (MPCD/SEAMP-HRI 1992/2002). Thailand's 32,000 or so Akha belong to three main groups – Loimisa, Phami, and Ulo – and are concentrated in northernmost Chiang Rai province, (Choopoh and Naess 1997). Akha no longer shift their villages in Thailand, due to government policy on forest and watershed conservation, and its national security interest in having settled populations, as well

as pressure on resources from lowlanders (Kammerer 1996b). Akha are among Thailand's nine officially recognised hilltribes, who together number around 1% of the country's total population, which is predominantly Buddhist and Thai-speaking (Kammerer 1996b).

Akha, whose society is patrilineal and gerontological, for centuries have lived in small, largely self-sufficient villages (Lewis 1984), though they have always interacted with other uplanders and lowlanders, even if as a "perennial minority" (Alting von Geusau 1983); also, it is not uncommon for Akha families to shift between Akha villages (Alting von Geusau 1983:271,275). Akha society is egalitarian though some practices lend themselves to inequality (Alting von Geusau 1983:270), while within their communitarian structure they are individualistic with great value put on personal autonomy (Alting von Geusau 1983:246,1995:23-24, Lewis 1990:208). Akha exclude non-Akha from their social organisation and highly value maintaining allegiance to their ethnic identity as socially and religiously expressed (Kammerer 1990:282), however, they exercise cultural relativity in accepting other customs and values as appropriate for other peoples (Kammerer 1989:272-73).

5.1.2 Akha religion

Akha religion is embedded in their wider culture and customs, in their ethnic identity, and their dialogues of identity with other cultures. Their cultural-religious system of rules for proper ritual and non-ritual action is termed, variously, zang, zan, yang, and zah. I use the term Akhazang, because Akha consider there are multiple types of zang – including Western zang (Pahlazang), which is often associated with Christian zang (Yesuzang) (Kammerer 1990:286) – that "to be human is to have zah of some kind" and that to be zangless is to be less than human (Kammerer 1990:285). Alting von Geusau (1983:253) says Akhazang is essentially about "linking human events to cosmic processes and cycles", similar to a summation by Little Bear (2000:81): "The function of Aboriginal values and customs is to maintain the relationships that hold creation together", which implies cosmic disruption if customs are disrupted. Continuity and order are crucial to Akha religio-cosmology, which identifies symbolic patterns in numerous spheres (Tooker 1992:3, Kammerer 1988:34, Lewis and Lewis 1984), including the village as microcosm of the cosmologically-grounded model (Kammerer 1989:276).

Akhazang functioned within non-contemporary Akha society as the primary producer and maintainer of social capital: It contains Akhas' blessing cult, which is fundamentally about relational joining; it emphasises the words of ancestors as the source of Akha lore, and regular

communication with ancestors to secure blessing, especially fertility, and in this it fosters intergenerational connections, which are reinforced by one generation apprenticing the next; and Akhazang codifies an exteriorised and extremely high ritual threshold, which according to costly signalling theory would generate high levels of group cohesion, commitment, and trust.

Akhazang is an all-encompassing frame of reference for personal and village life (Alting von Geusau 1983:253), containing instructions which cover everything from agriculture and marriage to house-building and cooking, as well as songs, and requirements for making the often lengthy recitations which include most zang codification as well as genealogical histories. The oral tradition that is central to Akhas' sociocultural system consists of teachings that provide examples thought to derive from ancestors' practices, including their mistakes (Alting von Geusau 1999, 1995:20).

Kammerer (1983:23) states that Akhazang indexes ethnic affiliation and allegiance, or Akhanness; thus Akha are not only socially but "religiously ethnic" (O'Connor 1996:230). This is illustrated in that those who failed to observe the strictures of Akhazang, or who unwittingly disrupted the cosmic balance, such as by having twins, were, in the past, excluded from village life. In terms of costly signalling theory (Sosis and Alcorta 2003, Sosis 2004), Akhazang establishes a very high ritual threshold for group members and strict sanctions for falling short.

Religion's prominence in Akhazang is contested: while Lewis et al (1984:222) include religion within their definition of zang, Alting von Geusau (1999) prefers "customary law" and repeatedly disassociates Akhazang from religion. This is unhelpful. In fact, Alting von Geusau's description (1983:276) of Akhazang as "the depository of the Akha adaptation to a harsh natural and human environment" is not dissimilar to the definition of religion as evolutionary adaptor mechanism. Akhas' worldview includes a superempirical reality and places humans in symbolic relationship to it, Lambert's (1999) two conditions for defining religion, and though Akha religion is not salvific, messianistic, or other-worldly, its this-worldly fixation (eg, a focus on fertility, not heaven) is not uncommon in religion (Weber 1965:1). Akhazang conforms to Durkheim's description of religion as a "social discipline" involving participation in collective rituals that bind people into moral communities (cited Stark 2001:620-21).

Tooker (1992) argues that Akha have a completely exteriorised idiom for relating to tradition; one cannot believe or not believe in zang, only "carry it", or not, which renders the Western idiom of interiorised belief irrelevant to them. Akhazang does not codify belief – neither cosmology nor doctrine – but codifies elaborate rules of practice (Kammerer 1996a:81).

Weber (1965:7) argues that symbolic activity associated with magic or religions, once repeatedly shown to be effective, becomes so set that “the greatest conflicts between purely dogmatic views, even within rationalistic religions, may be tolerated more easily than innovations in symbolism, which threaten the magical efficacy of action or even ... arouse the anger of a god.” It is ironic that Akhazang does not fit with Western notions of religion based on interiorised belief, given that it and other hilltribe religions have commonly been lumped together as animism, spiritism, or ancestor worship, all three of which *do* fit within the category of “primitive religion”, which Durkheim (1972) and Swanson (1963) helped develop - a categorisation which supported the tradition-modern dichotomy within the development industry. Tooker (1992) suggests that to say Akha “believe” in spirits must be wrong given their exteriorised idiom.

Men hold all key positions within Akhazang – of note here are those of village leader, or dzoema, and village reciting specialist, or pima (Alting von Geusau 1983:268). Women hold no formal decisionmaking positions, though they can be charismatic healers, or nyipas, and a matriarch can become a “white-skirted” woman who takes over from men her household’s practice of ancestor service (Kammerer 1988:39-40). Ritual affirms women’s collective status above men, because it is their fertility and rice that sustain ancestors, and this provides “cosmological compensation” for their individually lesser status and greater agricultural workload (Kammerer 1988:49). Though ritual offerings are to patrilineal ancestors, the role of women ancestors is central (Tannenbaum and Kammerer 1996).

Akha themselves consider Akhazang onerous, both in time and money (Tooker 1992, Kammerer 1990:283): Their mythology has it that in the beginning Akha collected their customs in a tightly-woven bag from which nothing was lost, as opposed to the leaky bags of other ethnic groups (Kammerer 1996b).

5.1.3 Ceremonies

Akha religion combines annual household-based offerings to patrilineal ancestors and calendrical rice rituals (Kammerer 1996b). Ceremonies often entail killing pairs of chickens, and less often pigs or dogs, and for the likes of funeral rites, a buffalo. Their expense has mounted as agricultural wherewithal has diminished in villages, and evaporated for urban Akha. Each Akhazang household keeps an essential ceremonial object - an ancestor bamboo section - tied to a roof rafter (Kammerer 1983:14). Ceremonies emphasise both male

leadership but also the necessary male/female pairing (Kammerer 1983:112). An annual cycle of ceremonies entails:

- 5 rice-related rituals, which emphasise the household (Kammerer 1983:112).
- 9 ancestor services, which emphasise the village entity. Best-known of these is the Akha swing ceremony (*yehr kuq lawr dav-eu aq poeq*). Kammerer (1983:12-20) provides a full description of ancestor service.
- 3 community ceremonies – erecting a new village gate in April; the offering to the ruler of land and water in April; the grasshopper ceremony in September. The last two are syncretic forms.

5.1.4 Blessing

The transfer of blessing shapes all Akha religious practice (Kammerer 1996a:91). This places Akha among Southeast Asia's blessing cults, "according to which one *solicits or begs from the position of an inferior supplicant* the means to one's well-being and prosperity", including begging from God and other people (Lehman 1996:29, italics in original). However, a person who blesses does not gain merit, but honour, and anyone can do the blessing; thus the social arrangement is ultimately symmetrical (Lehman 1996:38), in contrast to the Thai Buddhist practice of merit-making which is a "a very competitive game" in which one gives in order to get power and rank in a social order of ranked hierarchy (Lehman 1996:29). Blessing cults operate in small societies as a non-institutionalised religious form close to the surface of society (O'Connor 1996:215).

O'Connor (1996:214) says blessing has direct and literal power because it objectifies experience, and so its efficacy comes not from having ideas about gods but from experiencing society. Cursing separates, but blessing joins, and this essential oneness precedes any divisions that social structure then institutes.

"Blessing joins. It can join a people to their god, elder to younger, host to guest, or weak to strong. The practices vary, but the one constant is that blessing always creates a relationship. In this simple connectedness society arises."

- O'Connor 1996:214

Clearly, blessing among Akha must operate differently from merit-making among Thai in terms of social capital production. Analysis of this is beyond this thesis' methodological reach,

except to highlight two differences which emphasise Akhazang's capacity to generate bonding social capital: O'Connor (1996:214) says blessing is a basic religious form that confers grace, whereas merit is a priestly elaboration linked to salvation: "Blessing usually stays close to everyday life and affirms society's oneness; merit is a vehicle for the hierarchies that divide large-scale societies." Blessing cults' ritual feasting serves "to emphasise bonds of essential equality among participants" (Unger 1998:34). Kammerer (1996a:94-95) says that among Kachin and Chin peoples, competitive feasts of merit manifest rank both in this world and the next, so pit households against one other, while Akha feasts unite households in begging for blessing. Also, Akha cosmological and communal emphasis translates into less competition for blessing than among, say, the Lisu.

The second point of difference is that merit-making has its own economy, which works according to the market principle that the more merit you make the more potential you have to make merit (Lehman 1996:25). This aligns with the previously noted drawback of social capital, that those rich in it get richer, increasing inequality (Putnam 2000:9). Blessing, however, is reciprocal and independent of actual resources; eg, the poor can bless the rich (O'Connor 1996: 218-219).

5.1.5 Ancestors and kinship

For Akha, the primary blessing and fixation is fertility, represented by rice and children, because a son ensures parents a place among ancestors after death (Tannenbaum and Kammerer 1996). Ancestors thus provide this-worldly benefits and an other-worldly destination. Seeking blessing joins Akha with ancestors: ancestors are cared for, and reciprocate by caring for their descendants. It is common for societies so oriented to be said to engage in "ancestor worship", however, Steadman, Palmer and Tilley (1996) argue that, in general, the practices so categorised are more accurately described as methods of communication with ancestors. I refer, then, to ancestor service, not worship.

To Akha, ancestors are people who have died but yet can still be present in some way, and on some important occasions (MPCD/SEAMP 2000). This understanding exhibits what Steadman et al (1996) argue are universal human claims of communication with dead kin which strengthen kin ties and tradition. In Akha orderings, social cohesion is inseparable from ancestors and ancestor service.

“(Phima Assaw:) “We don’t keep our ancestors and ancestor-lines as a luxury!! ... When we say ‘*Tsui-ghui-eu*’ for ‘reading genealogy’, we really say: ‘Counting /reading the linkages/joints’ of the Akha system. We use ‘joints’ like the joints/bones in a human body. This means that these links are very strong and also fit together very well. This means that the ‘ancestor’-links/joints which we have keep us together as Akha.”

- Alting von Geusau 1995:23

Ancestor service has a political aspect, underpinning the ideology of the Hani/Akha ethnic alliance system (MPCD/SEAMP 2000a). Thus ancestor service is the means for Akha to recognise their roots, history, and manner of survival, and a symbol of their unity despite a migratory diaspora (Li Xi Xian 1995, cited MPCD/SEAMP 2000a). This helps explain the high value Akha put on keeping genealogies, which in oral form memorised by pima stretch back three-score generations and are extremely consistent. Akhazang requires often lengthy recitations by pimas of genealogies at lifecycle initiations – birth, marriage, death – at times of crisis, and for determining suitable marriage partners (Lewis 1984:204).

Akhazang also encourages ceremonial joining with living relatives, as parents and particularly male relatives on the mother’s side are important intermediary sources of blessing (Tannenbaum and Kammerer 1996, Kammerer 1996a:90-93). The ultimate source of blessing for Akha is Apoemiyeh, which Kammerer (1996a:88,91) describes as their non-gendered high god-originator, who is so crucial to be mostly assumed in Akhazang. Typically, Alting von Geusau (1995:19) insists Apoemiyeh is not a god but a female principle, of rain and water. In the occasional reference to Apoemiyeh by my interviewees, personal characteristics were attributed to it more in keeping with Kammerer’s concept.

5.1.6 Akha religion: Summary

Akhazang ceremonies are all explicitly concerned with intragroup relations, not intergroup relations, as would be expected in a largely self-sufficient village. Ritual practices promote values of egalitarianism and interdependence. Norms of reciprocity and sanctions on transgressing religio-cultural codes buttress networks that exhibit thick, informal, bonding, inward social capital, of the type that provides people with most of their personal support and meaning (Putnam and Goss 2002); for Akha, this extends to undergirding an ethnic identity that is regularly reaffirmed by collective religious practice (Kammerer 1983). Exteriorised

codes are operative in face-to-face contacts across a broad array of social contexts, such contacts being a feature of “closed” networks associated with high levels of trust (Unger 1998:33).

5.2 Akhazang in transition

Outlined above is the general situation as it pertained in Akha villages pre-1950s, as interpreted by anthropologists and ethnologists at specific times and places. These are generalisations, even idealisations, that in their necessary focus on religion tend to treat it in isolation from political, economic, and social structures and forces. A theme of this thesis is that religion is not, and cannot be adequately treated as separate. I seek next to outline major facets of that dialectical relationship post-1950 between Akha, Akhazang, and a modernising wider political economy, which is highly relevant to Akhazang’s operation in Chiang Mai.

Also, the above outline presents Akhazang as a monolithic structure, but this “system” perceived, interpreted, and presented by Westerners from interactions mostly with those who value Akhazang - such as religious specialists with much spiritual capital invested in it - is not the same as the lived experience of Akhazang as a process by individuals. As noted by Worsley (1997), religion is not of equal value to everyone, as this next section makes clear by elaborating on the impacts of major general processes of modernisation: individualisation, rationalisation, functional differentiation, and pluralism.

5.2.1 Push factors

Kammerer (1990) states that Akhazang’s own nature and requirements, which led Akha to resist Christian conversion much longer than most hilltribes, are now contributing to its own demise. It is “extensive and expensive” (Kammerer 1990:283) and is required to be met correctly and completely, a combination that disqualifies Akha with insufficient knowledge or resources (Kammerer 1990:284, Buadaeng et al 2003:156, MPCD/SEAMP-HRI 1992/2002). Christian Akha gave these push factors as the stated reason for converting, rather than any inherent attraction of Christianity (Kammerer 1990:283). Others, though fewer, convert to Buddhism, and others, probably fewer still, simply drop Akhazang. This fragmentation lessens social cohesion, further reducing benefits from practising Akhazang. To use Verter’s terms (2003:159-160), embodied zang (the religious acts) is diluted because fewer Akha know ritual practices, objectified zang (religious goods) is devalued because it is unaffordable to many,

and institutionalised zang is weakened because the status of religious specialists goes down, while the costs, say of memorising texts, increase.

It is consistent with Unger's observation (1998:16) of an often inverse relationship between inward, communal, and usually intense trust, and outward, less intense trust, that Akhazang has been less capable of generating bridging, outward social capital of the type increasingly needed in a modernising social situation and cash economy. Akhazang is failing because, as the task contingencies concept has it: "If the task requires trust and cooperation, embedded ties with repeated exchange history is [sic] preferred, but if the task requires economic rationality and market competition" weak ties are better (Adler and Kwon 1999). Strong ties become a liability not just because weak ties are better for expanding networks, but because when strong ties are threatened there is more at stake, such as personal and collective identities.

5.2.2 Pull factors

The environment now for all Akha is one of increasing pluralism and individualisation, enhancing autonomy to choose between expanding alternatives. This enables Akha to express the differential value they put on Akhazang, even to make choices economically, geographically, and religiously without reference to Akhazang, while in turn shaping the choices they do make. Pivotal to the shaping process are education and economic resources. Education has been shifted from the family to a State function, excising its content of Akhazang while elevating rationalisation that can promote religious scepticism, while its delivery often carries Akha youngsters beyond parental influence into an assimilative position to Thai society (MPCD/SEAMP-HRI 1992/2002). Economically, the family unit's function within an agricultural subsistence operation is being supplanted by the demands of functional differentiation; also, Akha must rely less on land and rice, and enter more into the lowland capitalist economy. Both these trends tend to divorce blessings from an established context of kinship, while forcing reassessment of what is described as Akhas' generally ambivalent attitude to wealth (Kammerer 1996a:94).

It is now an advantage to be mobile and cosmopolitan, with the benefits of being conversant with lowland society and economy often coming at a cost to relationships with kin, and the village, once central to Akha cosmology, becoming a place associated with marginality. As Kammerer (1990:284) notes: "Knowledge of the Thai language and Thai ways, rather than knowledge of zah, can lead to new economic opportunities." Conversion to Christianity provides the same, while in Chiang Mai, Christian churches crucially provide social

opportunities notably lacking from Akhazang. I identify Akha sociability - which in Unger's scheme (1998) is also a component of social capital - as one of the most powerful and recent pull factors away from Akhazang.

Akha have always interacted with others, but previously rarely had recourse to the alternatives offered by plurality because they had sufficient resources of themselves, and their cultural preference was not to (Kammerer 1990:282). Dislocation within their cultural system - and for city Akha from their villages and its cosmological significance - has made them open to finding alternatives, with Christianity the leading contender. Akha resisted conversion until the 1960s, but there has subsequently been strong growth of both Protestant and Catholic churches among Akha in Thailand, and probably in Myanmar too (Kammerer 1990:277,1996b). Significant proportions of Akha villages are now Christian or Christian-Akhazangist mixed, though inadequate census data make numerical estimates impossible (Kammerer 1996b).

5.2.3 Akhazang ceremonies in one village

I spent one week as a participant-observer at Akhazang ceremonies in one village, acquainting me with the type of cultural-religious situation many Akha in Chiang Mai had experienced, and often remained connected to. Often in interviews Akha related to the "village" with nostalgia; it was important then, that I had a foil to prevent me idealising a rural "other", of shared, mutually valued, and culturally uplifting Akhazang.

Saen Chareon is an Ulo Akha village of about 500 people, 10km west of Mae Suai town, itself 50km from Chiang Rai city. Most villagers identify with Akhazang, though there are some Christian households, and the village has experienced religious division, most notably with Christian converts founding New Saen Chareon village (Buadaeng et al 2003:156). Saen Chareon is a much-researched village, as Western anthropologist Dr Leo Alting von Geusau married into the village's dominant Choopoh clan and based much research there. I stayed for one week in May 2004 with Choopoh family members, and was a participant-observer at three Akhazang ceremonies: one household's ancestor service offering on the eve of rice-planting in late May; the village's communal water purification ceremony, on the morning of the first rice-planting; and a fertility ritual by a white-skirted woman. A common theme was of rice/fertility, which Lewis (1990) suggests as a trinity of themes in Akha culture (the other two being God/gods and purity).

5.2.4 Ancestor service

The household ancestor service, performed to ensure a good year for rice farming, was almost cancelled by the grandson so he could go fishing with his village friends; this showed an ambivalence that belied the importance of the ritual as he emphasised it to me. Over the course of three hours, the young man performed multiple steps, beginning with cooking rice and killing and cooking a chicken, and centring on offerings of rice and chicken using paraphernalia from his household's ancestor basket. The grandson said all households were meant to perform this ceremony on that day; however, only some of his friends participated in it, while others had become Christians but did not perform Christian ceremonies either – they were “skin, not heart” followers, he said.

The steps were performed matter-of-factly, without any accompanying prayers or chants: As O'Connor (1996:221) says of Southeast Asians in general, “...they wield the inherited [religious ritual] forms pragmatically, not reverentially.” My requests for a commentary invariably elicited an explanation of the minutiae of each step, not an interpretation of why it was so, in line with Kammerer's extensive experience among Akha (1983:23). The man occasionally consulted his grandfather or grandmother, and at various stages everyone, including his sister and a young girl cousin, joined in the work of rice-pounding or rice-cake making and cooking. The ritual culminated at the “altar” in the grandparents' bedroom where even I partook of offerings, and ended with a shared meal. It was all very participatory, inclusive of genders and generations, including the dead, and pragmatic.

5.2.5 Water-source ceremony

The water-source ceremony was ostensibly for all the village men, but of at least 200 men in Saen Chareon, only nine came, including one young man cajoled along by a friend; there were also 3 old men, and 4 middle-aged men. Though we passed by many men on the way to the water-source - a run-off pipe 200m into the forest, the only place where “pure” water for Akhazang rituals could be collected - none accompanied us. Kammerer's experience (1983) was that as a woman she was allowed to observe and sometimes to participate in such rituals.

The ritual lasted about an hour, involving the killing of four chickens – together worth 280 baht, or at least a day's wages - and offering of chicken broth, pure water, and whisky, with the pima reciting the whole time, finishing with a short prayer to Apoemiyeh, while others conducted the year's only maintenance around the site, mostly by repairing makeshift bamboo

lattice. The shared meal that followed lasted another hour, the older men animated but with the two young Akha eating but rarely speaking. An irony was that, while the men expressed to me disquiet at cultural erosion, and suggested Akhazang should change, but not how, the younger pair's opinions were not sought; a general impression is that young people are considered central to the problem, but peripheral to any solution. Back at the dzoema's house, amid more whisky and chat, 3 old men forecast a good year ahead from reading chicken bones. Several younger men with rifles called by to hear if hunting would be good, indicating some confidence in ritual efficacy.

