Social Capital, Resilience, And the Local Church
Ayeyarwady Delta, Myanmar

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Abstract

In order to contribute to the further integration of social capital theory into disaster resilience practice, this research seeks to understand the impact of local faith communities (LFCs) on social capital and the production of resilience to disasters. Social capital refers to the networks, norms, and trust that provide access to resources and facilitate collective action. Resilience is the capacity of a community to recover quickly and efficiently from the impacts of a shock or stress. This dissertation first reviews the literature on resilience and social capital to better understand the concepts and how they interrelate in the context of development and disaster recovery. Secondly, the research reviews the literature on the role of religion and LFCs in developing social capital for the poor. Original field research undertaken in 2014 investigates the role of LFCs – Christian churches in particular – in aiding or hindering the recovery of small, multi-religious, multi-ethnic villages from Cyclone Nargis, which struck the Ayeyawady River Delta Region of Myanmar in 2008. This case study demonstrates the importance of social capital optimisation to the resilience of those villages and identifies characteristics of local churches that contribute to it. Based on these findings, recommendations are proposed for LFCs and their religious leaders as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with similar villages in the Delta Region on resilience-building to future disasters.
Statement of Originality

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references.

Signed: ________________________ (Candidate)  Date: 21 September 2014

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed: ________________________ (Candidate)  Date: 21 September 2014

Statement of Ethics Approval

This dissertation involved human participants. A Form TDE E1 for each group of participants, showing ethics review approval, has been attached to this dissertation as Appendix 10.
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In addition, I am very thankful for the incredible hospitality and support shown to me by the Myanmar Baptist Convention, specifically Dr. Saw Allan and Rev. Mang Khan Sum prior to and during the two weeks I spent in Myanmar. May God bless you for the care you have shown me.

To the people of Thar Pyan Gyi, Pyapon, Htan Bin Chaung, Palaw Neh Moo, Nant Hta Minn Gone, and War Taloke, thank you for welcoming me into your villages, your homes, your churches, and your hearts. Thank you for sharing your stories, thoughts, feelings, and aspirations with me.

A very special word of thanks to S’Lont Mun. Not only were you an incredible Research Assistant, but a great friend and brother. I could not have done this without you. You will forever be a special friend. May God bless the works of your hands. I wish you and your family all the best.

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And, most of all, thank you to my lovely wife, Allison. Thank you for your tireless commitment and your many sacrifices to help make my education possible. Thank you for encouraging me through it all. Your steadfast belief in me has fuelled me to the end. I owe all of this to you.
Dedication

To my newborn daughter, Lilly.
You and your mother have all my love for all my life.
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australian Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDN</td>
<td>Consortium of Dutch NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSDD</td>
<td>Christian Social Services and Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DROP</td>
<td>Disaster Resilience of Place Model (Cutter et al., 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAA</td>
<td>German Agro Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI</td>
<td>Good Neighbour International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBC</td>
<td>Htan Bin Chaung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRRI</td>
<td>International Rice Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFC</td>
<td>local faith community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBC</td>
<td>Myanmar Baptist Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPG</td>
<td>Thar Pyan Gyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISDR</td>
<td>United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Extreme events reveal the extreme differences in the way we live and die, cope, and rebuild.” (Kates et al., 2006, pp.14657). They introduce extraordinary and troublesome variables to our equations of lived experience. Today, due to climate change, extreme events are more frequent, more intense, and affect more people than ever before (see Figs. 1-2).

Fig. 1

![Graph showing number of events](https://example.com/fig1.png)

(Cavallo et al., 2010)

Fig. 2

![Graph showing people affected](https://example.com/fig2.png)

(EM-DAT, 2008)
The UNISDR\(^1\) defines disaster as:

> A serious disruption of the functioning of a community\(^2\) or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

As disasters become “covariant, i.e. simultaneously affecting groups of households or even entire communities (Heltberg 2007) as opposed to idiosyncratic shocks that affect individual households”, the interrelation of vulnerabilities and capacities of socially-connected stakeholders take on particular significance (Béné et al., 2012, pp.11-12). Covariant shocks emphasise social\(^3\) aspects of disaster vulnerability and resilience. Pasteur, in her *Vulnerability to Resilience (V2R)* framework, describes the interconnected, inverse relationship between vulnerability and resilience. She defines resilience as “the ability of a system, community or society to resist, absorb, cope with and recover from the effects of hazards” (2011, pp.13). Existing resilience frameworks, however, do not take social aspects of development sufficiently into account, namely social capital (Mayunga, 2007). Mayunga states that “social capital”, in resilience terms, “reflects the quantity and quality of social cooperation” described in terms of “social structure, trust, norms, and social networks” (2007, pp.7). Thus, communities wealthier in social capital are able, collectively, to access and utilize economic, physical, human, and natural capital more effectively and efficiently to sustainably recovery from shocks or stresses.