5.2.6 Rice-field ceremony

This ceremony, called *ya-yeh-meuh*, is designed to be performed by every family in their farm area to secure fertility for the year's rice crop, and is much shorter and less elaborate than the other two. The 65-year-old whiteskirted woman I watched perform the rite single-handedly in a family field was chosen as the second village person to perform it, following the dzoema, or village leader, who did it privately the day before. After she did it, all others would be free to do it. The rite involved killing a chicken and throwing a hand-hoe - while her daughter and son-in-law continued weed-spraying, illustrative of Akhas' utilitarian approach to land use tempered by ritual that sacralises the land and forges the family's direct connection with rice as the symbol of blessing from Apoemiyeh.

5.2.7 Reflections on ceremonies

The bonding value of these ceremonies, performed within the high ritual thresholds of Akhazang, was striking. Both the household and communal ceremonies involve shared preparation, shared requests for blessing, and shared meals. The rice-field ceremony was the prerequisite for shared work next day, with 16 men and women planting rice all day; they work together for one farmer in the knowledge that that farmer will work for them. This work and these blessing requests are shared, pragmatic tasks of co-survival: Akha farmers cannot be individualistic because the individual cannot manage the work or crises. This is an economic parallel to the spiritual situation, where no one can stand as an Akha minus community.

The poor turnout for the water-source ceremony illustrated the repeated concern expressed by Saen Chareon interviewees, about decreasing practice of Akhazang, and erosion of cooperative norms. In extended interviews with four people – two male elders, a young man, and one

elderly woman - they all expressed the need to address a perceived indifference to Akhazang among Akha generally, in their village, and especially among young Akha. All four commented negatively on the inverse relationship between Akha youth being educated at Thai schools and their knowledge of and commitment to Akhazang. “Maybe young people don’t care, only a few care a little,” said the elderly woman. Pima Asaw Choopoh said: “Maybe in future Akha will have more than 80% [of their heart given over to moneymaking] because nowadays people in this village and other hilltribe people want to send their children to study and they must make money to study. Because of that it’s hard to come back and learn about Akha culture ... those who stay in the city must forget Akha culture.”

The rituals themselves are largely without shared chants or liturgy; this may limit their reaffirming power by restricting collective participation to a single cognitive level of “doing”, but not enunciating, a rite. The reluctant youth at the water-source ceremony could not manage even the “doing” because he had not been to such a ritual before - there were “many, many” ceremonies, he said, but only “old men” knew how to do them. This contrasts with the religious experience of the Karen, where the importance of their exercising a shared language of the symbolic-religious motivated Catholic missionaries to invent entirely new words related to the Catholic belief system (Maniratanavongsiri 1997:243).

There were indications in Saen Chareon that confidence in Akhazang’s capacity to generate collective action has been shaken. The water-source participants did not cajole along a large crowd of men met on the way, despite it being a village-wide rite. The grandson appeared self-conscious about doing ancestor service when his friends were going fishing. Interviewee W6 spoke of how Akha were known as singing people - “by singing everything can be fun” - and how singing while farming made people “very close with the heart”. “But now people think you are mad” to go about singing, she said. She added that older people were also forgetting about Akhazang, partly because regular inter-house visits to swap stories and games had been replaced by TV watching. Interviewee W5 said she used to tell stories about Akhazang to her grandson at night, but not now there was TV.

Half the total of seven village interviewees expressed the need to modify Akhazang; Saen Chareon’s group of elders had been themselves addressing this issue, but without any conclusions. Interviewee M2 suggested reducing the number of important ceremonies, and added that Akha might learn from Hani in China about preserving ceremonies.¹ No one else

¹ An Akha NGO researcher (Higashide 2004) with firsthand knowledge of Hani told me that while Hani are mostly not drifting from villages into China’s cities, and appear to have retained more of their

suggested how Akhazang might be modified; rather, several raised obstacles to any change, notably, the absolute necessity for households to keep an ancestor bamboo box, that Akha lacked money to form any sort of centralised religious institution, and that lessening ritual requirements might weaken Akhazang.

From SRI's research, Buadaeng et al (2003:155) states that pressures on resources are forcing uplanders to look for jobs outside villages, and that as children access education they become increasingly reluctant to return to villages, "forget their own culture", and respect elders less. "People in the community are further away from each other" and there is "less connection with the old culture."

The main theme of my interviews and experience in Saen Chareon was that of loss. As an exteriorised religious form, Akhazang only exists via its embodiment in regular, collective practice, and that practice in Saen Chareon has been severely disrupted, with cosmological consequences. Interviewee W6 said she did not know who would look after her when she became an ancestor. "What would happen to her?" I asked. She shook her head.

5.3 Akhazang at village-city interface

The history of upland-lowland relations in Thailand is of the centre gradually exerting increased influence on the periphery. An embodiment of the centre in the north is Chiang Mai, a city with dramatic experience of intentional development which has transformed it from a backwater pre-1980s to a hub of tourism and property development (Buadaeng et al 2003). In considering social capital production in Chiang Mai, it is not just connections within the city that matter, but those between city Akha and village Akha, and any signs of breakdown in either norms or networks between them; these connections are analysed next, based on interviews in Saen Chareon village, before a summation of the history of the Akha-Chiang Mai relationship.

5.3.1 Connections

Interviewee M7 had both the most generous attitude to city Akha – some were "trying to be good Akha" but city life was antithetical to Akhazang, he said – as well as the most

culture than Thailand Akha, in fact the opposite is true because the Cultural Revolution bled Hani culture of content.

enthusiasm for the nature of connections between the city and village Akha. He said there were strong connections between Saen Chareon and Chiang Mai: Many people returned for ceremonies, while he himself went occasionally to the city, including to make a ceremony for his daughter's marriage to a foreigner, for a baby-naming ceremony, and a "new house" ceremony. Akha who got sick or suffered bad luck "must come back home", while rich city Akha also returned for ceremonies, because they were aware that "bad things can happen to anyone." I was unable to pursue confirmation of this fact, which might indicate some Akha successfully straddling the worlds of village and city blessing.

Of seven interviewees, five said they had frequent or occasional contacts with city Akha to do with ritual occasions. Two of the seven said they themselves had performed minor Akhazang rituals in Chiang Mai. Pima Choopoh said he was in "frequent" contact with city Akha for ceremonies - though he estimated he had been to Chiang Mai fewer than 10 times in all, and did not know of any other pimas visiting the city, or living there. He had recently been called to help another pima perform funeral rites for a boy who drowned in Bangkok - "pima who have not done ceremonies in the city worry about how to do it properly." He said city Akha had approached him directly about performing a ritual only once in the past 2-3 years. However, he and other village interviewees all said many city Akha returned for the major ceremonies; most popular were the village swing and top-spinning ceremonies, and this was confirmed by Akha interviewees in Chiang Mai.

In Pong Noi, an outer suburb of Chiang Mai, I interviewed one pima who had come from his village to perform a minor strengthening ritual for his son. Initially he said he had come to the city perhaps 3 times in 5 months for ceremonies, but later contradicted this, saying he had performed only one other ceremony in the city, and explained this was because Akha liked to use pimas they were familiar with, he relied on being invited, and "because there are many Christians" few people were likely to invite him.

5.3.2 Trust

Costly signalling theory would suggest that Akha perceived to be outside the ritual threshold would be trusted less by those within it, which could be summed up in interviewee M3's statement: "I have 2 groups of friends – some who care for the culture and some who don't. Maybe I trust the ones who don't love the culture less compared with the ones who do." Indications of a rift were borne out by the largely negative attitudes of village interviewees to

Akha living in cities; implicit in this was the understanding that Akhazang demands an intact village structure and institutions, including village gates and ritual specialists.

A common statement was that Akha in cities were after money and forgot Akhazang. W6 said: "They fight to be Akha but can't be Akha because they don't live in the village, they always stay in the city and get only new things from the city. They change." Pima Choopoh said: "Akha people in Chiang Mai ... like Akha culture but in their heart maybe 20% they love Akha culture and 80% they want to make money." As for any religious specialists who might operate in the city, "yes, they can do the ceremonies but not perfectly – but maybe if they live in the city they don't care about Akha culture ... maybe they are pima in name only."

The greatest antipathy was reserved by one interviewee for Christian and Buddhist Akha, despite the fact that, unlike zangless Akha, these people at least practise zang of a sort. M7 said: "You can trust Akha in the city as much as in the village if they don't get the new religion. But if they get another religion you can't trust them. Because if you are staying in the city you must believe in Akha." The notion that Christian Akha do not meet the index of Akha-ness was expressed by Christian Akha themselves in Chiang Mai, as I will discuss later.

5.4 Akhazang in the city

5.4.1 Akha in Chiang Mai, 1960s-early 1980s

Due to its proximity to Thailand's unstable borders, Chiang Mai has always exhibited dynamic and advanced ethnic heterogeneity, unlike most of the country (Vatikiotis 1984), and Akha urban migrants enter an environment of obvious, longstanding plurality. Akha settlement in Chiang Mai can be mapped in two stages: 1950s-1970s, when numbers were small, many migrants were refugees, and their adaptation appeared quite successful; and a subsequent stage, when numbers have increased, economic migration has predominated, and incidence of maladaptation has risen. For information on the first stage, the primary source - in the absence of prior research - is Vatikiotis' PhD thesis (1984); subsequently, this lack has been partially corrected, particularly by Chiang Mai University's Social Research Institute (SRI), whose preliminary findings from a study into hilltribe social capital are drawn upon here.

Vatikiotis (1984) counted 698 hilltribe people living in Chiang Mai, including 76 Akha (10.9%); Lisu and Lahu together accounted for 55% of numbers. He concluded that "the highland minority group in aggregate is unambiguously better placed in urban society" than

northern Thai people, including by employment and educational attainment, and enjoying a higher living standard than most of the city's population. He argued that in Chiang Mai's pluralistic environment, competition between existing interest groups mediated benefits, and hilltribes had better access to resources, including a burgeoning frontier trade, tourism, and the patronage of wealthy elite tribals, bureaucrats, and missionaries. Akha for their part exploited historical ethnic ties with southern China and the Yunnanese. These findings ran counter to the environmental determinism prevalent in scholarship in Vatikiotis' day.

The establishment of permanent settlement in Chiang Mai by virtually all hilltribes, including Akha, resulted from refugees fleeing social and political upheaval in Burma, China, and Laos; from 1960-1980, 30,000 minority refugees entered Thailand from Burma. The refugees often were not welcome in hilltribe villages in Thailand - they were seen as bad luck, and there existed only distant clan ties. Thus there were fewer grounds for connection between Chiang Mai Akha and Akha villages before 1980 than subsequently, and within the city a distinction between refugee migrants and migrants from villages in Thailand.

Vatikiotis considers in detail the interpersonal networks of hilltribes in general, and Akha specifically. He says early migrants did not assimilate but did adapt with "striking rapidity", carving out a niche in tourism, while occupations between hilltribes became highly ethnically specialised: Akha are still known as small traders associated with the foreign tourist Night Bazaar (Buadaeng et al 2003:99). Networks and sense of community were based not on neighbourhoods - migrants were widely dispersed, and city Akha remain dispersed today (Buadaeng et al 2003:94, Choopoh 2004b) - but on occupational networks linked to extensive regional networks. A concentrated and "remarkably segregated pattern of social activity ... ensures a high degree of insulation from the surrounding environment" (Vatikiotis 1984). Mission hostels also encouraged ethnic exclusivity, yet Vatikiotis concluded that between city tribals there were not sharp social cleavages, but rather widely diffused weak ties which facilitated individuals to exercise ethnic affiliation by "convenience". This manipulation of ethnicity between and within groups was not about preserving norms but accessing resources.

Even so, Vatikiotis said hilltribes kept up ties with rural relatives and claimed to have wide family networks in Chiang Mai, though these were often loose social networks which secured people's participation through the "bonding role" of affinal ties. He observed that Akha in Chiang Mai are "neither held together by a broad range of common cultural activities, nor by a voluntary association of institutional means enforcing common norms and values. Individuals are apparently bound together by their common economic activity." Akhazang, glossed here as "common cultural activities", was notable by its absence. Akha were very close - 70% of

primary group ties were within their ethnic group – but with economic interdependence the main causal factor of group activity, the many social differences between city Akha were exploited by better-off Akha, for instance by employing “kin” – actually, non-relatives – in low-paying, insecure labour. Exploiting group affiliation to serve individual interests is an example of a negative externality of social capital.

Vatikiotis’ core finding that the interpersonal networks of hilltribes were key to their smooth integration into Chiang Mai supports the corollary of this thesis, that social capital can aid the adaptation of dislocated, minority urban migrants. However, the nature of social capital among early Akha migrants was complex: in its concentration of social activity in exclusive ethnic groupings, it imported the dynamics of social capital propagated by Akhazang at village level, where this analysis has shown that bonding, inward social capital was and is prevalent; yet in the city this capital arose from group activity surrounding economic, not cultural, activities; and bridging, outward social capital operated between hilltribe groups, extending outward into the region and across the border.

5.4.2 Akha in Chiang Mai, 1980s-present

Buadaeng et al (2003:166-169), in preliminary findings from SRI’s ongoing (2003-06) study of social capital among six hilltribes in Chiang Mai, say most hilltribe migrants into Chiang Mai are aged 11-30 years, with roughly half coming for education and half to get employment. Migrants struggle to survive individually and so form social groups whose benefits include resisting exploitation, and facilitating employment and housing. Pre-eminent mention is made of the efficacy of network-building through relationships formed at religious ceremonial gatherings, especially through Christian churches, with gains including spiritual and practical support, as well as the ceremonies regularly reconnecting city Akha with villagers.

Estimates of Akha numbers in Chiang Mai range from 842 (Choopoh 2004a) to 7,000 (MPCD/SEAMP 2002); SRI (Buadaeng et al 2003:93) estimates 1,020 persons, while noting that their coincidental survey method, combined with the transience of many Akha, means they may have counted just 60% of all Akha in the city (see Table 2). SRI counted 489 men and 531 women, with 80% aged 30 or under (16.6% aged 1-10 years, 34% aged 11-20 and mostly at school, 30 % aged 21-30). Another 10% were 31-40 years; few Akha in the city are older than 40.

Table 2: Number of hilltribe people in Chiang Mai, by tribal group

Tribal group*	Men/Women	Total	% of all hilltribe people in Chiang Mai
Karen	855/471	1326	25.4
Akha	489/531	1020	19.5
Hmong	632/709	1341	25.7
Lahu	351/435	786	15.1

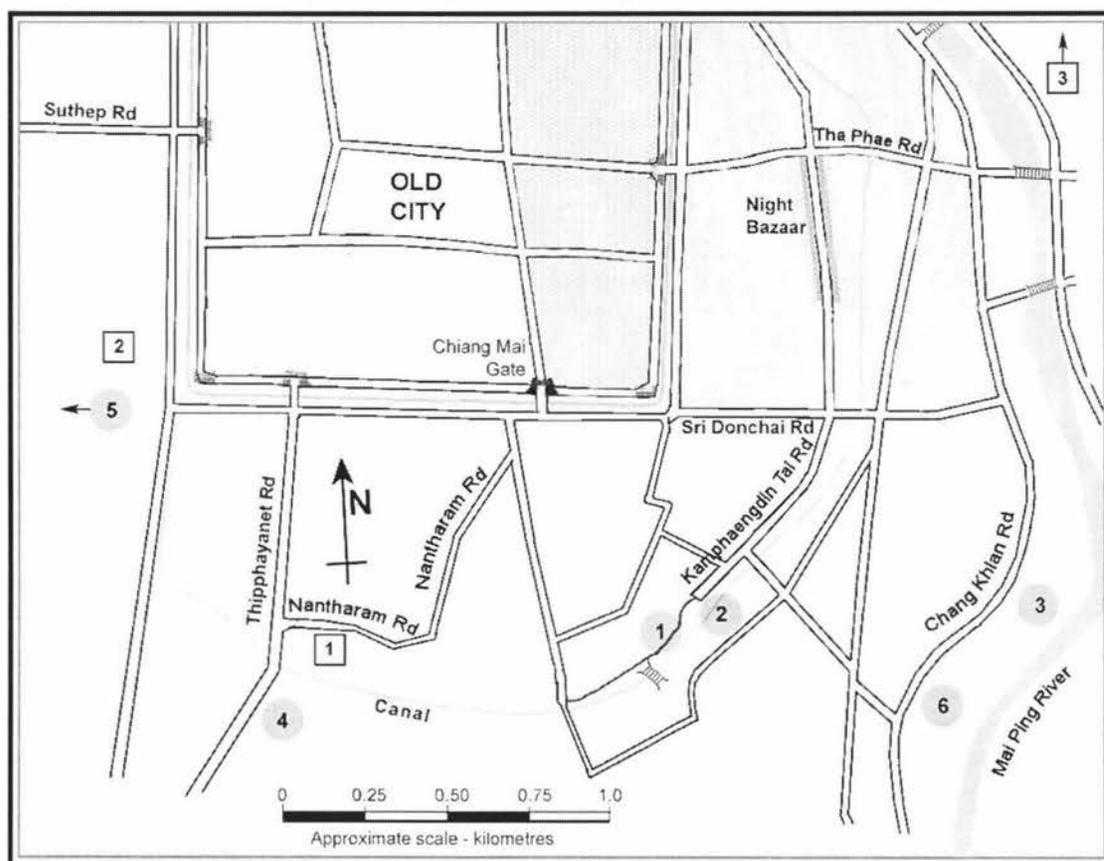
* Other tribal groups with fewer people in Chiang Mai are omitted.

Source: Buadaeng et al 2003:55

Buadaeng et al (2003) put the start of Akha migration to Chiang Mai around 1970, for economic reasons; numbers leapt from 1998 on as land problems increased, while numbers of Akha born in the city rose too. Many Akha work in restaurants, the entertainment industry, and construction, though they are noted as small traders in self-made handicrafts, selling as far afield as tourist markets in Phuket, Pattaya, and Bangkok (Buadaeng et al 2003:93,99,167). Others live in “bad or miserable circumstances” (MPCD/SEAMP 2002). A 1994 survey estimated Akha children constituted 63% of hilltribe children - and 33% of all children - living on the streets in Chiang Mai (Creative Vieng Ping 1994, cited Buadaeng et al 2003:43). Catholic lay worker Billy Doerners (2004) said his Chiang Mai education programme had only 8 Akha children attending because it was difficult to keep track as they moved around often with parents. MPCD/SEAMP (2002) said by 2002 the number of poor people of all ethnicities working in karaoke bars and massage parlours had jumped (no figures were given), though Akha’s small-trading abilities kept them from the worst of this. In 1997, the Informal Chiang Mai Akha Community Group began a programme to support impoverished Akha, prompted by increased incidence of maladaptation (MPCD/SEAMP 2002).

Buadaeng et al (2003:94) found migrants’ villages of origin were concentrated in Mae Suai and Mae Fahr Luang districts (50%), and Mae Ay district (almost 50%). Residentially, they remain widely dispersed: Choopoh (2004b) estimated from a survey that Akha resided in 71 different places in the city. Some Akha live in slums, with one of them, Kamphaengdin Tai, noted as an Akha neighbourhood for reasons of historic settlement (Vatikiotis 1984). Fieldwork for this thesis focused on Kamphaengdin Tai, though here too Akha households are dispersed among other ethnicities (see Figure 3). Chiang Mai today has an estimated 10 small slums (Buadaeng et al 2003:169); Vatikiotis (1984) recorded 9 slums with 12,500 residents or 11% of Chiang Mai’s 1980s population.

Figure 3: Detail of City of Chiang Mai showing fieldwork locations, May-June 2004



LEGEND

Main interview sites in Chiang Mai City

Place	Type of housing / number of Akha interviewees
1 Kamphaengdin Tai, West side	Slum* / 12 interviewees
2 Kamphaengdin Tai, East side	Slum* / 10 interviewees
3 Chang Khlan Road	Compound / 5 interviewees
4 Old Cultural Centre	Slum** / 4 interviewees
← 5 Pong Noi - suburb on Chiang Mai outskirts (5km west of this point)	Suburban home / 1 interviewee
6 Sacred Heart Cathedral School	Boarding school / Group of 15 teenagers
1 Akha NGO MPCD/SEAMP	
2 House of A-beya Choopoh	
↑ 3 Akha Chiang Mai Church (Presbyterian) and house of Pastor Nikorn Lechoe (1 km north of this point)	



Main tourist zone

* Though classified as slums, these neighbourhoods are mostly of permanent housing, with water and power utilities; some residents own their homes.

** Residents here generally live in small thatched houses, perform at the centre at night, and work during the day.

I found the “slum” label misleading; Kamphaengdin Tai residents live in reasonable wood or concrete houses, with some renting though three of six Akha households I encountered owned their homes, most with municipal water and power supply, and a short walk from the tourist hub of Tha Phae Road.

Nearly all Akha stay in groups centred on family and wider kin, with only 1% staying alone. School students live at Buddhist schools, or in Christian dormitories or boarding schools, both Catholic and Protestant. Christian organisations often pay for tuition, or provide other forms of financial support, especially to girls. Of 390 Akha students, only 3 were studying at university level (Buadaeng et al 2003:97).

Choopoh (2004a) found 65% of his sample of 187 city Akha self-identified as Christian (123 respondents), with 27% Buddhist (50) and 7.4% Akhazang (14). Buadaeng et al (2003:98) found 64.5% of Akha in Chiang Mai self-identified as Christian – compared with 46% of all uplanders in the city - while 35.5% were recorded as Buddhist. No category was included for Akhazang, and this and any other types of religious self-identification were collapsed into the category of “Buddhist”, an ethnocentric approach by researchers (see Table 3). One of the study’s researcher, Panadda Boonyasaranai (2004a), said of Akha: “They are very confused how to identify themselves.” She said Akha were religious omnivores, attending Buddhist temples one day, churches the next, and that the young especially were confused and preferred to say they were Buddhist than identify with Akhazang, perhaps because on State-issued ID cards they did not want their religion recorded as animist. She suggested of 1,000 Akha in Chiang Mai, perhaps 20 were keen Akhazangists. Christian conversion trends were evident 22 years ago: In 1982 in Chiang Mai, Vatikiotis (1984) recorded 61% of Akha, Lisu, Karen and Hmong as Christians, 22% Buddhist, and 12% animist.

Table 3: Religious self-identification by Akha in Chiang Mai

Person category	Buddhist*	Christian	TOTAL
Single	252	368	620
Married	105	279	384
Youth	5	11	16
TOTAL	362	658	1020

*Religious self-identification other than Christian has been collapsed into the Buddhist category by research authors

Source: Boonyasaranai 2004b

5.4.3 Akha networks in Chiang Mai

Portes (1998) notes that sociologists know that everyday survival in poor urban communities frequently depends on close interaction with kin and friends in similar situations. This is a case of pressure producing bounded solidarity which can be a source of social capital (Portes and Landolt 2000). The problem is that such ties seldom reach beyond the inner city, thus depriving their inhabitants of beneficial wider links, such as for employment.

I had anticipated that Akha in Chiang Mai slums would know where many other Akha lived thereabouts, regardless of whether Akhazang was grounds for a connection; Vatikiotis' findings (1984) about Akhas' close occupational-based social network suggested this might still apply. However, few interviewees were able to direct me to other Akha of any zang, whether near Kamphaengdin Tai Rd, or elsewhere, and several times interviewees commented that there were very few traditional Akha anywhere in Chiang Mai. I gained the impression that poorer Akha were isolated from each other, by contrast with those 6 elite city Akha I interviewed who all had extensive networks; yet they did not utilise these networks for Akhazang ritual purposes, except to call on a city nyipa to perform healing ceremonies.

Buadaeng et al (2003:99) say Akha lack any structure to conduct Akhazang ceremonies in Chiang Mai, or Buddhist ceremonies, in contrast to Akha Christians who form a cohesive community facilitated by access to various churches with weekly services, and community support including education and housing resources. These pull factors result in increasing numbers of conversions by Akha to Christianity.

The Akha Chiang Mai (Presbyterian) Church, under Pastor Nikorn Lechoe, is, according to Boonyasaranai (2004), the most important visible social-capital generating centre for Akha. 150-200 Akha attend an Akha-language service each Sunday from a membership of 300+ (Lechoe 2004); 200-300 attended Thanksgiving week services in November 2003, timed to coincide with village harvests (Buadaeng et al 2003:100). Though church leadership is emphatic that Akhazang ceremonies are evil (Lechoe 2004), Buadaeng et al (2003:100) say the Thanksgiving ceremonies were conducted in the same way as in the village, "to pay respect to the ancestors", though the ritual was "not completely perfect" by traditional standards. Another significant event within the wider Akha community was carol-singing around homes at Christmas by Akha Christians, joined by some Akha Buddhists. The Akha are a singing people, so they were modifying their base culture, which helped make the event popular with non-Christian Akha (Buadaeng et al 2003:101).

In 1992, Akha established an Informal Chiang Mai Akha Community Group to give structure to existing mutual support and friendship, and gatherings for marriages, funerals, etc, and five years later the group, then with 500 members, began a programme to support impoverished Akha (MPCD/SEAMP 2002). By design the group's three official posts were taken by a Catholic, a Protestant, and an Akhazangist. The group's founding and triumvirate leadership "demonstrate that religion continues to be salient in intraethnic dialogues of identity" (Kammerer 1996b). This group had patches of activity then inactivity (Boonyasaranai 2004), and was in a lull during my research in mid-2004. Some collective activities, such as English language lessons, were loosely centred on the offices of MPCD/SEAMP in Chiang Mai. Also, various Akha formed an association to perform traditional arts and enter a float in the city's 2002-03 Yee-Peng festival (Buadaeng et al 2003:101).

Other Akha networks in Chiang Mai are more informal, forged in response to immediate need, eg, slumdwellers uniting if the municipality threatens their living situation (Boonyasaranai 2004). School students typically see their parents in home villages infrequently and the links that count are with schoolfriends, and co-workers if they have jobs (Bamrung 1998:5). The strong occupational networks that Vatikiotis (1984) highlighted receive much less comment from Buadaeng et al (2003), who instead note that city migrants sometimes met others at work with neither realising they were from the same village.

5.4.4 Connections back to villages

Early refugee migrants had extensive cross-frontier networks, but many more recent migrants maintain links with their home villages within Thailand; I found no longitudinal data on whether maintenance of city-village connections drops off over time. The village is a recent and regularly refreshed memory for most: Buadaeng et al (2003:94) recorded 52% of city Akha had migrated to Chiang Mai since 1998, and 92% since 1988 (including 12.7% born there). Choopoh (2004a), from a smaller sample, recorded 23.4% since 1998, and a total of 58% migrated since 1993.

Buadaeng et al (2003:161) say once villagers migrate few return permanently to the village, but most make visits for holidays or to see family, and repatriation of money to the village common. Visitors told other villagers about city jobs, encouraging further migration. Akha returned for such visits no matter how long they had been in the city, and the researchers did not find any Akha who never returned to visit their home village. I found 4 city Akha who

claimed they never went back. Choopoh (2004a:7-8) asked 181 respondents about their connection to a home village, and recorded 12.8% as having no connection, while 58% had parents or relatives there, 20.7% maintained occasional contact, while very few either repatriated money, returned to help with work, or sent children back (see Table 4); 78% of respondents said they would not wish to settle back in their village given the chance, and 18% said they would.

Table 4: Some major forms of connection back to village among Akha living in Chiang Mai

Type of connection to village	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Have parents, relatives in village	109	58
Occasional connections (unspecified)	39	20.7
No connection	24	12.8
Return to help with work	4	2.1
Send children back to stay with relatives	3	1.6
Send back money	1	0.5
Have house in village	1	0.5

Source: Choopoh 2004a:7

5.5 Fieldwork: The findings

The intention in fieldwork had been to consider only Akhazang and avoid addressing Christianity to keep the focus limited. However, in actuality this was not only impracticable but likely to skew the research by omitting one of the fundamental influences on the operation of Akhazang in Chiang Mai. One conclusion is that any fieldwork concerning religion in Chiang Mai must address the Christian factor, even if only to a very limited extent, as here. Where I describe Akha as Akhazangist, this can denote that they practise Akhazang, or merely that they identify with Akhazang: some do not practise because they either cannot or do not know how.

5.6 General attitudes

5.6.1 Religion matters

Religion is a topic of relevance that is deeply felt and appears to have wide potential impact among poor Akha in Chiang Mai. The topic of Akha religious ceremonies was one that engaged all village interviewees and virtually all city interviewees in discussion, often animated and extended in sessions of up to two hours, and between themselves as much as with my translator and myself. This interest was significant - imagine the response from asking random New Zealanders about their experience of religious ritual. At only one household in Kamphaengdin Tai did the resident Christian family appear largely indifferent to the subject, while one other household appeared harried. More typical were freely shared feelings by both women and men of dislocation, of loss, and in six cases of a desire to return to Akhazang practices.

Only 1 out of 51 interviewees self-identified as having “no religion”, but this young man later explicitly qualified this saying that in his “heart” he was Akhazangist. Interviewee WD, a Christian woman in Kamphaengdin Tai, said: “This is exciting. In 5 years no one comes to ask us about these things like this. It’s a good feeling and we’re very lucky to get to talk about it.”

5.6.2 Akhazang is valued

Akhazang assumed positive values across all interviewee types, both in Chiang Mai and Saen Chareon, both among traditionalists and Christian Akha. Half of all interviewees commented specifically and positively about the value of Akhazang, while only two, both Christian Akha, one of them Pastor Lechoe, described it negatively based on their perception of Akhazang religious rituals as evil. Both these Christians were quick to point to the church’s and their own encouragement of the use of Akha language, importance of genealogies, and use of non-religious knowledge, such as of medicinal plants. Two interviewees, both women, one Christian and one Buddhist, were indifferent about Akhazang.

However, 17 interviewees expressed pessimism about the future for Akha, ranging from mild pessimism to several predictions that the culture and language would likely die out in the next generation; two elite Akha were explicitly optimistic about education’s potential to spark cultural resurgence. Valuing Akhazang in the abstract, however, does not make it useful in

reality, as noted by IMPECT worker Saryo Phubeku:² “Maybe zang is not useful in the city, only for thinking, because there is not the relationship with the land... Between jobs and religion today, people are thinking more about jobs.”

Fairly typical was the comment of slum interviewee MT, who self-identified as Akhazangist and Buddhist, who said he “loves” Akhazang, and ceremonies were “very important.” Traditionalist slum interviewee WT said Akhazang was better than other religious traditions “because it’s old, because our ancestors did it before us”, and she added that the ceremonies were “more fun” than Christian ceremonies. Statements of loss rather than of judgement were common from Akha Christians. Slum Christian interviewees MD and MF both said they were “sad” they did not know Akha genealogies or ceremonies. A group of Akha Catholic students at Sacred Heart Cathedral School similarly wished they knew more about Akha culture, but said their parents had forgotten it, and that if one day they themselves lost Akhazang entirely they would be sad, while they would feel “proud” if they were able to do the ceremonies. Slum traditionalist WK said when they performed minor Akhazang rituals in the city, other people, including other uplanders and foreign tourists, sometimes came to watch, and it “makes us feel proud to do them.”

5.7 City connections around Akhazang ritual

5.7.1 Major ritual performance

Of the 22 city Akha interviewed who self-identified as Akhazangist, none performed ancestor service or any other major rituals in the city. The main reason given was that it was impossible to perform such rituals “perfectly” in Chiang Mai, and inadequate performance risked bringing harm to themselves or relatives related to cosmic disruption; this perception is of crucial relevance to why Akha convert to Christianity. City Akha mentioned lack of resources, eg, livestock, and of knowledge to conduct ceremonies. Separation from the institutionalised religious form is marked: there are no active pima-reciters living in Chiang Mai, city Akha live outside the cosmologically-ordered village entity, and they follow no agricultural cycle – “The ceremony is about the field and in Bangkok we do not have a field,” said one. I interviewed one Akhazang ritual specialist, a nyipa, in Chiang Mai, but a key respondent who said there were also 2 or 3 city pima was unable to verify this, and no other interviewees, including the nyipa, knew of any other ritual specialists in the city.

² Saryo Phubeku is identified by consent in this research.

Four slum Akha and three other interviewees mentioned their own lack of knowledge precluding ritual observance. Slum interviewees MH, a traditionalist, and MF, a Christian, both said: “If I knew how, I would do.” MI, in his late teens and an ex-Buddhist monk, said the same, but added that rectifying this would involve learning “all” of Akhazang and he did not have time; from when he became a monk he had not had time to return to his village.

In two interviews, including with the Catholic student group, concern was raised that not performing Akhazang rituals at all would lead to “bad luck” or “something bad” happening to families. Four traditionalist interviewees said family in villages performed rituals for them, so they did not worry about non-performance themselves. However, altogether 16 interviewees, including 8 slum Akha, expressed the idea that it was better not to do Akhazang ceremonies at all, than to do them imperfectly; several said that it was better even to change religion than risk inadequate performance. Half of this number specifically used the word “perfect” to describe what to them was clearly a core requirement for performing each step of major rituals. Most who so commented were traditional Akha, as well as three Christian Akha. There was an amorphous fear of the consequences of violating Akhazang.

Religious specialists are similarly concerned. Pima Choopoh repeatedly said ceremonies could not be “perfect” in the city, and that this concerned himself and religious experts unsure of how to modify rituals. The pima visiting Pong Noi said to do “perfect” ceremonies would entail building a village gate in the city. In his view, ceremonies had much more power in the village than in the city.

Slum interviewee ML said inadequate performance could mean you got sick; IMPECT Akha Saryo Phubeku said Akha worried bad things would happen. One slum household group said they did not want to become Christians “but if one day there is no one left who can do Akha culture and ceremonies, we must change because when you do ceremony you must be perfect - if 10 steps, must do 10 steps; if you do it wrong something bad will happen.” Elite traditionalist Akha ML said: “Akha change religion because they have a problem – they don’t have money or can’t do ceremony in the city and they don’t want to become Christian but they have no other way. But in their heart they are Akha. The Akha who become Christians, they are really Akha, but in the Akha mind if you can’t do ceremonies perfectly you will get sick, that’s the thinking –they really love Akha but can’t do it perfectly.” Only the nyipa said she was not afraid of her inevitably imperfect ritual performance, because she first gained permission for it from Apoemiyeh and ancestors.

5.7.2 Minor ritual performance

Eight of the 22 city Akha, and five of the 15 Akhazangist interviewees living in slums, said they performed minor rituals in Chiang Mai, namely baby name-giving, new house ceremonies, an “egg-carrying” ceremony, and, most commonly, the soul-strengthening ceremony when someone got ill. These ceremonies are of limited scope, efficacy, and typically involve fewer kin than more major ceremonies; they reaffirm only weakly core Akhazang themes of rice/fertility, ancestrality, and the village.

A soul-strengthening ceremony in Pong Noi during the research period brought together an Akha craft-maker and trader and his family resident there, with his village pima father. The ceremony occupied half a day and cost an estimated 2700 baht in livestock alone: 2 pigs, 5 chickens, and a dog were killed for it. Another elite city Akha, WA2, said the egg-giving ceremony was a chance to meet in the city with blood relations, and they tended to involve children in the ritual “because it’s fun. We do that because we want the children to learn about culture.” She said city friends quite often invited one another to Akhazang ceremonies, but she had no time to join in.

Three interviewees said they would like to do ceremonies if they could find other Akha in Chiang Mai to do them with, but one had only Christian neighbours and another’s neighbours did not know enough Akhazang.

5.7.3 Use of religious specialists

If there were a pima, or reciter, active in Chiang Mai, it would be significant that no interviewees knew how to contact him. The city nyipa regularly performed healing rituals for people afflicted by bad luck, illness, or accidents, with clients who were Akha, Thai, and Chinese; even Christian Akha had requested her services, but she declined when they insisted she not involve ancestors. Usually, her ceremonies were for only one person, with rituals for whole families, apart from predictions, less common now than before.

The ceremonial role of the nyipa, or healer, in Chiang Mai is circumscribed by her position as a religious specialist operating outside the sanction and social milieu of the village. The healing sessions she provides are sometimes personal (when she knows the client), and always a commercial transaction, with an overnight trance-therapy session costing about 360 baht, though the nyipa had recently returned from servicing Bangkok Chinese who paid her 4,000

baht. Akha demonstrate continued confidence in her rituals' efficacy and none of the reluctance associated with imperfectly performed zang: it could be surmised that the charismatic, individualised nature of nyipa rituals creates distance between them and Akhazang codifications.

Shamans typically use their knowledge of intricate social webs and genealogies to improve the efficacy of healing rituals designed to treat physical and, very often, relational unwellness (Steadman and Palmer 1994). Among Akha, village nyipas do not have the genealogical knowledge of pimas, and in this respect the typical shaman role as healer-peacemaker is split between pimas/dzoemas and nyipas. As for the city nyipa, she is one step removed again than village nyipa from any relevant social knowledge about clients.

5.7.4 Trust

According to both social capital theory and costly-signalling theory, trust is greater among group members than between members and those they perceive as outsiders. While for Saen Chareon interviewees, trust was an issue with city Akha generally, because they were perceived to not value Akhazang sufficiently, among Chiang Mai interviewees trust was an issue with Akha who had changed religions, especially to Christianity. One interviewee, an Akhazangist, combined the two contexts when, in suggesting why pima and dzoema did not visit the city, she said: "...because we have become Christian they don't think about us." The repeated perception was that Christian Akha were less than fully Akha.

Asked to rate religion switchers on a percentage scale for Akha-ness, virtually all recorded responses had Christian Akha at substantially less than 100%, versus Akhazangists at 100%. Among Akhazangists, WK said Christian Akha "lose a lot", WM that they lose their culture, WT that Christian Akha are less than 50% Akha (a rating also given by WU), while the Pong Noi pima said neither Christians nor Buddhists were 100% Akha, adding that while he had some anger towards Christians, "then again it is normal to spread religion." Christian interviewee MD also said Christian Akha were less Akha than Akhazangists, while the Catholic girl students rated their own Akhaness at just 30-50%.

However, another Christian interviewee, WS, the keenest Christian interviewed, said that to downgrade a Christian convert's Akha-ness was wrong, and pointed to her own example of living by the Bible but loving Akha language – reading the Bible in Akha, praying in Akha,

teaching “everything about God” in Akha. “We don’t need Thai ... So a Christian Akha can be 100% Akha.”

5.8 Connections from city to village

5.8.1 Physical connections

City Akha generally returned to their villages for ceremonial duties. Nine of the 22 city Akha interviewees returned regularly for ceremonies, and a further 5 returned occasionally. The most popular ceremonies to return for were the swing ceremony and top-spinning ceremony; in fact, these were the only ceremonies regularly mentioned explicitly, and basic ancestor service rituals were not often mentioned. WU, a teenager, said she was so keen to get to the swing ceremony one time she got to the village at 2am. Only 4 interviewees said they had no contact with villages, for ceremonial or any other reason: two of these Akha were Buddhists, one identified as Buddhist-Akhazang, and another had five children and limited means. Christian Akha said they went back to visit family or proselytise.

5.8.2 Ancestors and kinship

All slum Akha interviewees, and most other interviewees, mentioned living kin or ancestors during discussions of ritual observance. Common themes were the renewing of affinal ties through ritual observance, family doing rituals for city Akha, and family influence on religious conversion. No one spoke of family coming from villages for rituals in the city. Slum Akhazangist WT said: “When you make ceremony you invite family and do it together, like when you do ceremony for an old man in the house and all the relations come together. Togetherness makes you happy.” WA2 said her mother in the village did all the family’s ancestor service, and her brother also kept it going.

As for the issue of the impact on Akhas’ relationship to ancestors who were no longer being cared for via Akhazang, in most cases the response to this was of regret and sadness, both from Akhazangists and Christians. Slum Akhazangists MK, WK, and WM said their ancestors would be “very sad. If we could speak with the person, maybe they would be crying. ...To do the ceremony for them, if we did it they would be happy.” Christian interviewee MF said his ancestors were probably very sad he did not do ancestor service, while the Catholic student group repeated this, adding that performing ancestor service was important, and identifying

ancestors as their kin. Elite Akhazangist ML said Christians had told him they worried a lot about ancestors “because you love the people and want to be with them.” The nyipa mentioned ancestors taking care of her in response to her use of genealogies in her treatments.

All interviewees who had changed religion specified a kinship influence on that shift, usually a male relative converting first and requiring the wider family convert, or marrying a Christian or Buddhist. This will be discussed in the coming section on experience of other religions.

5.9 Change in Akhazang

Many more interviewees favoured modifying Akhazang than opposed it, and many said what they needed most was support from religious specialists for modification and to enable Akhazang performance generally. Sixteen interviewees, including 12 city Akha and 8 slum Akha, said Akhazang practices should be modified, to ensure cultural continuity generally and to enable ceremonies to be performed outside of villages. Two opposed change on the grounds that might dilute and weaken Akhazang, while two others expressed serious doubts about any possibility of change. There was also widespread support for an initiative begun between city Akha and the Thai Government to build an Akha village within Chiang Mai (Choopoh 2004:b; see Appendix 3).

The Pong Noi pima noted that standard 6-7 day funeral ceremonies were not conducive to economic productivity. Several interviewees pointed out Akhazang had already changed in good ways, such as desisting from killing twin babies, but one elite Akha, ML, stressed the need to discern between “very old, true” ceremonies and “ghost” customs related to spiritism. Elite Akhazangist WA2 said good reasons must support any change, and raised the crucial question: “How much can we change and still be Akha?” Yet the possibility of change that enabled slum Akha and Christian Akha to do ceremonies and reclaim their Akha-ness attracted her.

Slum Akhazangist WG backed making ceremonies more adaptive, “but somebody would have to support us to do that. In the city, if someone would support us, say dzoema or pima, we would make changes and do ceremonies. But pima and dzoema don’t come to visit.” This need for authorisation was echoed by Pima Choopoh, who sought out old men’s advice when he faced having to modify Akhazang, and also by Christian Akha who wished to reconvert. Several interviewees said Akhazangists needed the equivalent of a “church” as a coordinating, resourcing body, but added no one had money for this.

Possible changes mentioned included using fewer or “imperfect” livestock in ceremonies, allowing women to do ceremonies, and doing only a few, major ceremonies. As noted, the nyipa said she already performed self-circumscribed rituals. WA2 raised an intriguing possibility of renaissance: as young Akha were becoming better educated, this was fuelling a search for their roots, as had happened to her, and “many” were coming to her on a quest for identity. “People with a lot of knowledge will come back [to Akhazang].”

Yet interviewees largely communicated a sense of inertia. Even a leading proponent of innovating within Akhazang, who had extensive networks, told me she regularly practised Buddhist ceremonies, because they were “same, same” as Akhazang rituals, which it was not possible to perform in the city.

5.10 Other religions

Negative experience of non-Akhazang religions was a major theme of interviews, with Christian conversion the most contentious subject. Of 20 interviewees who talked of such experiences, 14, or 70%, had a negative experience, virtually all of those with Christianity, while 6 had a positive experience, mostly with Buddhism. A common explanation for conversions, including from Christians themselves, was that Christian zang was easier than Akhazang. However, half of the Christian slum Akha (5 of 9) expressed a desire to change back to Akhazang, but did not know how to. Others, including the Catholic students, spoke of kinship’s influence on religious conversion, and several of conversion then reconversion, both from Christianity and Buddhism, whether by themselves personally or someone they knew.

Fluidity of religious affiliation is common. Interviewee MH knew of three families who were Christian, changed back to Akhazang, then back to Christianity again. Middle-aged Akhazangist WT said she and her family became Christians in their village after her father-in-law converted. Conversion lasted only a year: she herself knew nothing of Christian beliefs, while her mother-in-law never went to church, and her grandfather fell ill but, crying, refused to let her sister-in-law conduct a Christian ceremony for him. Days later the extended family changed back to Akhazang. “Grandfather said if he dies and no one makes ceremony for him, he won’t be able to eat and will come back to haunt us.”

Given such fluidity, which is also described by other authors (Tooker 1992, Kammerer 1990), why then did three Christian slum households express a keen desire to change back to

practising Akhazang, yet did not? An explanation may lie partially in the different social patterns within Chiang Mai. Five of these Akha identified two major obstacles to reconverting: inability to perform Akhazang rituals in the city, and the absence of a social network among city Akhazangists, by contrast with Christian Akhas' networks. MF summed up this group's dilemma: "If someone would support us we would be Akha. But the way must be perfect. If pimas said, 'The sin of doing Akha ritual imperfectly, you can give it to me' then we would change back. Akha ceremonies are much fun but much work as well, and difficult to find the animals. If pimas could say, 'Do them with fewer animals', OK." One elite Akha in her 20s, whose Christian education had left her feeling that "my brain is almost all Christian", expressed urgency to learn Akha ways, but professed ignorance, and pessimism for her young son's future for learning Akhazang.

As for conversions in Chiang Mai, the only reason proffered by several Christian Akha for their own conversion was the attraction of the Akha church's social network. Slum Christian WD said she converted on moving to Chiang Mai because other Akha there were Christians, and she found no Akhazangists. Pastor Lechoe said: "The number one reason the non-Christian comes [to his church] is to make friends, find Akha friends. Some believe in God and stay, some go." He could think of nowhere else Akha might find friends, and asked if Akhazangists were lonely, nodded: "Sometimes mostly they change religion, become Buddhist or Christian or Catholic, but some people don't change." Only the pastor and fervent Christian WS mentioned Christian beliefs, God, or heaven to explain their conversion.

Interviewees expressed a much less oppositional relationship with Buddhism. MI self-identified as Buddhist and Akhazangist, saying his time as a Buddhist monk gained him an education in Chiang Mai, and showed him Buddhism was easier than Akhazang, but he "loved" Akhazang. Far fewer city Akha are Buddhist, and performance of Buddhism is seen by some as complementary to Akhazang – two women Akhazangists said as much of their performance of Buddhist rites - or at least not contradictory to the same extent as Christian zang.

Section Two - Akha religious ritual and social capital in Chiang Mai: an analysis of fieldwork

5.11 An immediate analysis

Religion is the field in which are conducted rituals that by regularly reaffirming collective norms, values, and memories, enhance identity and create trust, which leads to social cohesion and lower transaction costs. For Akha, because their idiom of relating to tradition is exteriorised, their religion *is* their ritual; where Akhazang ceremonies are practised, there is Akha religion; where ceremonies are not practised, there is no religion, no religious field for producing social capital. This is more clear-cut than with religions that have a systemised theology, where ideas may persist separate from associated practices.

Previously in villages, Akha religion was a primary generator of bonding and inward social capital, with the major positive externality of intense, inward trust, an important factor in Akha society maintaining great cohesion, collective memory, and cultural continuity over centuries despite migrations, pressure from lowlanders, and internal emphasis on personal autonomy (Alting von Geusau 1983). Akhazang contributed to Akhas' freedom of opportunity to achieve valued outcomes of tolerance and generosity, through its cultural relativism and operation of blessing; though it constrained freedom of decision-making mostly to men, it compensated women with cosmologically higher status than men (Kammerer 1988b).

The major negative externalities of this social capital, to use Portes' summary (1998), were exclusiveness, excessive claims on members, and restrictions on individual freedoms. In Fukuyama's terms (2001), Akha had a narrow radius of trust; however, I would argue they did not, inversely, have a wide radius of distrust, due to their regular, multifaceted, if shallow contacts with other ethnic groups, and a non-ideological exclusivity allied to cultural relativism which focused on Akhazang's own consistency, not on other zang's impurity (Kammerer 1996b, 1989:272-73). A core principle has been that one's zang harmonise with who one is; conversely, practising one's zang determines who one is, so failure to practise Akhazang jeopardises one's place on Kammerer's (1983:23) index of Akha ethnicity.

As for excessive claims, these were previously balanced by many gains for members, largely because those making claims to social capital, those agreeing to those claims, and the resources to meet the claims (see Portes 1998) were all located in and controlled by Akha themselves. They rewarded commitment and sanctioned disloyalty or unwitting disruption of

group harmony without undue constraints on resources or outside intervention. By contrast, the forced exile from villages of Christian converts no longer occurs so widely because of State intervention, so more villages are of mixed religion. Group survival was maintained at the expense of individual freedoms, which were no more an option than was survival for a dry-cultivation rice farmer independent of other farmers.

As for Portes' final major negative externality, downward levelling, Akhas' exteriorised idiom of relating to tradition appears to have constrained innovation, for several reasons, one of which is that it did not challenge religious specialists to systemise religious ideas into a construct open to reinterpretation and exegesis, as will be discussed later.

I found that there exists no significant practice of Akhazang rituals in Chiang Mai, so it can be said Akha religion is largely absent, and therefore can not produce or maintain either norms or networks of social capital. This state of affairs is similar to that described by Vatikiotis (1984), when Akha engaged in few culturally-shared activities, instead forming social networks around group activities resulting from economic interdependence. However, the situation as I found it, and as described in more extensive research by Buadaeng et al (2003), is more fragmented than that described by Vatikiotis: elite city Akha maintain wide networks yet do not use these to foster Akhazang, while slum Akha are constrained to the social bounds and benefits delineated by often very limited livelihood mechanisms, often to do with craftmaking and trading. Neither group's previous experience of Akhazang is obviously helping them adapt to life in Chiang Mai. Akha youth, meanwhile, are often in enduring, dependent relationships with Christian or Buddhist missions to access education, which they exploit but nonetheless are influenced by.

Social capital is being produced by Akhazang rituals within city-village connections. Akhazangists appear more likely to maintain more regular contacts with kin in home villages than do non-traditionalists, and are positive about the benefits provided by having kin perform rituals for them. Some Akha are transient, occupying both city and village, and mediating benefits between the two. Yet these connections limit Akhazang once more to producing largely bonding, inward social capital (though the geographic effect modifies this, evidenced by city Akha promoting copycat urban migration by kin).

Village-oriented, bonding social capital maintains some cohesion between city Akha and village kin, though its limits are evident in the distrust expressed by Saen Chareon villagers regards city Akha, even where villagers had close kin in the city. Also, the benefits to city Akha from investing in village connections are questionable on a purely rational economic

basis, while the costs are evident in travel, gifts, and supplying ritual livestock, as well as the psychological stress of straddling the city/village divide, given the disjuncture with rituals that revolve around the rice calendrical cycle and require the village entity.

The dynamics outlined above are not unusual. Apter (1968:133) wrote of competition for affiliation triggered by modernism among Ashanti in Ghana:

“Cleavages divided the extended and nuclear families. Social breaks which meant modifying one’s religious practices and sundering ties with the past (and one’s ancestors) led to migration of individuals to urban areas which supported very different patterns of social life. These created more fundamental differences in outlook between urban and rural groups ...”

Akha settling in Chiang Mai are familiar with religion as a field which generates substantial, beneficial social capital. It could be expected they would look in the city for religion to similarly fulfil needs, both immediate (social, economic) and long-term (identity, meaning), but they cannot find this in Akhazang; Akhazangists exist in name but there are no mediating agents to provide a forum for new migrants to engage in reproduction of their religion, which over time could evolve through adaptation to new conditions. City Akha are constrained by Akhazang’s requirements that it be performed correctly and completely, or trigger cosmological disruption with harmful consequences. Not only are the benefits of Akhazang diminished to the occasional minor ritual with a few kin to welcome a baby or seek healing, but its costs escalate to include the potential of personal hazard caused by inadequate ritual performance.

In such a situation, it is understandable that even pima (reciters) and elite city Akha communicate inertia about how to respond to the marginalisation of what remains a widely valued cultural-religious system. There is potential for new mediating agents to arise among educated youth, as has antecedents in other societies (Krishna 2002, Eng 1999), and I will speculate about this possibility later inasmuch as it reflects the dynamics of the religion-social capital interaction.

The absence of Akhazang presents city migrants with an identity dilemma. Adoption of any other zang could be expected to reduce their self-assessment of how Akha they are, and the findings here show this is the case. Non-categoric zanglessness is even less attractive. Given that locally-specific religious phenomena are mostly Buddhist, why do Akha seeking harmony

within that context convert primarily to Christianity, not Buddhism? Suffice to say here, prior to later, detailed discussion, that Christianity provides exteriorised rituals with a lower ritual threshold than Akhazang, so it is easier and cheaper (Kammerer 1990), while obviously generating both bonding (or inter-Akha) and bridging social capital; in Verter's terms (2003), Akha investing to acquire the embodied form of Christianity (its acts but not, in this case, its doctrines) so as to access its objectified form (its ritual goods) make for themselves spiritual currency which is exchangeable in other fields, in a way Akhazang never was.

5.12 The analysis extended

This analysis needs to be extended to take heed of Putnam and Goss' warning (2002:16) about simple-minded interpretations of modernisation-as-cultural-destroyer greatly underestimating people's adaptability in creating "new forms to fit new circumstances." If religion is an evolutionary adaptor mechanism, and if active social capital is crucial to the healthy operation of a society - two views I subscribe to in light of what many others have argued, as outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2 - then it should be possible to locate adaptability within a people's religion as it pertains to social capital production and maintenance. That location will, however, depend on where and when in the process of cultural-religious evolution the research finds itself; for Akhazang in the city, at this stage it appears to be expiring rather than adapting, however, I attempt here to show that the adaptability of Akhazang and its interaction with social capital can be located within religious change as a process that contains, rather than is opposite of, cultural continuity.

Akha are well aware from their history of interaction as a "perennial minority" with lowlanders of threats to their way of life (Alting von Geusau 1983:244). Previously it had been possible to negotiate this threat, or to keep it at bay courtesy of relative isolation, while at the same time Akhazang provided a depository of adaptation to "a harsh natural and human environment" (Alting von Geusau 1983:276). But as Alting von Geusau (1983:245) noted of hilltribes generally, they "are now at the end of their long journey" in terms of migration and what it symbolised of their ability to set the agenda to negotiate their own reality, while Kammerer (1989:275) wrote 15 years ago that "the limits of adaptability of [Akha] customs as a coherent, cosmologically-grounded cultural subsystem could well be reached in the not so distant future."

Chiang Mai appears to be the frontier of the limits of Akhazang, but as with many frontiers, including Thailand's physical frontier, it is more permeable and unstable than appearances

suggest. Though for Akhazang, Chiang Mai is a “periphery”, it is also peripheral to the mainstream operation of Christianity; thus, these two religions interact in a zone where peripherality creates possibilities. Put simply, I argue Akhazang does not end at Chiang Mai’s outer suburbs but is integral to processes by which Akha Christian converts are developing a reformulated Akha-ness (Kammerer 1990:285), which will have implications for being Akha, wherever Akha are. The fact that this reformulation is principally occurring in a religious context is, as I will show, a result of Akha experience of Akhazang, including of its beneficial provision of social capital. Thus performance of Christian ritual by Chiang Mai Akha becomes not a break from their indigenous religion, though in aspects it is *also* that, but a continuation of important themes internalised for Akha through the exteriorised idiom of Akhazang.

5.12.1 Parochiality and plurality

Verter’s hypothesis (2003) suggests spiritual capital is much more stable in value in a closed, homogenous system – closed in terms of people’s dense social networks – than in an open, pluralistic environment, wherein it demonstrates its parochiality: a stock of capability, status, or knowledge in one religion loses its value in an altered societal context, encouraging adherents to exchange capital by shifting affiliations. Akha villages are increasingly penetrated by a pluralistic environment, while city migrants transplant themselves into just such an environment, encountering modernisation’s other major processes: individualisation, differentiation, and rationalisation.

Akhazang’s parochiality results from its evolution as the religiously-aligned codification of behaviours attuned to survival and adaptation in specific local contexts that were socially homogenous, economically independent, and rural. Parochiality is evidenced by the material focus on a village set up according to cosmological orderings, and a very full calendar of ceremonies tied to seasonal agricultural activities (Kammerer 1983). When Akha say, as thesis interviewees did, that Chiang Mai is “not Akha territory”, this indicates a cosmological and ritual sense. This tangible parochiality extends to where Akha might reasonably expect to be in connection with ancestors, that is, in their territory. The ancestor bamboo box is tied to a household’s roof rafter, and can be shifted when the household moves; yet no city Akha interviewees had such a box in their home, and several Akha talked as if having a box in the city would be impossible. No Akha said they conducted ancestor service in the city, despite many emphasising how important ancestors were. This function of the home village as the essential connection point with ancestors is echoed by Eng (1999), when she describes what drew Singapore Chinese back to invest in Anxi province.

5.12.2 Exteriorised idiom in this context

A strength of what Tooker (1992) describes as an exteriorised religio-cultural system, from a trust-building point of view, is its lack of ambiguity; a person is either doing the ritual or not, there is no issue of “nominal” adherents versus “true believers” because belief does not come into it. This removes distrust about the heresy someone may be hiding behind apparent orthodoxy. Yet the exteriorised idiom also exhibits weaknesses. Tooker (1992) suggests Akha connection and commitment to the group are about not conviction but consistency; they are not internally convinced of the rightness of following Akhazang as a Westerner might be about Christianity, but instead value behaviour consistent with an ideal. The implication of this is that one must know and honour the ideal, which becomes less likely as Akhazang collectives weaken and villages Christianise; it becomes improbable in Chiang Mai where the parochial ideal lacks context: In both cases, consistency becomes irrelevant.

Also, an exteriorised idiom encourages unreflective behaviour, discouraging development of a systemised theology; and it emphasises exteriorised benefits, which lack potency for maintaining intra-group commitment (see Sosis and Alcorta 2003:268-270). As to the first, Akha urban migrants who find Akhazang practice nontransferable lack recourse to systemised religious ideas to interpret their new environment and innovate from. Self-creation through adaptation of interiorised belief is an avenue of personal agency for legitimating change in behaviours and rituals to safeguard access to religious commodities. This option is closed even as the challenge to Akhazang’s rationale is increased from secular rationalism. Akha interviewees expressed their reliance on institutionalised legitimisation of change, yet the institution was silent, leading to stasis and decay. Their religious specialists acquire spiritual capital in the minutiae of performing rites and reciting genealogies, but not in exegesis of Akhazang amid rapid societal change. Akhazang acts a depository of adaptable practices that relate to Akhas’ historical context, but not of ideas that can cope with their new, unprecedented context.

However, loss of practice and absence of exegesis need not equate to loss of confidence in ritual efficacy; and findings were that city Akha retain this confidence. Had their confidence been shaken, that would indicate deepseated impact on their worldview; as it is, the impact appears superficial. Akha in Chiang Mai are experiencing the immediate stress of loss of ritual practice, without the chronic stress of loss of meaning, though there are indications the latter is gradually spreading, especially among young Akha.

As to its emphasis on exteriorised benefits, the exteriorised idiom does not tap the full potential of religious ritual to promote long-term solidarity. Sosis and Alcorta (2003:268-270) summarise arguments which posit, generally, that imbuing rituals with sanctity means that performing them is *de facto* accepting unverifiable claims, which adherents verify emotionally through religious experience. Postulates that are “beyond the vicissitudes of examination provide more stable referents than do secular rituals” (Sosis and Alcorta 2003:268). Akhazang’s this-worldly orientation places its claims about blessing within the verifiable material realm (apart from joining ancestors after death): if the rice plantings or humans prove infertile, ritual claims to efficacy may suffer. Furthermore, Akhazangists need not make the intense emotional verification common to interiorised belief systems; the resulting diluted religious experience may help explain why, once Christian conversion became a pragmatic survival strategy for Akha, conversions rapidly accelerated.

Finally, because Akha identity is socially and religiously constructed, with an emphasis on “doing”, change is constrained. Whereas for a Christian, tampering with theology can be done privately and introduced stealthily, for an Akha tampering with “doing” is public and risks one’s claim to Akha-ness in a system where identity is more precarious than for groups who construct ethnicity on blood lines.

5.12.3 Relativism and conversion

Despite the rigours and seeming rigidity of Akhazang, Akha are cultural relativists (Kammerer 1989:272-3). Anyone can become an Akha by learning the language and practising Akhazang (Lewis 1984:218, 1992:215) while, because Akha do not demonise other zang, it makes it easier for them individually to shift affiliations. I found Akhazangists expressed little animosity towards Christian Akha; by contrast, Christian Akha typically regard or portray Akhazang as less civilised than Christianity (Kammerer 1990).

These attitudes allow Akha to adopt as an adaptative strategy the kind of situational identity Vatikiotis described (1984). Tooker (1992) noted the strength of this, in that she met Akha who had temporarily adopted other zang, until such time as they could afford to switch back to Akhazang; I was told of such switches myself. Yet Akhas’ relativism is tempered by their stress on consistency within a zang.

Relativism reduces the traction available for producing social capital from bounded solidarity, that is, that cohesion and collective purpose typically generated in a group feeling under

pressure in an “us-versus-them” situation (Portes and Landolt 2000). The paucity of organisation of Akha into regularly constituted groups in Chiang Mai (aside from in Christian groups) may result from relativism making it difficult to mobilise Akha to assert ethnic identity or other claims against the dominant Thai society, as is common for minorities elsewhere to do.

5.12.4 Coherence

As noted previously, analysing social capital among minorities is complicated by the heterogenous, contested cultural space they inhabit. Putnam’s observation (2002:415) that inequality of access to social capital was much more pronounced in socially heterogenous than homogenous communities, is an observation about communities with multiple conversations going on between groups which rarely can include all groups and regularly exclude many groups, and in which dominant voices can drown out others. It is a sociological axiom that all people seek, establish, and experience coherence through relationships with “significant others” that provide meaning and purpose, and ultimately construct their reality, and that coherence depends on shared understanding of concepts based on a collective memory of varying values, beliefs, and ideas that provide society members with an objectively available body of knowledge (Berger 1969:21,41).

Akha “carrying” their load of parochial law, customs, and religion seek coherence in Chiang Mai in a pluralistic environment which devalues Akhazang. They do not face the typical task for which religion is employed by a dominant, homogenous society, which is to reproduce plausible structures of meaning within a relatively congruent daily life; rather, Akha face making coherent a daily life with big disjunctures from their village experience, new “significant others” of other worldviews who mediate employment and other benefits within a dominant, sometimes overtly assimilative non-Akha society, and the stress of negotiating the wider impacts of change from a global political economy impacting on Thai society. The egalitarian nature of Akhazang, as reaffirmed in rituals, is at variance with all Akhas’ major, accessible, exogenous cultural models – Thai (client-patron), Christianity (hierarchical), and secular development agencies, as hilltribes have experienced them (Kampe 1997, see this thesis page 75) - so there is no natural coherence in terms of social organisation. Parochial Akhazang cannot readily explain or adjust to city Akhas’ experiences, so fails to generate bridging social capital.

Akha must move beyond Akhazang's frame of understanding the world or experience incoherence, yet trying to simultaneously maintain Akhazang is difficult because investment of spiritual capital in more than one religious or ideological creed is costly (Verter 2003:167). Thus, this move involves a high cost: when Akha choose to invest in social capital in another religious tradition, they diminish their stock of it in Akhazang and become "less" Akha; and disassociation from a group with a high ritual threshold "represents a substantial sacrifice of accumulated spiritual capital" (Verter 2003:167). That would tend to exacerbate the unequal relationships which characterise Akha entry into Chiang Mai in the first place, and unequal relationships may be a barrier to social capital production (Edwards 1999b). Furthermore, city Akha are separated from the village, the depository to some extent still of their build-up of social capital into an immutable stock.

Incoherence is unsustainable, perhaps moreso because the exteriorised idiom makes seeking harmony imperative. Under this system, as Tooker (1992) states, "The identity of one's community determined to a large extent, if not completely, one's practices." City Akha experience a change in community which they must reflect in practice. Coherence is sought not only with significant others, or "the community", but also with locally-experienced phenomena. As noted by Swanson (1963:5): "Our knowledge about beliefs shows that they do not persist by themselves. An idea or attitude or belief must correspond to current experiences with the environment if it is to continue across the generations." The collective provides coherence and continuity, while the individual provides commitment: One depends on the other; if one erodes, the other erodes. This presents a cleft stick regards modifying ritual: If ritual is too difficult, that threatens its continuity, which would erode the collective; but by making ritual easier, costly signalling theory suggests this lessens individual commitment, which again erodes the collective.

5.12.5 Rituals and trust

Candland (2000:370) suggests that religious production of social capital will be evident in adherents placing trust in one another without requiring a closed social network of multiple face-to-face contacts. While Akhazang is efficacious in a closed network, it has not proved itself in an open one. Rather, there is evidence of observance/non-observance of Akhazang rituals as causative of distrust between city and village Akha, and of religious conversion functioning divisively in Chiang Mai.

In villages, hillcountry rice farming still requires cooperative labour to achieve economic success, favouring rituals which address the collectivisation problem. However, this collectivity is weakening, inevitably eroding village-city connections, and intra-city connections. City Akhas' economic striving appears to have become divorced from the successful, collective approach described by Vatikiotis (1984), with Akha geographic dispersal around Chiang Mai now mirrored in a fragmentary approach to making livelihoods (Buadaeng et al 2003). Akha are motivated to become conversant with the dominant Thai society through which most economic and political rewards are mediated; to combine Portes' terms (1998) with O'Connor's insights (1996) regarding blessing cults, Akha become inferior supplicants begging the blessings of social capital from its possessors, mostly Thai, sometimes Christian missions, but they beg out of self-interest rather than to advance the collective good.

Akhazang has latent potential to restore some collectivity, but lacks a city-based institutional form to support a social network to mediate social, economic, and other benefits, and the momentum is in the opposite direction as the number of Akha meeting Akhazang's demands declines generally, as more Akha leave villages where social benefits are diffuse, for a more isolated existence in Thai cities, and as more Akha adopt other zang. The struggle to maintain a Chiang Mai Akha Community Group is indicative of lack of momentum: Christian Akha have less reason to support it as their own social network is sound. As numbers of Christian Akha increase, costly-signalling theory would suggest that benefits to members will expand, enabling demands placed on members to rise, in what for Christian Akha is a virtuous cycle likely to further depopulate Akhazang.

Akhazang's ritual threshold is too high for city Akha to exhibit commitment, and there is no interiorised belief idiom in which to display authenticity in less costly forms; so, group size and cohesion are diminished, reducing overall social capital potential for Akhazangists. Ceremonies exclude those lacking knowledge, resources, or interest, or who fear attracting prejudice, and they also exclude the devoted individual (and, for some ceremonies, household) because adequate performance requires an observant group: there is no individualistic salvation. Akha urban migrants in slums are doubly dislocated from their communities and cannot perform rituals even if they so wished. The personal trauma and sadness associated with this was evident among many interviewees.

Because Akhazang indexes ethnic identity, not merely religiosity, non-observance jeopardises an individual's place within the ethnic group and self-identity, and also fragments the collective identity. Akha who adopt other zang present an increasingly pluralistic body of viable alternatives to other Akha, with new urban migrants particularly vulnerable: Their

desire to retain ethnic identity is in tension with more immediate needs for social capital, both for meaningful relationships (bonding) and leverageable relationships (bridging), and the urge to achieve coherence with local phenomena.

This posits a huge dilemma: Repeatedly in this research Akha were asked whether Akhazang ceremonies should be altered to facilitate observance; most said yes. However, this would almost certainly entail not just a reshuffle but a reform, for instance by compromising on purity or numbers of livestock (to cut costs), or on the ancestral link (by making the ancestor bamboo box non-essential), or on male dominance of rituals, all of which would disrupt symbolic patterns in the religio-cosmology. Disruption is not by-the-by: Kammerer (1988b:51), for instance, says the “most devastating future shift in the Akha gender system would be the disappearance of the shifting asymmetries grounded in the religio-cosmological system inherited from the ancestors”, because then men would likely increase their control in society, “leaving Akha women only hard work without cosmological compensation” - and this, she suggests, is occurring as poverty attenuates the ritual system. Also, modification to make rituals less costly would, costly-signalling theory suggests, lessen the intra-group commitment rituals generate. This might be expected to further erode the status of Akhazang rather than make it more popular, a possibility intuited and expressed by two interviewees.

5.12.6 Rituals and kinship

Kinship was previously the central mediator of blessings to ritually-joined Akha. Its role has diminished as the processes of individualisation and functional differentiation have advanced, so that Akha no longer necessarily look first to their family for the means of economic survival or cultural-religious-educational endowment. As Durkheim (1972) argued was inevitable in a society’s development, young Akha are at a place where economic and political functions are becoming free of the collective, unifying practice of Akhazang, and as the collective loses its cohesion and strength, it loses its religious character.

Weakened kinship is physically exaggerated for city Akha away from home villages and lifecycles, particularly as regards the most common and most kin-oriented ceremonies, those of ancestor offerings. Because city Akha are, except by proxy, not caring for their ancestors, they cannot expect their ancestors to take care of them. Blessings from ancestors, once core to Akha cosmology and daily experience, become peripheral to city lives of work and study. Given that the link to ancestors sanctifies Akhazang (Kammerer 1989:274), weakening of city Akhas’ link to ancestors may weaken their regard for Akhazang generally, and for the

authority of religious specialists and village leadership, who have had key roles in maintaining social cohesion; this has potential to directly diminish social capital.

5.13 Christianity and cultural continuity

5.13.1 Conversion and coherence

As noted in this section's introduction, this analysis reflects where in the process of cultural-religious evolution of Akhazang the fieldwork occurred. The analysis has so far been largely negative about this stage of Akhazang's interaction with social capital in Chiang Mai: its limitations appeared more obvious (or quantifiable) to the qualitative methodology than did its potentials. Next, those potentials are addressed in a discussion that revolves around Akha Christian conversion, and that endeavours to stay grounded even where it becomes speculative.

It is characteristic of Akhazangists to view negatively Christianity's impact on Akha culture. Christian mission is "a main agent to destroy highlanders' cultures and traditional knowledge, including traditional morality and customary law", while baptism into some groups requires ceremonial destruction of ancestor paraphernalia (MPCD/SEAMP-HRI 1992/2002; see also Alting von Geusau et al 2003). Certainly, Christian conversion is of great pertinence because of the large numbers of Akha converts, the extent of villages converted, the momentum for change gathered, and in Chiang Mai that, as Buadaeng et al (2003) and Boonyasaranai (2004a) note, Christian groups are the main providers of Akha social networks. Most importantly, Christian conversion, I will show, displays Akha reformulation of their own version of modernity, which like others among the emergent multiple modernities outlined in Chapter 2, contains key religious ritual elements, and which has great impact on social capital among Akha in Chiang Mai.

The context of multiple modernities, and of resurgence and convergence between religion and modernisation, affects analysis of Akhazang's evolution, for it cannot be assumed that Akha's only choice is between Westernisation (including Christianisation) and Thai-isation, nor that their choice of Christianity is not a choice into a multiple modernity they are making their own, just as it could not be assumed at Quitovac oasis in Mexico that empty alfalfa fields evidenced the ravages of a global economy upon disempowered actors moved only by economic rationalism (Weir and Azary 2001).

Desan's account (1983) of US Hmong refugees' wholesale conversion to Christianity may provide pointers to dynamics that underlie Akha religious patterns in Chiang Mai. Hmong religion, like Akhazang, emphasises maintaining equilibrium in the universe by "achieving harmony by responding to locally revealed phenomena" (Desan 1983:38). Having this predisposition, refugees concluded that adopting Christianity was compatible with US life, where god might just be American. For Akha, religious conversion presents the similar possibility of achieving coherence within a changed local context; it does not express itself as alignment with Buddhism because a pluralistic environment allows the Akha minority to increase coherence while maintaining an oppositional identity against a dominant Buddhist society from which it, unlike Hmong in the US, has historical reason to wish to differentiate. The propensity Akhazang encourages is for Akha to convert to Christianity.

5.13.2 Akha-ness reformulated

Christian mission typically presents conversion as the advent of an altered interiorised state concomitant of a decision to believe certain propositional truths, which then leads to altered behaviour. Tooker (1992) argues Akha miss out this first step and simply adopt exteriorised Christian behaviours - "I know of no case where conversion occurred for reasons of belief" - an observation echoed by Kammerer (1990:283-84) and in my interviews. As Tooker notes, Western religious discourse would suspect such conversion of manipulation or deception and, not surprisingly, nominalism among Akha has been a concern of missions (Kammerer 1990:288). Yet this approach is entirely consistent with, and a result of, Akhas' exteriorised relationship to Akhazang, which one can only carry, not believe.

The result, says Tooker (1992), is an indigenised form of Christianity, a form that can and does spread by group and village conversions, which an interiorised belief system could not condone; a form that makes switches of religion possible and acceptable; and a form which Tooker argues may be seen as a sub-ethnic marker within Akha ethno-religious identity, similar to Akha sub-tribe differentiation, rather than a discrete ethnic group. I suggest this form already shows signs of being a synthesis of Akhazang and Christianity, a synthesis likely to increase in Akhazang's favour in future despite both traditions' anti-syncretic traits.

Kammerer (1990) discusses this same process. She suggests that conversion is based on the characteristics of Akhazang being left behind - that its demands for correct and complete observance of extensive and expensive ritual render it too costly to maintain - rather than any characteristics of Christianity, including its beliefs. Thus, while Akhazang was do-able, Akha

were strongly inclined to carry it on. Now, it is not so do-able, and while staunch Akhazangists or innovators might either dig in or try to modify Akhazang, converts instead replace it with another zang, Yesuzang. This is preferable to being zangless, which was described to Kammerer (1990:285) as being like a “bat”, symbolic of categoric ambiguity.

While Kammerer insists that converts explicitly forsake Akhazang for a new religion (1990:287), nonetheless she says it is significant that Christianity provides for Akha to be different from Thai “while retaining some semblance of Akha-ness”, such as clothes, language, and patrilineal affiliation, which are all associated with Akhazang; converts are, she says, reformulating their Akha-ness. She notes that Christian Akha are not forming alliances with other hilltribe Christians, which emphasizes the Akha-ness of their conversion, while also demonstrating limits to the bridging social capital of Akha Christian networks.

“An intriguing possibility is that eventually Christian customs will be considered one kind of Akha customs ... the internalization of an entire alien religious system, would represent the ultimate form of indigenisation – a totalized syncretism.”

– Kammerer 1990:286

5.13.3 Supporting factors

Other factors weigh in support of this syncretising evolution: That religious practice for Akha is part of their “dialogue of identity”; the autonomous nature of Akha society; and the fact that Christianity itself is changing to accommodate diverse cultural expressions. First, Christian conversion can be seen as Akhas’ claim to both difference and equality with lowland Thai, and a claim to sharing the “civilisation” of dominant Thai by identifying in opposition to Akhazangists portrayed as practising primitive spirit worship (Kammerer 1990:285). Conversion may even be a claim to superiority vis-a-vis Thai, since it aligns Akha with the religion of the globally dominant West. But because this religion is not interiorised, what occurs is not assimilation; rather, Akhazang-Christianity supports Akha ethnic identity as a perennial minority pressured by a dominant society.

One would expect among Akha a pragmatic angle on this, and there is one: Christian networks, especially in Chiang Mai but also in many villages, provide more readily leverageable social capital - and with international links, often through missions - than either Akhazang or Thai Buddhism, given the weaknesses of Thai social capital as noted in Chapter 4, while Akha face

little competition from Thai for missions' resources (Vatikiotis 1984). Unger (1998:15) suggests that rapid urbanisation leads to more social capital; certainly, for urban Christian Akha their range of contacts generally widens and membership of a church collective places them in the novel position of consistently accessing a more heterogeneous group of other Akha than ever in a village.

Second, the autonomous nature of Akha social order, if translated to a church environment, might create room for syncretised behaviours to evolve: there are signs of blends in Chiang Mai carol-singing and Thanksgiving ceremonies (see page 104). Third, the trends of resurgence and convergence elaborated in this thesis are operative across religious fields, and in Christianity one effect is increasing emphasis on the immanence of god/grace present in every culture (Riddell 1998:117-129, Tomlinson 1995, Starkloff 1994). This opens the possibility of "investing traditional religious forms with new meaning" and of appreciating some forms of syncretism as "an authentically human phenomenon, and ... potentially an incarnational reality" (Starkloff 1994:90). Christianity itself is not monolithic, and Catholic missions in north Thailand have been more sympathetic to hilltribe cultures than Protestant missions (Tapp (1985b:221), in some cases allowing Akha converts to carry on with Akhazang rituals (Buadaeng et al 2003:156-57).

Against this, old-style evangelicalism abhors syncretism, an attitude some Akha converts pick up (Kammerer 1996b); the two keen Christians I interviewed were vigilant against converts reverting to any Akhazang religious practices, perhaps encouraged by Akhas' customary anti-syncretic emphasis on consistency. However, Christians cannot police against components of Akhazang that are not explicitly religious, which is seen in Pastor Lechoe's enthusiasm for genealogies – even though genealogies likely always recall ritualised connection to ancestors. Akha, if you like, are their own Trojan Horse of Akhazang within Christianity. Their predisposition to favour a this-worldly religion and benefits shields them from needing to believe the other-worldly claims and offerings of Christian doctrine.

5.13.4 Conclusion

I conclude that Akha adoption of Christian ritual is a strategic choice that is consistent with and may become subsumed to ritual practice of Akhazang. The religious adaptor mechanism of Akhazang works by predisposing Akha to modify Christianity to support them in achieving coherence with locally revealed, modernising phenomena, an example of Sahlins' "indigenisation of modernity", that creates the hybridised religious form, Akhazang-

Christianity. Ritual practice that returns benefits of both bonding and bridging social capital to group members has been central to this confluence, and will continue to be so to its evolution. Akhazang-Christianity in Chiang Mai is a context-specific example of the convergence/resurgence theme: here, this two-winged process is occurring between modernisation instigated as a modernised form of a world religion – evangelical Christianity – and tradition instigated as Akhazang.

5.14 Mediators

Apart from Christian Akha, the main mediators activating social capital in Chiang Mai are a few innovative Akhazangists, who are mostly elite city Akha with strong village connections. Interaction of innovator groups with Akha Christian might well be fostered by regular contact within an Akha village, were one built in Chiang Mai (see Appendix 3). Assessment of innovators' efforts focused on formal institution-building through the Akha NGO MPCD/SEAMP, in Chiang Mai, and international Hani-Akha conferences (MPCD/SEAMP:1996) is beyond the scope of this research, except in the limited case of support for the Chiang Mai Akha Community Group and MPCD/SEAMP's several projects attempting to preserve cultural knowledge.

MPCD/SEAMP was instrumental in gathering pimas at a 2002 workshop in Chiang Rai to discuss how Akhazang might be modified; I was unable to secure a transcript of this meeting sponsored by the Japan Foundation. The NGO has education projects with an Akha cultural component in Mae Suai and Chiang Rai, and an ongoing project to revive Akha/Hani oral traditions which is recording the many Akha texts in archaic Akha, and translating these into contemporary Akha, and English language, for dissemination in book form. In MPCD/SEAMP's stated goal (MPCD/SEAMP 2000b) of building a network of villages and families cooperating to safeguard, adapt, and revitalise customary law and traditional knowledge, emphasis is on gender equality and ecological, agricultural, and medical knowledge; no mention is made of religious knowledge.

5.14.1 Institutional resourcing

Apart from the Chiang Mai community group, these initiatives are not primarily concerned with social capital. To frame this NGOs' efforts according to Bourdieu's model of culture (1986:243-48), initiatives have been largely about resourcing the objectified form of

Akhazang, ie, its cultural-religious “goods”. However, without also adequate resourcing of the institutionalised form of Akhazang this runs the risk of the objects becoming museum pieces of interest to anthropologists but inaccessible to Akha who have lost the embodied forms, the tools, of zang. The pima workshop is an example of fledgling institutional resourcing.

The task is, as Wedde (2004:42) says of diverse Pacific cultures which are reinventing themselves, a matter of “trying to produce futures rather than memories.” Resourcing institutionalised Akhazang in Chiang Mai might challenge the barrier to ritual presented by people’s fear of the consequences of inadequate performance. The pima in Pong Noi suggested some avenues: support for pima to travel to Chiang Mai to officiate at rituals, and for them and other religious specialists to offer training to Akha young people. This latter approach has been tried in Chiang Rai at AFECT, an MPCD/SEAMP-related NGO, and at the Akha women’s education project in Mae Suai, with patchy results. One participant noted that girls at Mae Suai gradually tapered off involvement in after-school classes about Akhazang, possibly because of its seeming irrelevancy.

The institution also appears key to legitimating modification of Akhazang ritual, but concurrently is a barrier because it has been essentially non-prophetic and concerned with continuity, not reform. Akha society’s gerontological nature has reinforced this, but created a widening intergenerational divide between old Akhazangists and young Akha who find their parents’ worldviews incoherent with their reality (MPCD/SEAMP-HRI 1992/2002). Young, educated villagers have been key to activating social capital in India (Krishna 2002), and a similar possibility was raised by two elite Akha interviewees. This presents the potential radical possibility of such mediators acting as “prophets” to catalyse change, as cosmopolitan Singapore Chinese have done in Anxi (Eng 1999).

5.14.2 Voluntarism

Costly signalling theory would suggest that as Akha affiliation with Akhazang shifts from the non-voluntary towards voluntarism, young Akhas’ connection and commitment to Akhazang will become a matter of conviction as to one’s origins, not consistency of behaviour (Sosis 2004). These, ironically, are modern attitudes advanced by secular education and individualisation. The exercise of choice not only can make voluntary affiliation more intense, but would alter Akhazang collective dynamics from nonvoluntary towards voluntary – and voluntary groups produce more of the “civil” social capital of weak, broad ties (Offe 1997). Voluntarism would also change Akhazang’s codifying of behaviours, which might allow more

room for hybridisation and re-evaluation of old ways in light of modernising values, though this would require mediators to also be integrationists. One possibility is that city-village connections maintained by Akhazang rituals could become a conduit for these mediators to help revitalise economic and sociocultural life with their skills, enthusiasm, and nostalgia for old ways, as is happening elsewhere (eg, Eng 1999, Hooker and Varcoe 1999, Tozy 1996:61).

5.15 Conclusion

Akha in Chiang Mai, and throughout north Thailand, clearly suffer from lack of bridging social capital and from eroding norms and networks of bonding social capital. But it is possible that urban drift and societal crisis will sow seeds of social capital through which Akha survive and prosper. Turning this situation around will involve evolution across multiple, interacting fields, including religion, as well as politically-motivated social entrepreneurs and businesspeople; one field in which it is proceeding is within Akhazang-Christianity.

For people to generate social capital they must be able to make connections. Development can either attempt to set up new connections and bases for connections, or support existing bases (Anacleiti 2002). As Edwards (1999b) has suggested, the complexities of development usually confound attempts by agencies or bureaucrats to “pick winners” to best advance these processes, and a better option is to provide for pathways and meeting places for individuals and groups to interact. Akhazang is an existing connection base which would benefit from this.

I have shown that Akhazang through its ritual performance has much latent potential, and is active in a limited respect, for social capital production and maintenance in Chiang Mai, and by extension urban and rural environments of rapid societal change for Akha across Southeast Asia. I have also shown that a simple-minded, shallow analysis that does not take serious account of religious evolution might well misunderstand a situation and result in a confused or non-optimal approach. Were development agencies to take seriously Akha cultural-religious phenomena in their analysis, plans, and resourcing, that would be entirely consistent with those wider trends in global development which are characterised by a resurgence and convergence of religion and development, and also entirely consistent with the aim of better enabling a minority group to exercise the option of setting an endogenous agenda for their own development.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

6.0 In general

This thesis has demonstrated that religion is important for development, that development is awakening to this fact and to the potentialities of often-resurgent religion, as well as the limits and dangers, and that convergence between the two may well be inevitable. An evolutionary view of human development would suggest that just such a process was likely to happen; that large human movements, such as religion, or development, might move through stages characterised by dichotomous thinking towards holism, or what Agarwala (1991) calls “harmonism”, wherein balance is sought between material and spiritual wellbeing and advancement. Contrary to modernisation theory, secularisation appears to be not the inevitable destination of undeniable processes of modernisation; rather, it is a stage, and not for everyone.

The two basic potentials of religion are integral to its interaction with social capital: instrumentally, religion is a producer and maintainer of social capital that can resource development interventions with secularist, non-religious, or even non-endogenous agendas; non-instrumentally, religion fuels and informs development of multiple modernities which, while reproducing some of the major trends of modernisation, are often also the vehicle for people’s quests for meaning and order, identities and values, that have significance for wellbeing beyond, but not necessarily non-complementary to, the material and rational. The instrumentalist view of religion represented by sociologists Weber and Durkheim complemented a rationalistic development industry in its early years; other, broader, often radical, approaches in religious studies, sociology (eg, Eisenstadt 2000), and biological sciences are evolving new appreciations of religion that can support development as a diverse exploration of human fulfilment.

Religion is important to social capital, through its production of social order, continuity, cohesion, and meaning, including through rituals that create trust thresholds wherein intergenerational kinship networks are strengthened. Religion’s interaction with social capital is very varied, for instance, competitive feasts of merit can erode social cohesion but promote individuation and achievement ideology, while blessing cults tend to promote bonding social capital, sometimes to the detriment of outward-oriented trust and weak ties.

For Akha, their cosmological-religious and cultural system, Akhazang, has been central to social capital production and maintenance in Akha villages. This central role is being modified and jeopardised by the imposition and invitation of exogenous, modernising development processes into villages. In Chiang Mai, Akhazang is severely constrained from realising its time-proven potential for social capital production, to the point of impotency. Indeed, ritual has a divisive effect because non-performance by individuals automatically excludes them from the collective, placing them within the radius of distrust of some Akhazangists.

Efforts by urban Akha to preserve Akhazang are undermined by the complete-and-correct ritual requirements, paucity of zang-derived social networks, imbalance of costs and benefits for adherents, and lack of mediating agents; these trends are reinforced by continued exchange of Akhazang spiritual capital for Christianity by converts, largely to access the benefits of existing social networks maintained by regular church meetings and rituals. For urban Akha in Chiang Mai, Christian conversion manifests religion functioning as an evolutionary adaptor mechanism. Religious resurgence may, in time, involve young, cosmopolitan Akha revitalising Akhazang and ancestor service in their quest for roots, introducing ideas that are liberating for Akhazang and injecting fresh resources for cultural and economic development, but at this stage there are few indications of this happening.

The potential for Akhazang rituals to contribute to social capital in Chiang Mai illustrates the need for the development industry to take religion seriously on a case-by-case basis, if only in order to on occasion choose priorities for engagement that do not include religion. Akhazang is parochial but it is also too valuable and comprehensive a framework for Akhas' individual and communal life to be dismissed as past its best-by date. In this case, I suggest that initiatives that resourced the institutionalised form of Akha religion, in addition to those existing initiatives that resource their religious "goods", would enhance the options for Akha seeking to negotiate change according to their own agenda.

6.1 Implications for the development industry

Development interventions must take seriously all existing societal organising features, before looking to introduce new ones or to modify what exists (Anacleiti 2002, Edwards 1999b). Such consideration must explicitly include analysis of a society's relationship to religion, particularly where there is a religion of long-standing, mass affiliation, and it must do so at depth, in order to appreciate the dynamics of unfamiliar idioms, such as Akhas' exteriorised idiom for relating to tradition. This increases the chances of interventions proceeding in a way

that allows an endogenous agenda to evolve, be formulated, and be applied, whether that agenda appears to favour change or stasis.

Development interventions could consider explicitly resourcing religious institutions to bolster their society's resilience in responding to change, and creatively seek ways to make pathways and meeting places for people in religious fields, eg, between competing or conflictual religions that share geographical territory. As long as widely agreed ethical norms are not being violated by religious structures and practices, these should be privileged – treated as potential sources of learning, even preserved or protected if necessary - as indigenous forms by development agencies.

After a half-century's neglect, development theorists have ground to make up in studying, interpreting, and analysing religion-spirituality's role, research which would most usefully be based upon case studies that appreciate local context as much as possible, as case studies cited in this thesis (Weir and Azary 2001, Eng 1999, Lansing and Kremer 1995) show. Analyses that explore instrumental uses of religion are useful but not sufficient.

“The more justifiable stance is noninstrumental, one whose initial postulate holds that traditional values harbor within them a latent dynamism which, when properly respected, can serve as the springboard for modes of development that are more humane than those derived from outside paradigms”

- Goulet 1996

A move beyond developmental instrumentalism is assured by the growing numbers of well-educated, religiously-empowered people in developing countries, and in development agencies, but the extension of this shift beyond its spawning grounds in the multiple modernities of developing countries – in order, partly, to spread to the First World insights into development alternatives more sustainable, and enjoyable, than industrial modernity - could be aided by allowing more Third World voices to be heard among the Western-dominated development academy, and especially within the many bodies at multilateral level set up recently at the religion-development interface, such as WFDD and UN bodies.

One avenue for analysis is religions' interactions with social capital in its different forms: this would enhance shallow Western understandings of social capital in the Third World (Edwards 1999b), while benefiting from cross-fertilisation with the many studies of social capital going on in other contexts. I suggest the very nature of religion as both a collective, values-led

outreach towards transcendence (Goulet 1996), or deep connection immanently, as well as its orientation to this-worldly, mundane concerns (Weber 1965:1) produces a fit with social capital that is fertile for development research, and perhaps beneficial for the latter concept itself. Critics of social capital fear the concept threatens to pull expanding social development concerns back into an orbit around economics, and subjection to the limitations of modern economic analysis, such as reductionism, rationalisation, and compartmentalism (McNeill 2002, Edwards 1999b). A religious component to analysis would complement consideration of economic rationalism, as Iannaccone, Stark, and Finke (1998) make clear, but also demand its extension into supra-mundane fields where people and their motivations and needs are addressed holistically. In this thesis, Akhas' concerns for taking care of dead ancestors supernaturally are a motivation alongside concern for taking care of themselves materially.

There is a contradiction at the heart of this research, which is that the analysis highlights the pitfalls of the modernist approach that proceeds by identifying societal patterns in order to apply readymade exogenous development models; yet this deductive research has gone looking for patterns among the Akha, patterns which social capital theory suggests would indicate certain things about group functioning. Yet the patterns I identify, interpretations I offer, and conclusions I draw about those patterns, are conditioned by my personal filters. Only the thesis itself can show if I have adequately resolved this tension.

The major issue here is that the interaction of Akhazang and Christianity suggests to me a repeat of the pattern of the supplantation of indigenous culture by a colonising force; the alternative - that Akhas' choice of Christianity is a strategic move to retain and advance their ethnic identity, a strategy which conceivably might flow through into a strengthened, if modified, Akhazang - is so radically different an interpretation (and one which I explored only after being alerted to it by the literature (Tooker 1992, Kammerer 1990)) as to suggest the possibility of other wildly various interpretations I cannot, in myself, even imagine. This has echoes of Weir and Azary's (2001) variant interpretation of development at Quitovac, which came from incorporating local religious concerns and perceptions that proceeded from an epistemology radically unlike the Western Enlightenment worldview. Like them, I conclude the problem of epistemology-to-methodology links makes imperative the need to develop methodological approaches for use in non-instrumental development research that can bridge "the gap between these different realities and types of truth" (Weir and Azary 2001:53).

6.2 Implications for religion

There needs to be caution that, should the swelling chorus of appreciation of indigenous knowledge in future generate a sub-chorus heralding indigenous religion (or even religion generally), that this not essentialise all indigenous religion-spirituality as worthwhile, as if there were a monolithic “indigenous spirit” or “wisdom of the elders”, all-good and universally applicable for today. Convergence demands not just development’s engagement with religion, but religions to make a case that appeals to humanist scientists and development practitioners (Baharuddin 2000:108) and is subject to scrutiny according to evolving, universal ethics. As Goulet (1996) says: “The pressing this-worldly imperatives of development will doubtless oblige religious practitioners to change many of their ancient symbols and practices.” A choice not to engage with this world appears to be one becoming less attractive to religious people.

This thesis shows that making a case for religion in development is neither unconditional nor straightforward. A superficial analysis for the purposes of development intervention might conclude that Akhazang ceremonies are of little use for producing social capital for Akha in Chiang Mai. However, more is going on. It is evident that Akha are familiar from village life with religion as an important field for generating mutual benefits from cooperative behaviours. As urban migrants, they look to religion to provide the same benefits, and not finding it in Akhazang, they adopt the exteriorised practices of Christianity to access its social networks, plus those outside resources facilitated by universalising Christian norms which generate bridging social capital.

Migrants’ spiritual capital built up in Akhazang is parochial and not transferable to Christianity; however, their urge to invest in religious-spiritual capital is one result of their previous practice of Akhazang – they abhor zanglessness. Their choice of Christianity is not arbitrary, nor is it narrowly rational in the sense that, if, as many Akha have expressed, they wanted to find an easier, cheaper life-way than Akhazang, why not just jettison religion and become secular? Few take this option. Akhazang predisposes them towards conversion to Christianity, just as does their political-economic experience as a perennial minority. The choice to be an Akha Christian appears to be a choice *for* continuing ethnic identification as Akha, not away from that.

Practice of Akhazang and of Akha-Christianity, then, are both inherently *Akha* religious strategies aimed at empowerment amid often disempowering change. They are employed jointly as adaptor mechanisms for adjusting to live harmoniously with local phenomena.

Akhazang is indigenous in its origins; Akha-Christianity is indigenous in its practice – and over time may well be indigenised further even to the extent that Akha Christians become a sub-tribe within Akha. The experience of Akha with Christianity is partly the experience of their cultural space being overwhelmed, but also partly, and perhaps increasingly, their experience of the indigenisation of modernity.

This thesis gives an insight into how the evolutionary tracking of religion may be occurring, with reference to social capital's role in that, and illustrates that religions in an age of globalisation exist upon a continuum of convergence, with each other, with modernising forces, and with development, and this must greatly problematise analysis of a discrete “indigenous” religion's operation anywhere, but nevertheless require analysis of religion to better the chances for sustainable, equitable development.

Appendix 1

Interview Guideline

The following is the interview guideline I used for conducting semi-structured interviews with groups of Akha people in Saen Chareon village and Chiang Mai city, Thailand, May-June 2004.

Interviews did not necessarily follow this order; typically, the pattern was to move from the more prosaic questions – such as about networks and connections in Chiang Mai – to more personal questions about religious experience. Some of the questions were specific to the city, or to the village.

Core questions

Identity and orientation

How do you self-identify in terms of religion?

What Akha sub-tribe and village are you from?

How long have you been in Chiang Mai? Do you live here? Do you sometimes live elsewhere – and where?

Describe your family, eg, number of children.

What do you do in Chiang Mai for a livelihood?

Why did you come to/why do you stay in Chiang Mai?

Connections

a. Village >> Chiang Mai

Who do you know who comes from the village to Chiang Mai?

For what?

How often? Is this more or less often than five years ago?

Do you know of any religious specialists, such as pimas, who come? Who? How often? For what?

b. Chiang Mai >> village

Do you go to the village – how often and for what?

Who goes, eg, all your family in the city?

Do you go more often or less often than five years ago?

Ceremonies

Do you perform Akhazang religious ceremonies?

Where? How often? What are your favourites?

Who participates? Household, children, the wider community?

Do you have an ancestor box in your home in Chiang Mai? If not, why not?

How would your ancestors feel about the current situation?

Benefits – what do you get out of doing ceremonies?

Should ceremonies be adapted for the city? How, or why not?

What are your sources of ritual knowledge? Are they adequate?

What would Thais think if you performed Akha ceremonies in the city?

Networks

Do you belong to any Akha networks in Chiang Mai? Which ones? What do they do?

Have you more or less connections with Akha than five years ago?

Do you make any attempts to connect with Akha for customary or ceremonial reasons?

Are others in your household in networks, and which ones?

Would you describe your own family as strongly linked together or weakly linked together?

Attitudes

What do you think of Akha in the city?

What do you think of Akha who change their religion?

Some Akha in the villages think Akha in the city are not living as true Akha – what do you think about this?

Change

What do you miss most about – the village? – the ceremonies?

What do you think will happen to Akha culture in 5/10 years? What will happen to Akha language? To ceremonies?

What can be done about this?

Children – what activities do you do to help children retain Akha culture?

What's the main difference between Akhazangists and Christian Akha?

If Akhazangists are 100% Akha, what percentage Akha are Christian or Buddhist Akha? How would you describe yourself in terms of how Akha you are?

To Christians and Buddhist Akha – what do you think about Akhazang religious rituals? Why don't you perform them? What would you like to do about Akhazang?

There are plans to set up an Akha village in Chiang Mai – what do you think about this?

Appendix 2

Interviewee characteristics

Table 5: Akha interviewees by gender, age, and location of household

Legend: y = young, ie, <30 years old; m = middle-aged, 30-50 years old; o = old, >50 years old

Location of household	Women – by age	Men – by age	TOTALS		
			Women	Men	Total
IN CHIANG MAI					
In slum areas					
Kamphaengdin Tai, west side of canal	2 m 4 o	3 y 2 m 1 o	6	6	12
Kamphaengdin Tai, east side of canal	3 y 4 m 2 o	1y	9	1	10
Chang Khlan Road	1y 2m 1o	1y	4	1	5
Cultural Centre	1y 1m	2y	2	2	4
Total number of interviewees in Chiang Mai slums					31
Others in Chiang Mai – elites and students					
Various dispersed locations	2y* 2m 1o	4y* 1m	5	5	10
Total number of interviewees in Chiang Mai					41*
OUTSIDE CHIANG MAI					
Saen Chareon villagers	2o	3y 4o	2	7	9
Others		1o		1	1
Total number of interviewees outside Chiang Mai					10
Total number of interviewees					51*

*These numbers include two groups of Catholic students at Sacred Heart Cathedral School, Chang Khlan Rd. The 2 groups of roughly 10 girl and 5 boy teenagers, have been counted as one discrete interviewee unit each. It was impossible given the nature of this group interview to separate out individual speakers.

Table 6: Akha interviewees by religion, gender, and location of household

		Religion			
Location		Akhazangist	Christian	Catholic*	Buddhist
Chiang Mai, in slums	Women	11	4	1	1
	Men	4	2	2	
	Total	15	6	3	1
Chiang Mai, not in slums	Women	4	2	1**	1
	Men	3	1	2**	
	Total	7	3	2**	1
Saen Chareon village	Women	2			
	Men	7			
	Total	9			
Other	Women		1		
	Men	2			
	Total	2	1		
TOTAL		33 (17 women, 16 men)	10 (7 women, 3 men)	6** (1 woman, 2 men, plus students)	2 (2 women)

*The differentiation between Christian and Catholic is widely made by Akha themselves, and I have adopted it in this table to reflect this; however, throughout the thesis Christian is generally used to denote both Protestant and Catholic..

** These numbers include the 2 groups of boy and girl Catholic students at Sacred Heart Cathedral School, Chang Khlan Rd. The 2 groups of roughly 10 girl and 5 boy teenagers, have been counted as one discrete interviewee unit each.

Appendix 3

Plans for an Akha village in Chiang Mai

Potentially far-reaching change accompanies an initiative to create in Chiang Mai an Akha village, complete with Akhazang structures, for all city Akha of whatever zang. This project, being coordinated by A-beya Choopoh and supported by the municipality and central Government's Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI) with an eye to tourism potential, has been 7 years in planning and is at least 5 years from realisation. Choopoh (2004b) said he already had 50 families keen, and there might be land for up to 200 families to build houses; his survey (Choopoh 2004a) found 89% of interviewees (167 out of his sample of 170 Akha) would shift to such a village, and only 1.6% would not. Choopoh's motivation is to preserve Akha culture, so the village would have religious specialists, though consensus would be sought on what customs to retain. Christians, while welcome, and supportive to date as part of ongoing consultations, might choose to live in their own village section. One Christian interviewee, WS, said she would seek to proselytise in such a village.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abraham, W. E. (1966). *The Mind of Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Adler, P. S. & Kwon, S.-W. (1999). 'Social Capital: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.' University of Southern California. Accessed on October 20, 2004, at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=186928
- Agarwala, R. (1991). 'A Harmonist Manifesto: Hindu Philosophy in Action.' **In** D. Beckmann, R. Agarwala, S. Burmester, & I. Serageldin (eds.) *Friday Morning Reflections at the World Bank: Essays on Values and Development* (pp9-10). Washington DC: Seven Locks Press.
- Aguettant, J. L. (1996). 'Impact of Population Registration on Hilltribe Development in Thailand.' *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, 11 (4), 47-72. UNESCAP. Accessed on September 4, 2003, at <http://www.unescap.org/pop/journal/1996/v11n4a3.htm>
- Alexander, R. D. (1987). *The biology of moral systems*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Alting von Geusau, L. (1983). 'Dialectics of Akhazan: The Interiorizations of a Perennial Minority Group.' **In** J. McKinnon & W. Bhruksasri (eds.) *Highlanders of Thailand* (pp243-277). Chiang Mai.
- Alting von Geusau, L. (1988). 'The Interiorizations of a Perennial Minority Group.' **In** J. G. Taylor & A. Turton (eds.) *Sociology of 'Developing Societies' in Southeast Asia* (pp215-229). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Alting von Geusau, L. (1995). 'Chronicle of Saen Chareon Akha Village in Northern Thailand', unpublished report. MPCD/SEAMP: Chiang Mai.
- Alting von Geusau, L. (1999). 'Akha Zangr / Hgagr.' Chiang Mai: MPCD/SEAMP. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at <http://www.hani-akha.org/mpcd/hani-akha/Zang.html>
- Alting von Geusau, L., Wongprasert, S. & Trakansupakon, P. (2003). 'Regional Development in Northern Thailand: Its Impact on Highlanders.' Ottawa: IDRC. Accessed on December 9, 2004, at http://web.idrc.ca/es/ev-43110-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html
- Anacleti, O. (2002). 'Research into local culture: implications for participatory development.' **In** D. Eade (ed) *Development and Culture* (pp168-173). London: Oxfam, in association with World Faiths Development Dialogue.
- Anderson, E. (1993). *Plants and People of the Golden Triangle: Ethnobotany of the Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand*. Portland, Oregon: Dioscorides Press.
- Apter, D. E. (1968). *Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Arbab, F. (2000a). 'Promoting a Discourse on Science, Religion, and Development.' **In** S. Harper (ed) *The Lab, the Temple and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion and Development* (pp149-238). Ottawa and Bloomfield, CT, USA: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)/CRDI Kumarian Press.

- Arbab, F. (2000b). 'Introduction.' In S. Harper (ed) *The Lab, the Temple and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion and Development* (pp1-20). Ottawa and Bloomfield, CT, USA: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)/CRDI Kumarian Press.
- Armstrong, K. (2000). *The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.
- Arrow, K. (1999). 'Observations on Social Capital.' In P. Dasgupta, & I. Serageldin (eds.) *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective*. Washington: The World Bank.
- Arruda, M. (1994). 'A Creative Approach to Structural Adjustment: Towards a People-centred Development.' In J. Cavanagh, D. Wysham, & M. Arruda (eds.) *Beyond Bretton Woods: Alternatives to the Global Economic Order* (pp132-144). London: Pluto.
- Bahá'í International Community (2000). 'In New Delhi, a search for the missing ingredient in international development.' The Bahá'í International Community. Accessed on October 26, 2004, at http://www.onecountry.org/e123/e12301as_CSRD_Story.htm
- Baharuddin, A. (2000). 'Rediscovering the Resources of Religion.' In S. Harper (ed.) *The Lab, the Temple and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion and Development* (pp105-148). Ottawa and Bloomfield, CT, USA: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)/CRDI Kumarian Press.
- Bamrung, P. (1998). 'Ethnic Adaptation in Urban Chiang Mai.' In *Articles on Ethnic Studies* (each article separately numbered). Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.
- Bangkok Post (2002). 'Between the lines: Hill-tribes villagers deserve Thai citizenship.' *Bangkok Post*. Bangkok. Page not given, July 3, 2002.
- Baum, F. E., Bush, R. A., Modra, C. C., Murray, C. J., Cox, E. M., Alexander, K. M. & Potter, R. C. (2000). 'Epidemiology of participation: an Australian community study.' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 54 (6), 414-423. Accessed on October 20, 2004, at <http://jech.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/54/6/414>
- Baum, G. (2000). 'Solidarity with the Poor.' In S. Harper (ed.) *The Lab, the Temple and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion and Development* (pp72-104). Ottawa and Bloomfield, CT, USA: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)/CRDI Kumarian Press.
- Bauman, Z. (1973). *Culture as Praxis*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Beemans, P. (2000). 'Foreword.' In S. Harper (ed.) *The Lab, the Temple and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion and Development* (pp.vii-viii). Ottawa and Bloomfield, CT, USA: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)/CRDI Kumarian Press.
- Bellah, R. N. (1957). *Tokugawa Religion: The Cultural Roots of Modern Japan*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bello, W., Cunningham, S. & Poh, L. K. (1998). *A Siamese Tragedy: Development and Disintegration in Modern Thailand*. Oakland, CA, and Bangkok: Food First Books and White Lotus Co Ltd.
- Berger, P. L. (1969). *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor Books.

- Berger, P. L. (1976). *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Berger, P. L. (1977). *Facing up to Modernity: Excursions in Society, Politics, and Religion*. New York: Basic Books Inc Publishers.
- Berger, P. L. (1992). *A far glory. The quest for faith in an age of credulity*. New York: Free Press.
- Berger, P. L. (2002). 'Introduction: The Cultural Dynamics of Globalization.' In P. L. Berger, & S. P. Huntington (eds.) *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (pp1-16). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bhruksasri, W. (1989a). 'Problem Solving Through Understanding: A Personal Opinion on How to Approach Development Problems in the Highlands.' In J. McKinnon, & B. Vienne (eds.) *Hilltribes Today* (pp227-248). Bangkok and Paris: White Lotus Co Ltd and ORSTOM Institut Francais de Recherche Scientifique pour le Developpement en Cooperation.
- Bhruksasri, W. (1989b). 'Government Policy: Highland Ethnic Minorities.' In J. McKinnon, & B. Vienne (eds.) *Hilltribes Today* (pp5-32). Bangkok and Paris: White Lotus Co Ltd and ORSTOM Institut Francais de Recherche Scientifique pour le Developpement en Cooperation.
- Boff, L. (1985). *Church: Charism and Power - Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*. New York: Crossroad.
- Bondi, L. (2003). *Emotions and Research*. Seminar at Earth Sciences Faculty, Victoria University, Wellington, March 25, 2003
- Bourdieu, P. (1980). 'The production of belief: Contribution to an economy of symbolic goods.' *Media, Culture, and Society*, 2, 261-293.
- Bourdieu, P. (1985). 'The Genesis of the Concepts of Habitus and of Field.' *Sociocriticism*, 2, 11-24.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). 'The Forms of Capital.' In J. G. Richardson (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp241-258). New York: Greenwood.
- Buadaeng, K. (2003). *Buddhism, Christianity and the Ancestors: Religion and Pragmatism in a Skaw Karen Community of North Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.
- Candland, C. (2000). 'Faith as social capital: Religion and community development in Southern Asia.' *Policy Sciences*, 33, 355-374.
- Centre for Development Research (1998). 'Religion and Development - A bibliography.' *CDR Library Papers*, 98.1 Danish Institute for International Studies, Department for Development Research. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://www.cdr.dk/library_paper/lp-98-1.htm
- Chaipigusit, P. & Renard, R. D. (1997). 'Documenting the Lessons Learned in Thai Highland Development.' *Regional Workshop Report: Information Exchange on Development Experiences With Highland Peoples*. Chiang Mai: Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples/UNDP Highland Peoples Programme.
- Chambers, R. (1983). *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*. London: Longman.
- Chambers, R. (1997a). 'Responsible Well-Being - A Personal Agenda for Development.' *World Development*, 25 (11), 1743-1754.

- Chambers, R. (1997b). *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Channell, K. (2000). 'The social mobilization approach: A participatory model for local resource mobilization.' *Revue Canadienne D'etudes De Developpement - Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 21, 479-493.
- Chatwin, B. (1998). *The Songlines*. London: Vintage.
- Chinvarakorn, V. (2004). 'Old Insights, New Questions.' Bangkok: *Bangkok Post*, Outlook section, pp1 and 3.
- Choopoh, A. (2004b). Interview with P. Pennington. Chiang Mai, June 1, 2004.
- Chowdhry, K. (2003). 'Achieving Millennium Development Goals: A View from Gandhi's Window.' AVARD National Seminar, Wardha, India, July 22-24, 2003.
- Clarke, P. (1999). 'In pursuit of the millennium.' *Index on Censorship*, 1, 131-134.
- Clough, P. (2000). 'Conclusions: The Political Economy behind the Powers of Good and Evil.' In P. Clough, & J. Mitchell (eds.) *Powers of Good and Evil* (pp233-251). New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Clough, P. & Mitchell, J. P. (2000). *Powers of Good and Evil*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Cohen, E. (1991). *Thai Society in Comparative Perspective: Collected Essays*. Bangkok: White Lotus.
- Cohen, E. (1992). 'The Growing Gap: Hill Tribe Image and Reality.' *Pacific Viewpoint*, 33 (2), 165-169.
- Cohen, E. (1996). *Thai Tourism: Hill Tribes, Islands and Open-ended Prostitution*. Bangkok: White Lotus Co Ltd.
- Cohen, P. T. (2000). 'Resettlement, Opium and Labour Dependence: Akha-Tai Relations in Northern Laos.' *Development and Change*, 31, 179-200.
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). 'Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital.' *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95-121.
- Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J. (1992). *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder, San Francisco, and Oxford: Westview Press.
- Connors, M. K. (2003). *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Cousins, E. (1999). 'The Convergence of Cultures and Religions in Light of the Evolution of Consciousness.' *Zygon*, 34 (2), 209-219.
- Cowen, M. P. & Shenton, R. W. (1995). 'The invention of development.' In J. Crush (ed.) *Power of development* (pp27-43). London and New York: Routledge.
- Cox, E. & Caldwell, P. (2000). 'Making Policy Social.' In I. Winter (ed.) *Social Capital and Public Policy in Australia* (pp43-73). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

- Cronk, L. (1994). 'Evolutionary theories of morality and the manipulative use of signals.' *Zygon*, 19, 5-20.
- Crush, J. (1995). 'Introduction.' In J. Crush (ed.) *Power of development*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Csordas, T. J. (1994). *The Sacred Self. A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing*. London: University of California Press.
- Christian World Service (2004). *Are You Up For It? Wipe Out Poverty Week*, brochure. Christchurch, NZ: Christian World Service.
- Daniere, A. (1996). 'Growth, Inequality and Poverty in South-east Asia: The case of Thailand.' *TWPR*, 18 (4), 373-395.
- D'Aquili, E. G. & Newberg, A. B. (1999). *The mystical mind: probing the biology of religious experience*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Delforge, I. (2004). 'Putting safe chicken on the plate.' Bangkok: *Bangkok Post*, Opinion & analysis section, pp13.
- Desan, C. (1983). 'A Change of Faith for Hmong Refugees.' *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 7 (3), 45-48.
- Development Gateway (2004). 'Development Gateway Newsletter July/August 2004.' Accessed by email from Development Gateway, August 11, 2004.
- Dhiravegin, L. (1977). *Siam and Colonialism (1855-1909): An Analysis of Diplomatic Relations*. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Co Ltd.
- Dixon, C. (1999). *The Thai Economy: Uneven Development and Internationalisation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Du, S. (1996). 'Cosmic and Social Exchanges: Blessing Among the Lahu of Southwest China and the Feast of Merit Complex in Highland Southeast Asia.' In C. A. Kammerer, & N. Tannenbaum (eds.) *Merit and Blessing in Mainland Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective* (pp52-78). New Haven, Conn. Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- du Toit, C. (2003). 'Fin de siècle and the development of a post-secular religion: intimations from the TRC.' Unisa Press. Accessed on December 4, 2004, at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=7368>
- Duang Pratheep Foundation (2001-02). 'Thailand's Slums.' Bangkok: Duang Prateep Foundation. Accessed on October 15, 2004, at <http://www.dpf.or.th/eng/slums.html>
- Duran, B. & Duran, E. (2000). 'Applied Postcolonial Clinical and Research Strategies.' In M. Battiste (ed.) *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp86-100). Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Durkheim, E. (1972). *Selected Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Durkheim, E. (1995). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.
- Durning, A. T. (1992). *Guardians of the land : Indigenous peoples and the health of the earth*. Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute.

- Durrenberger (1996). 'Blessing in Lisu Culture and Practice.' In C. A. Kammerer, & N. Tannenbaum (eds.) *Merit and blessing in mainland Southeast Asia in comparative perspective* (pp116-133). New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- Easterbrook, G. (1997). 'Science and God: A warming trend?' *Science*, 277 (5328), 890-893.
- Eberlee, J. (2000). 'The Lab, the Temple and the Market: Reflections on the Role of Science and Religion in Development.' Ottawa: IDRC. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-5570-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html
- Edwards, M. (1994). 'Rethinking social development: the search for 'relevance'' In D. Booth (ed.) *Rethinking Social Development: theory, research and practice* (pp279-297). Harlow: Longman.
- Edwards, M. (1999a). *Future Positive: International Co-operation in the 21st Century*. London: Earthscan Publications.
- Edwards, M. (1999b). 'Enthusiasts, Tacticians and Sceptics: The World Bank, Civil Society and Social Capital.' Governance and Civil Society Unit Ford Foundation. Accessed on February 26, 2004, 2004, at http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/4608_edwards.pdf
- Edwards, M. (2003). 'The Love That Does Justice.' Speech at Works of Love: Scientific and Religious Perspectives on Altruism conference, Villanova University, Villanova, PA USA, May 31–June 5, 2003. Future Positive. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at <http://www.futurepositive.org/docs/The%20Love%20That%20Does%20Justice.pdf>
- Eisenstadt, S. N. (1973). *Tradition, change, and modernity*. New York: Wiley.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. (2000). 'The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of 'Multiple Modernities'' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29 (3), 591-611.
- Ekachai, S. (1994). *Seeds of Hope: Local Initiatives in Thailand*. Bangkok: Thai Development Support Committee.
- Eng, K. K. (1999). 'The Changing Moral Economy of Ancestor Worship in A Chinese Emigrant District.' *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 23, 99-132.
- Escobar, A. (1992). 'Reflections on 'Development': Grassroots Approaches and Alternative Politics in the Third World.' *Futures*, June 1992, 411-436.
- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Esminger, J. (1997). 'Transaction costs and Islam: explaining conversion in Africa.' *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, 153, 4-29.
- Falk, R. (1979). 'Satisfying Human Needs in a World of Sovereign States: Rhetoric, Reality and Vision.' In W. R. J Gremillion (ed.) *World Faiths and the New World Order* (pp109-140). Washington, DC: Interreligious Peace Colloquium, now re-named Muslim Jewish Christian Conference.
- Foley, M., McCarthy, J. & Chaves, M. (2001). 'Social Capital, Religious Institutions, and Poor Communities.' In Susan Saegert, J. Phillip Thompson, & Mark R. Warren (eds.) *Social Capital and Poor Communities* (pp215-245). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

- Fowler, J. W. (1995). *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Friedmann, J. (1992). *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Fukuda-Parr, S. (2004). Lead author, *Human Development Report 2004: Cultural liberty in today's diverse world*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust : The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. New York: Free Press.
- Fukuyama, F. (2001). 'Social capital, civil society and development.' *Third World Quarterly*, 22 (1), 7-20.
- Gardner, G. (2002). *Invoking the Spirit: Religion and Spirituality in the Quest for a Sustainable World*. Danvers, MA: Worldwatch Institute.
- Gegeo, D. W. (1998). 'Indigenous Knowledge and Empowerment: Rural Development Examined from Within.' *The Contemporary Pacific*, 10 (2), 289-315.
- Goulet, D. (1980). 'Development Experts: The One-eyed Giants.' *World Development*, 8 (7/8), 481-489.
- Goulet, D. (1992). 'Development: creator and destroyer of values.' *World Development*, 20 (3), 467-475.
- Goulet, D. (1995). *Development Ethics: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. New York and London: Apex Press and Zed Books.
- Goulet, D. (1996). 'Development: Historical task or opening to transcendence?' *Cross Currents*, 46 (2), 22-231. Cross Currents. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://web5.epnet.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/citation.asp?tb=1&_ug=sid+6B011111%2D11E3%2D4EEB%2D9AAB%2D4DA552050892%40sessionmgr4+db+afh+cp+1+2D02&_us=hd+False+hs+False+or+Date+fh+False+ss+SO+sm+ES+sl+%2D1+dstb+ES+ri+KAAACBZA00025955+E333&_uso=hd+False+tg%5B2+%2D+tg%5B1+%2DSO+tg%5B0+%2DAU+st%5B2+%2D+st%5B1+%2Dcross++currents+st%5B0+%2Dgoulet+db%5B0+%2Dafh+op%5B2+%2DAnd+op%5B1+%2DAnd+op%5B0+%2D+1D04&fn=1&rn=1
- Granovetter, M. (1973). 'The Strength of Weak Ties.' *American Journal of Sociology of Religion*, 78, 1360-1380.
- Gray, J. (1998). *False dawn : The delusions of global capitalism*. London: Granta Books.
- Gumucio, C. P. (2002). 'Religion and the Awakening of Indigenous People in Latin America.' *Social Compass*, 49 (1), 67-81.
- Gunatilleke, G. (1979). 'The Interior Dimension.' *International Development Review*, 21 (1), 3-7.
- Gunther, M. (2001). 'Spirituality: God and Business.' *Fortune*, Monday, July 9, 2001. Accessed on March 25, 2004, at <http://www.fortune.com/fortune/careers/articles/0,15114,371129,00.html>
- Gusfield, J. R. (1971). 'Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change.' In J. L. Finkle, & R. W. Gable (eds.) *Political development and social change*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

- Haggis, J. & Schech, S. (2002). 'Introduction: Pathways to Culture and Development.' In S. Schech, & J. Haggis (eds.) *Development: A Cultural Studies Reader* (pp.xiii-xxiii). Oxford, UK, and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Hansson, I.-L. (1983). 'Death in an Akha Village.' In J. McKinnon, & W. Bhruksasri (eds.) *Highlanders of Thailand* (pp279-290). Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Hari, J. (2004). 'Islam's marked woman.' Wellington: *Dominion Post*, Magazine section, first edition, pE5.
- Harper, S. & Clancy, K. (1999). "The way to do is to be': Exploring the interface between values and research.' *Gender and Development*, 7 (1), 73-80.
- Harper, S. (2000). *The Lab, the Temple and the Market: Reflections on the Role of Science and Religion in Development*. Ottawa and Bloomfield, CT, USA: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)/CRDI Kumarian Press.
- Hayden, B. (1987). 'Alliances and ritual ecstasy: human responses to resource stress.' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 26, 81-91.
- Henin, B. (1996). 'Ethnic minority integration in China: transformation of Akha society.' *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 26 (2), 180-201.
- Hooker, K. & Varcoe, J. (1999). 'Migration and the Cook Islands.' In J. Overton, & R. Scheyvens (eds.) *Strategies for Sustainable Development: Experiences from the Pacific* (pp91-99). Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Hooper, A. (2000). 'Introduction.' In A. Hooper (ed.) *Culture and Sustainable Development in the Pacific* (pp1-21). Canberra: Asia Pacific Press.
- Howell, S. (1997). 'Introduction.' In S. Howell (ed.) *The Ethnography of Moralities*. New York: Routledge.
- Hutasingh, O. (2004). 'A life without hope.' Bangkok: *Bangkok Post*, Home News section, p2.
- Iannaccone, L. (1990). 'Religious Practice: A Human Capital Approach.' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 29, 297-314.
- Iannaccone, L., Stark, R. & Finke, R. (1998). 'Rationality and the "religious mind".' *Economic Inquiry* 36 (3) 373-389. Accessed on November 5, 2004, at <http://gunston.doit.gmu.edu/liannacc/ERel/S2-Archives/Iannaccone%20-%20Rationality%20and%20the%20Religious%20Mind-D.pdf>
- International Development Research Centre (2000). 'Spirituality, Culture and Economic Development.' Conference proceedings - Val Morin, Quebec, 1995. IDRC. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at <http://archive.idrc.ca/library/document/116064/valmorin.htm>
- ILO/UNDP (1997). 'Regional Workshop Report: Information Exchange on Development Experiences With Highland Peoples.' Chiang Mai: Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples/UNDP Highland Peoples Programme.
- Inamura, T. & Yang, L. (2000). *The International Bibliography on Hani-Akha*. Tsukuba City: Institute of History and Anthropology, University of Tsukuba.

- Inoguchi, T. (2002). 'Broadening the Basis of Social Capital in Japan.' **In** R. D. Putnam (ed.) *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society* (pp359-392). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Irons, W. (2001). 'Religion as a hard-to-fake sign of commitment.' **In** R. Nesse (ed.) *Evolution and the capacity for commitment* (pp292-309). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Jacobs, O. L. (not given). *Bibliography on the Akha*. Bangkok, Thailand Information Center, Battelle Memorial Institute.
- Jamieson, A. (2000). *A Churchless Faith: Faith journeys beyond evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic churches*. Wellington: Philip Garside Publishing.
- Jonsson, H. (1996). 'Shifting Social Landscape: Mien (Yao) Upland Communities and Histories in State-Client Settings.' PhD thesis. New York: Cornell University.
- Kammerer, C. A. (1983). 'Chapter 3: The Annual Ritual Cycle.' Unpublished report, MPCD/SEAMP, Chiang Mai.
- Kammerer, C. A. (1985). 'Gateway to the Akha World: Kinship, Ritual and Community among Highlanders of Thailand.' PhD thesis. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Kammerer, C. A. (1988a). 'Of Labels and Laws: Thailand's Resettlement and Repatriation Policies.' *CS Quarterly*, 12 (4), 7-12.
- Kammerer, C. A. (1988b). 'Shifting Gender Asymmetries among Akha of Northern Thailand.' **In** N. Eberhardt (ed.) *Gender, Power, and the Construction of the Moral Order: Studies from the Thai Periphery* (pp33-51). Madison, Wisconsin: The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin.
- Kammerer, C. A. (1989). 'Territorial Imperatives: Akha Ethnic Identity and Thailand's National Integration.' **In** J. McKinnon, & B. Vienne (eds.) *Hilltribes Today* (pp259-302). Bangkok and Paris: White Lotus Co Ltd and ORSTOM Institut Francais de Recherche Scientifique pour le Developpement en Cooperation.
- Kammerer, C. A. (1990). 'Customs and Christian conversion among Akha Highlanders of Burma and Thailand.' *American Ethnologist*, 17 (2), 277-291.
- Kammerer, C. A. (1996a). 'Begging for Blessing among Akha Highlanders of Northern Thailand.' **In** C. A. Kammerer, & N. Tannenbaum (eds.) *Merit and blessing in mainland Southeast Asia in comparative perspective* (pp79-97). New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- Kammerer, C. A. (1996b). 'Discarding the basket: the reinterpretation of tradition by Akha Christians of Northern Thailand.' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 27 (2), 320-333. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://web3.infotrac.galegroup.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/itw/infomark/719/809/85028302w3/?url=rc1_ITOF_0_A19212107&dyn=3!xrn_2_0_A19212107?sw_aep=massey
- Kampe, K. (1997). 'The Culture of Development in Developing Indigenous Peoples.' **In** D. McCaskill, & K. Kampe (eds.) *Development or Domestication: Indigenous Peoples of Southeast Asia*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.

- Kampe, K. (1996). 'Socio-Cultural Damage Inflicted on Indigenous Peoples in Southeast Asia Concurrent With or as a Consequence of 'Development'. 6th International Conference on Thai Studies, Chiang Mai.
- Kaplan, A. (2002). *Development practitioners and social process: artists of the invisible*. Sterling, VA, and London: Pluto Press.
- Kaplan, A. (1996). *The development practitioners' handbook*. London and Chicago: Pluto Press.
- Kebede, M. (1993). 'On the Relationship between the Spiritual and the Material: The Lessons of Underdevelopment.' *Diogenes*, 162, 111-124.
- Kesmanee, C. (1985). *The Impact of Modernisation on the Cultures of Ethnic Groups in Northern Thailand: A Case Study of the Hmong*. Chiang Mai: Tribal Research Institute.
- Ketudat, S. (1992). *The Middle Path for the Future of Thailand: Technology in Harmony with Culture and Environment*. Honolulu and Chiang Mai: East-West Center and Chiang Mai University.
- King, D. (1999). 'Thailand.' In I. Marsh, J. Blondel, & T. Inoguchi (eds.) *Democracy, Governance, and Economic Performance* (pp203-229). Tokyo, New York, and Paris: United Nations University Press.
- Kirsch, A. T. (1973). 'The Situation of Hill Tribes Society'. *Feasting and Social Oscillation: Religion and Society in Upland Southeast Asia*, Data Paper 92, SEA Program (pp9-37). New York: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program.
- Korten, D. (1990). *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press.
- Krishna, A. (2002). *Active Social Capital: Tracing the Roots of Development and Democracy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kukeawkasem, A. (1996). 'Report of the Oral Contributions.' Second International Hani/Akha Culture Studies Conference, Chiang Mai/Chiang Rai.
- Kuznets, S. (1963). 'Notes on the Take-off.' In W. Rostow (ed.) *The Economics of Take-off into Sustained Growth* (pp22-43). London, Toronto, and New York: MacMillan and Company, and St Martin's Press.
- Lambert, Y. (1999). 'Religion in Modernity as a New Axial Age: Secularization or New Religious Forms?' *Sociology of Religion*, Fall 1999. Accessed on October 24, 2004, at http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0SOR/is_3_60/ai_57533384
- Lansing, J. S. & Kremer, J. N. (1995). 'A Sociological Analysis of Balinese Water Temples.' In M. Warren, & J. Slikkerveer (eds.) *The Cultural Dimension of Development* (pp258-268). London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Layton, R. (2001). 'Destruction and conservation of cultural property' In R. Layton, P. G. Stone & J. Thomas (eds.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Leach, E. R. (1954). *Political Systems of Highland Burma*. London: Bell.
- Leepreecha, P. (1998). 'Modernization and the Construction of Hmong Kinship Identity.' In *Articles on Ethnic Studies* (sections separately numbered). Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.

- Lehman, F. K. (1996). 'Can God Be Coerced? Structural Correlates of Merit and Blessing in Some Southeast Asian Religions.' In C. A. Kammerer, & N. Tannenbaum (eds.) *Merit and blessing in mainland Southeast Asia in comparative perspective* (pp20-51). New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The Savage Mind*. London: George Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd.
- Lewis, P. W. (1992). 'Basic Themes in Akha Culture.' In A. Walker (ed.) *The Highland Heritage: Collected Essays on Upland North Thailand* (pp207-224). Singapore: Suvarnabhumi Books.
- Lewis, P. W. & Lewis, E. (1984). *Peoples of the Golden Triangle: Six Tribes in Thailand*. London and New York: Thames and Hudson.
- Limanonda, B. (1995). 'Families in Thailand: beliefs and realities.' *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 26 (1), 67-82. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://web1.infotrac.galegroup.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/itw/infomark/725/990/55921919w1/purl=rc1_ITOF_0_A17716114&dyn=3!xrn_2_0_A17716114?sw_aep=massey
- Little Bear, L. (2000). 'Jagged Worldviews Colliding.' In M. Battiste (ed.) *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp77-85). Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Loury, G. C. (1981). 'Intergenerational transfers and the distribution of earnings.' *Econometrica*, 49, 843-867.
- Malloch Brown, M. (2004). 'Foreword' In S. Fukuda-Parr (lead author) *Human Development Report 2004: Cultural liberty in today's diverse world* (pp.v-vi). New York, United Nations Development Programme.
- Maniratanavongsiri, C. (1997). 'Religion and Social Change: Ethnic Continuity and Change Among the Karen in Thailand.' In D. McCaskill, & K. Kampe (eds.) *Development or Domestication: Indigenous Peoples of Southeast Asia* (pp237-267). Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Marshall, K. (2000). *Challenges and Opportunities for Development in the New Millennium*. World Bank Colloquium on Science, Religion and Development, New Dehli, November 21-24, 2000.
- Marshall, K. (2001). 'Development and Religion: A Different Lens on Development Debates.' World Bank. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://www.wfdd.org.uk/articles_talks/marshall.pdf
- Max-Neef, M. A. (1991). *Human-scale Development*. New York: Apex Press.
- McClenon, J. (2002). *Wondrous healing: shamanism, human evolution and the origin of religion*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- McKinnon, J. (1977). *The Jeremiah Incorporation? A Discursive Interpretation of Problems in Contemporary History in the Highlands of Northern Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Tribal Research Institute.
- McKinnon, J. (1989). 'Structural Assimilation and the Consensus: Clearing Grounds on which to Rearrange our Thoughts.' In J. McKinnon, & B. Vienne (eds.) *Hilltribes Today* (pp303-359). Bangkok and Paris: White Lotus Co Ltd and ORSTOM Institut Francais de Recherche Scientifique pour le Developpement en Cooperation.
- McKinnon, J. (1992). 'Can The Military Be Sidelined?' *Pacific Viewpoint*, 33 (2), 128-134.

- McKinnon, J. & Bhrukasasri, W. (1983). *Highlanders of Thailand*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- McMichael, P. (1996). *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- McNeill, D. (2002). 'Social Capital, Development and Ethics.' The Ethical Challenges of Development - Panel: Teaching ethics, social capital, and development: dilemmas, strategies, and experiences, Buenos Aires, Inter-American Development Bank International Seminar, September 5 – 6, 2002.
- McVey, R. (1992). 'The Materialisation of the Southeast Asian Entrepreneur.' In R. McVey (ed.) *Southeast Asian Capitalists* (pp7-33). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.
- Meer, C. L. J. V. D. (1981). 'Rural Development in Northern Thailand: An Interpretation and Analysis.' PhD thesis. Groningen: Groningen University.
- Moberg, D. O. (2002). 'Religion and Spirituality.' *Social Compass*, 49 (1), 133-138.
- MPCD/SEAMP (2002). 'Informal Chiang Mai Community Group.' Chiang Mai: MPCD/SEAMP. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at <http://www.hani-akha.org/mpcd/MPCD-SEAMP/Informal.html>
- MPCD/SEAMP (2000a). 'Hani/Akha Sub-groups and Genealogical system.' Chiang Mai: MPCD/SEAMP. Accessed on February 26, 2004, 2004, at <http://www.hani-akha.org/mpcd/hani-akha/subgroups.html>
- MPCD/SEAMP (2000b). 'MPCD-SEAMP.' Chiang Mai: MPCD-SEAMP. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at <http://www.hani-akha.org/mpcd/MPCD-SEAMP/index.html>
- MPCD/SEAMP (1996). 'International Hani/Akha Culture Studies conferences.' Chiang Mai: MPCD/SEAMP. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at <http://www.hani-akha.org/mpcd/international/index.html>
- MPCD/SEAMP-HRI (1992/2002). 'Regional Development in Northern Thailand: Its Impact on Highlanders.' Chiang Mai: MPCD/SEAMP. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at <http://www.hani-akha.org/mpcd/hani-akha/Development.html>
- Mulder, N. (2003). *Southeast Asia Images: Towards Civil Society*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Naess, M. (1995). 'Negotiating NGO Partnerships: Rhetoric and Reality.' MA thesis. University of Oregon.
- Närman, A. (1999). 'Getting towards the beginning of the end for traditional development aid.' In D. Simon & A. Närman (eds.) *Development as Theory and Practice* (pp149-180). Harlow: Longman Press.
- Neal, J. (2000). 'Work as service to the divine: Giving our gifts selflessly and with joy.' *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 43 (8), 1316-1334.
- Nederveen Pieterse, J. (1997). 'Growth and Equity Revisited: A Supply-side Approach to Social Development.' *European Journal of Development Research*, 9 (1), 128-149.
- Nederveen Pieterse, J. (1998). 'My paradigm or yours? Alternative development, post development, reflexive development.' *Development and Change*, 29 (2), 343-373.

- Nozaki, A. (2003). 'The Buddhist Way of Rural Development in Thailand.' **In** A. Nozaki, & C. Baker (eds.) *Village Communities, States and Traders: Essays in Honour of Chatthip Nartsupha*. Bangkok: Sangran Publishing House.
- O'Connor (1996). 'Blessings and Merit: Elementary Forms and Religious Complexes in Comparative and Historical Perspective.' **In** C. A. Kammerer, & N. Tannenbaum (eds.) *Merit and blessing in mainland Southeast Asia in comparative perspective* (pp212-230). New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- O'Connor, R. A. (1993). 'Interpreting Thai religious change: temples, Sangha reform and social change.' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 24 (2), 330-339.
- Offe, C. (1997). 'Social Capital: Concepts and Hypotheses', draft (pp1-19). Berlin: Humboldt University
- Offe, C. & Fuchs, S. (2002). 'A decline of social capital?: The German case.' **In** R. Putnam (ed.) *Democracies in Flux : the evolution of social capital in contemporary society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Panjaphongse, C. & Tiensong, N. (1976). *Thailand: Population and Population Education*. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Co Ltd.
- Parsons, T. (1965). 'Introduction.' **In** M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (pp.xix-lxvii). London: Methuen & Co Ltd.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. California: Sage Publications.
- Pennington, P. (2002). 'Caution: taniwha ahead.' Wellington, New Zealand: *The Dominion Post*, Oped section, second edition, pB5.
- Pigg, S. L. (2002). 'The Credible and the Credulous: The Question of "Villagers' Beliefs" in Nepal.' **In** S. Schech, & J. Haggis (eds.) *Development: A Cultural Studies Reader* (pp324-344). Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Piker, S. (1973). 'Buddhism and Modernization of Contemporary Thailand.' *Contributions to Asia Studies*, 4, 51-67.
- Portes, A. (1998). 'Social capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology.' *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 1-24.
- Portes, A. (2000). 'The Two Meanings of Social Capital.' *Sociological Forum*, 15 (1), 1-12.
- Portes, A. & Landolt, P. (2000). 'Social Capital: Promise and Pitfalls of its Role in Development.' *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 32 (1), 529-547.
- Puntarigvivat, T. (1998). 'Toward a Buddhist social ethics: the case of Thailand.' *Cross Currents*, 48 (3), 347-366.
- Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

- Putnam, R. D. (2002). 'Conclusion.' In R. D. Putnam (ed.) *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society* (pp393-416). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. & Goss, K. (2002). 'Introduction.' In R. Putnam (ed) *Democracies in Flux* (pp3-19). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rappaport, R. (1999). *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reason, P. & Hawkins, P. (1989). 'Story-telling as Inquiry.' In P. Reason (ed) *Human Inquiry in Action: Developments in New Paradigm Research* (pp324-339). California: Sage Publications.
- Renard, R. D. (1996). 'Blessing and Northern Thai Historiography.' In C. A. Kammerer, & N. Tannenbaum (eds.) *Merit and blessing in mainland Southeast Asia in comparative perspective* (pp159-180). New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- Ribeiro de Oliveira, P. A. (2001). 'Immanent Sacrality: A Rereading of Durkheim's Sociology of Religion.' *Social Compass*, 48 (4), 613-619.
- Riddell, M. (1998). *Threshold of the Future: Reforming the Church in the Post-Christian West*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Rist, G. (1997). *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*. London: Zed Books.
- Ritchie, M. A. (1996). *Centralization and Diversification: From Local to Non-Local Economic Reproduction and Resource Control in Northern Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.
- Rostow, W. W. (1960). *The stages of economic growth, a non-Communist manifesto*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rountree, K. & Laing, T. (1996). *Writing by Degrees: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses and Research Papers*. Auckland: Addison Wesley Longman New Zealand Limited.
- Royal Forestry Department (1993). 'Thai Forestry Sector Master Plan: Discussion Draft.' Bangkok: Royal Forestry Department, Thailand.
- Ryan, W. F. (1995). 'Culture, Spirituality, and Economic Development: Opening a Dialogue.' Ottawa: International Development Research Centre. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://network.idrc.ca/ev.php?ID=30630_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC
- Sahlins, M. (2000). 'On the anthropology of modernity; or, some triumphs of culture over despondency theory.' In A. Hooper (ed.) *Culture and Sustainable Development in the Pacific* (pp44-61). Canberra: Asia Pacific Press.
- Sardar, Z. (1991). 'Islam and the Future.' *Futures*, 23 (3), 223-332.
- Saul, R. (1998). 'No time to worship the serpent dieties: Women, economic change, and religion in north-western Nepal.' In C. Sweetman (ed.) *Gender, Religion and Spirituality* (pp31-39). Oxford: Oxfam GB.
- Schech, S. & Haggis, J. (2002). 'Part 1: Modernizing Cultures.' In S. Schech, & J. Haggis (eds.) *Development: A Cultural Studies Reader* (pp1-2). Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

- Schober, J. (1995). 'The Theravada Buddhist Engagement with Modernity in Southeast Asia: Whither the Social Paradigm of the Galactic Polity?' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 26 (2), 307-325.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom: human capability and global need*. New York: Knopf.
- Sheridan, G. (1999). *Asian Values, Western Dreams: Understanding the New Asia*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin.
- Shinawatra, B. (1985). 'Highland-Lowland Interrelationships in Northern Thailand: A Study of Production, Distribution and Consumption.' PhD thesis. Michigan State University.
- Sivaraksa, S. (1993). *When Loyalty Demands Dissent: Sulak Sivaraksa and the Charge of Lese Majeste in Siam 1991-1993*. Bangkok: Pracha Dhamma Institute/ Ashram Wongsanit/ Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation.
- Slikkerveer, J. & Dechering (1995). 'LEAD: The Leiden Ethnosystems and Development Programme.' In M. Warren, & J. Slikkerveer (eds.) *The Cultural Dimension of Development* (pp435-440). London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Smelser, N. J. (1966). 'The modernization of social relations.' In M. Weiner (ed) *Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth* (pp119-130). Washington: Voice of America.
- Smith, W. J. (1979). 'Ritual and the ethnology of communicating.' In E. G. d'Aquili, C. D. Laughlin, & J. McManus (eds) *The Spectrum of Ritual* (pp51-79). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sosis, R. (2004). 'The Adaptive Value of Religious Ritual.' *American Scientist*, 92, 166-172.
- Sosis, R. & Alcorta, C. (2003). 'Signaling, Solidarity, and the Sacred: The Evolution of Religious Behaviour.' *Evolutionary Anthropology*, 12, 264-274.
- Spretnak, C. (1997). 'The Spiritual Dimension of New Thinking about Development.' *ReVision*, 19 (4), 13-19. Heldref Publications. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://web14.epnet.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/citation.asp?tb=1&_ug=sid+7B9D5D93%2D0EE3%2D4C10%2D987B%2DD8CB12474593%40sessionmgr3+dbs+afh+cp+1+9908&_us=hd+False+hs+False+or+Date+fh+False+ss+SO+sm+ES+sl+%2D1+dstb+ES+ri+KAAACBWB00025460+941F&_uso=hd+False+tg%5B2+%2D+tg%5B1+%2D+tg%5B0+%2D+st%5B2+%2D+st%5B1+%2D+revison+st%5B0+%2D+spretnak+db%5B0+%2D+afh+op%5B2+%2D+and+op%5B1+%2D+and+op%5B0+%2D+8CD3&cf=1&fn=1&rn=3
- Stark, R. (2001). 'Gods, Rituals and the Moral Order.' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40 (4), 619-636.
- Stark, R. & Finke, R. (2000). *Acts of Religion: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Starkloff, C. F. (1994). 'Inculturation and cultural systems.' *Theological Studies*, 55 (2), 274-295. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://web6.epnet.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/citation.asp?tb=1&_ug=sid+41D80FC6%2D1956%2D457B%2DB3D9%2D06AA5CD09D10%40sessionmgr3+dbs+afh+cp+1+AB3B&_us=hd+False+hs+False+or+Date+ss+SO+sm+ES+sl+%2D1+dstb+ES+ri+KAAACB1A00026918+B937&_uso=hd+False+tg%5B2+%2D+tg%5B1+%2D+SO+tg%5B0+%2D+DAU+st%5B2+%2D+st%5B1+%2D+theological++studies+st%5B0+%2D+starkloff+db%5B0+%2D+afh+op%5B2+%2D+and+op%5B1+%2D+and+op%5B0+%2D+043B&_ua=shn+9+305B&cf=1&fn=&rn=9&

- Steadman, L. B. & Palmer, C. T. (1994). 'Visiting Dead Ancestors: Shamans as Interpreters of Religious Traditions.' *Zygon*, 29 (2), 173-189.
- Steadman, L. B., Palmer, C. T. & Tilley, C. F. (1996). 'The Universality of Ancestor Worship.' *Ethnology*, 35 (1), 63-76.
- Storey, D. (2003). 'Modernisation,' a lecture, Massey University, Palmerston North, Class 131.701, May 22, 2003.
- Stuckelberger, A. (2002). 'Religion and Spirituality: The Neglected Reality of Development: New Trends and Features in the International Debate.' *Religion and Spirituality: A Taboo in the Development Agenda*. Bern, Switzerland: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.
- Sturgeon, J. C. (1997). 'Claiming and naming resources on the border of the state: Akha strategies in China and Thailand.' *Asia-Pacific Viewpoint*, 38 (2), 131-144.
- Sukrung, K. (2004). 'Looking for love in all the old places.' Bangkok: *Bangkok Post*, Outlook section, pp1 and 8, June 6, 2004.
- Swanson, G. (1963). *Birth of the Gods*. New York: Basic Books.
- Swartz, D. (1996). 'Bridging the study of culture and religion: Pierre Bourdieu's political economy of symbolic power.' *Sociology of Religion*, 57 (1), 71-85.
- Tannenbaum, N. & Kammerer, C. A. (1996). 'Introduction.' In C. A. Kammerer, & N. Tannenbaum (eds.) *Merit and blessing in mainland Southeast Asia in comparative perspective* (pp1-19). New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- Tantirittisak, P. (2001). 'Buddhist Economics: The Economics For Well-Being.' Master of Economics thesis. Bangkok: Thammasat University.
- Tapp, N. (1979). 'Thailand Government Policy Towards The Hill-Dwelling Minority People in the North of Thailand 1959-76,' unpublished report, Chiang Mai: MPCD/SEAMP
- Tapp, N. (1985a). 'Buddhism and the Hmong: A Case Study in Social Adjustment.' Regional workshop on Ethnic Minorities in Buddhist Polities, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, June 21-25, 1985.
- Tapp, N. (1985b). 'Categories of Change and Continuity Among White Hmong of Northern Thailand.' PhD thesis. London: University of London.
- Taylor, J. L. (2001). 'Embodiment, nation, and religiopolitics in Thailand.' *South East Asia Research*, 9 (2), 129-147.
- Tirrell, R. F. (1972). 'An Analysis of Factors that are assumed to influence acculturation and assimilation of tribal minorities in northern Thailand.' PhD thesis. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Syracuse University.
- Tomlinson, D. (1995). *The Post-evangelical*. London: Triangle.

- Tooker, D. (1992). 'Identity systems of highland Burma: 'belief', Akha zang, and a critique of interiorized notions of ethno-religious identity.' *MAN*, 27 (4), 799-820.
- Toyota, M. (1993). 'Tourism, Continuity and Change within an Akha Community: Image and Reality.' MA dissertation. Hull, UK: University of Hull.
- Tozy, M. (1996). 'Movements of Religious Renewal.' In S. Ellis (ed.) *Africa Now: Peoples, Policies and Institutions* (pp58-74). New Hampshire and London: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), Netherlands, James Currey Ltd, and Heinemann.
- Tribal Research Institute Hilltribes Welfare Division (1991). *Hill Tribes: Ways of Life and Development*. Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare.
- Tyndale, W. (1998). 'Key Issues for Development: A Discussion paper for the contribution by the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) to the World Bank's World Development Report 2001.' WFDD. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://www.wfdd.org.uk/documents/occas_papers/occas1.pdf
- Tyndale, W. (2001). 'A New Direction for World Development? Comment on the first full version of the World Development Report 2000/1.' Occasional Paper no. 3, World Faiths Development Dialogue. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://www.wfdd.org.uk/documents/occas_papers/occas3.pdf
- Tyndale, W. (2002). 'Faith and economics in 'development': a bridge across the chasm?' In D. Eade (ed.) *Development and Culture* (pp45-59). London: Oxfam, in association with World Faiths Development Dialogue.
- UN (1995). 'Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Social Progress: World Summit for Social Development.' Report for World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, March 6-12 1995. New York: United Nations.
- UN. (2002). 'NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.' UN. Accessed on November 30, 2004, at http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/pdf/INF_List.pdf
- UN (2004). 'World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision - Data Tables and Highlights.' New York: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.
- UNCT (2002). *A Partnership in Progress: The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Thailand 2002-2006*. Bangkok: United Nations.
- UNESCO (1996). 'The Resurgence of Religion: Interview with John L Esposito.' *The Unesco Courier*, pp17-19.
- Unger, D. (1998). *Building Social Capital in Thailand: Fibers, Finance, and Infrastructure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Uphoff, N., Esman, M. & Krishna, A. (1998). *Reasons for Success: Learning from Instructive Experiences in Rural Development*. West Hartford: Kumarian Press.
- van der Gaag, N. (1997). 'Farid Eysack: Nikki van der Gaag meets Farid Eysack, a gracious but determined Muslim who uses Islam to fight for the poor.' *New Internationalist*, 289, 31.

- Various (2001). 'Culture, Spirituality and Development.' Oxford: World Faiths Development Dialogue. Accessed on February 26, 2004, at http://www.wfdd.org.uk/documents/publications/CutureSp_Dev.pdf
- Vatikiotis, M. R. J. (1984). *Ethnic Pluralism in the Northern Thai City of Chiang Mai*. PhD thesis. Oxford: University of Oxford (Note: the copy of this thesis I accessed had NO page numbers).
- Veenhoven, R. (2002). 'Why social policy needs subjective indicators' *Social Indicators Research*, 58, 33-45.
- Ver Beek, K. A. (2000). 'Spirituality: a development taboo.' *Development in Practice*, 10 (1), 31-43.
- Verhelst, T. (1990). *No Life Without Roots: Culture and Development*. London and Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.
- Verhelst, T. & Tyndale, W. (2002). 'Cultures, spirituality and development.' In D. Eade (ed.) *Development and Culture* (pp1-24). London: Oxfam, in association with World Faiths Development Dialogue.
- Verter, B. (2003). 'Spiritual Capital: Theorizing Religion with Bourdieu Against Bourdieu.' *Sociological Theory*, 21 (2), 150-174.
- Vienne, B. (1989). 'Facing Development in the Highlands: A Challenge for Thai Society.' In J. McKinnon, & B. Vienne (eds.) *Hilltribes Today* (pp33-60). Bangkok and Paris: White Lotus Co Ltd and ORSTOM Institut Francais de Recherche Scientifique pour le Developpement en Cooperation.
- Von der Mehden, F. R. (1986). *Religion and modernization in Southeast Asia*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Walker, A. R. (1979-1980). 'Highlanders and Government in North Thailand.' *Folk*, 21-22, 419-449.
- Walker, A. R. (1992). 'Northern Thailand as Geo-Ethnic Mosaic.' In A. R. Walker (ed.) *The Highland Heritage: Collected Essays on Upland North Thailand* (pp1-94). Singapore: Anthony R Walker and the editors, Contributions to Southeast Asian Ethnography 1992.
- Wamue, G. N. (2001). 'Revisiting Our Indigenous Shrines Through Mungiki.' *African Affairs*, 100, 453-467.
- Weber, M. (1951). *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*. New York, London: The Macmillan Company Collier-Macmillan Ltd.
- Weber, M. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Weber, M. (1965). *The Sociology of Religion*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.
- Wedde, I. (2004). 'The next big thing.' *New Zealand Listener*, 195, 3358, September 18-24, 2004, 42-44.
- Weir, D. R. & Azary, I. (2001). 'Quitovac Oasis: A Sense of Home Place and the Development of Water Resources.' *Professional Geographer*, 53 (1), 45-55.
- Weller, R. P. (1999). *Alternate Civilities*. Boulder, Colorado and Oxford, UK: Westview Press.

- Weller, R. P. (2002). 'Divided Market Cultures in China: Gender, Enterprise, and Religion.' In S. Schech, & J. Haggis (eds.) *Development: A Cultural Studies Reader* (pp32-44). Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Wijeyewardene, G. (1967). 'Some Aspects of Rural Life in Thailand.' In T. H. Silcock (ed.) *Thailand: Social and Economic Studies in Development* (pp65-83). Canberra: Australian National University Press.
- Wijeyewardene, G. (1996). *The Changing Face of Thai Religion*. 6th International Conference on Thai Studies, Chiang Mai.
- Wilson, A. N. (2000). *God's Funeral*. London: Abacus.
- World Bank (2002). 'International Conference on the PRSP approach.' Washington, DC: World Bank. Accessed on 2003, June 12, at <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/review/intlconf.pdf>
- World Bank/IMF (2000). *A New Approach to Country-owned Poverty Reduction Strategies*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Faiths Development Dialogue (2004). 'What We Are.' WFDD. Accessed on August 3, 2004, at <http://www.wfdd.org.uk/aboutus.html>
- World Health Organisation (2004). 'Global council for mental health.' World Health Organisation. Accessed on November 13, 2004, at http://www.who.int/mental_health/advocacy/council/description/en/
- Worsley, P. (1997). *Knowledges: What Different Peoples Make of the World*. London: Profile Books.
- Wuthnow, R. (2002). 'The United States: Bridging the Privileged and the Marginalized?' In R. D. Putnam (ed.) *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society* (pp59-102). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zinnbauer, B. J., Pargament, K. I. & Scott, A. B. (1999). 'The Emerging Meanings of Religiousness and Spirituality: Problems and Prospects.' *Journal of Personality*, 67 (6), 889-919.

Sources in Thai language

Boonyasaranai, P. (2004b). 'Akha and social capital in Chiang Mai' draft report. Chiang Mai, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.

Buadaeng, K., Leepreecha, P. & Boonyasaranai, P. (2003). *The way of life of ethnic people in the urban area, Chiang Mai*. Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.

Choopoh, A. (2004a). 'Survey of Akha in Chiang Mai', unpublished report, Chiang Mai.

Personal communications

Boonyasaranai, P. (2004a). Personal communication with P. Pennington. Chiang Mai, May-June 2004.

Doerners, B. (2004). Personal communication with P. Pennington. Chiang Mai, June 9, 2004.

Higashide, N. (2004). Personal communication with P. Pennington. Chiang Mai, June 5, 2004.

International Justice Mission (2004). Personal communication with P. Pennington. Chiang Mai, May 30, 2004.

Lechoe, N. (2004). Personal communication with P Pennington, Chiang Mai, May 31, 2004.