Meanwhile, empirical research by Bhandari et al. “suggests that disaster resilience is based on social capital and social events such as rituals play a significant role in building community resilience.” (2010, pp.146-147). One of the most ritualized social institutions, especially in the developing world, is religion (Haynes, 2007; Fukuyama, 1996). Furthermore, vulnerable communities in developing countries are becoming increasingly religious and local faith communities (LFCs) and their leaders are critical stakeholders in their social fabric (Haynes, 2007; Narayan et al., 2000). Employing rituals and ritualised events, “Religious organizations are increasingly seen in development studies as important

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\(^1\) http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology

\(^2\) A community is defined as “an entity that has geographic boundaries and shared fate.” (Norris et al., 2007, pp.128).

\(^3\) “Social” is defined by Merriam-Webster as “of or relating to human society, the interaction of the individual and the group, or the welfare of human beings as members of society” (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social).
generators of social capital through building networks between people and fostering trust relationships between their members.” (Deneulin and Bano, 2009, pp.47).

1.1 Aim

According to Margareta Wahlström, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, “Disasters are first and foremost a ‘local’ phenomenon. Local communities are on the frontlines…It is therefore altogether fitting that we focus our energies on improving local communities’ resilience to natural hazards” (UNISDR, 2007a, pp.iii). In order to properly do this, we as humanitarian aid and development practitioners must embrace LFCs. “In short, there is wide agreement that religion is now a significant factor to be considered in any study or policy concerning social development (Wolters 2004).” (Haynes, 2007, pp.60). This research seeks to understand the impact of LFCs on social capital and the production of resilience to disasters.

1.2 Objectives

To accomplish this aim, this study pursues these three objectives:

• To understand the role of LFCs, particularly the Christian church, in local resilience and coping strategies of villages in the Ayeyarwady River Delta of Myanmar as they recover from Cyclone Nargis

• To place these strategies within broader existing theories and frameworks of disaster resilience and social capital to better understand how these concepts interrelate in practice

• To identify characteristics of these local churches which support or hinder the optimisation of social capital in order to inform future resilience-building programs of NGOs working with local churches in the region

4 According to Aldrich, “the mix of these types of social networks matters tremendously” (Aldrich, 2012, pp.131).
Chapter 2: Research Methodology

To accomplish the objectives above, secondary research in the form of authoritative, academic literature review was performed, supported by subsequent primary field research in Myanmar.

2.1 Primary Research

Primary field research focused on the Ayeyarwady River Delta of Myanmar, an area devastated by Cyclone Nargis in 2008. The research was facilitated and funded by Tearfund UK, a faith-based NGO with an excellent track record of humanitarian and development work in Myanmar, in conjunction with the Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC). Fourteen days of primary research were conducted in six multi-ethnic, multi-religious villages directly affected by Cyclone Nargis\(^\text{I}\). Of those six rural villages\(^\text{II}\), the two most heavily affected villages (bolded) were chosen for more in-depth study:

- Pyapon (188 households)
- **Thar Pyan Gyi (70 households)**
- War Taloke (151 households)
- Palaw Neh Moo (117 households)
- **Htan Bin Chaung (80 households)**
- Nant Hta Minn Gone (81 households)

Map of all villages visited.
General contextual data was compiled from all six villages unless otherwise noted. In-depth collection and analysis was only performed on data from Thar Pyan Gyi (TPG) and Htan Bin Chaung (HBC). The other four villages were visited in order to better understand the context of the delta region and to provide triangulation of primary and secondary data collected elsewhere. Semi-structured interviews and FGDs were performed in all villages along with transect walks. In particular, these visits were important to provide a delta-region-wide sampling and baseline of recovery from Cyclone Nargis and an opportunity to identify potential intervening variables that may account for differential recovery between villages.

The purpose of primary field research in this case is to apply and test the theories of resilience and social capital in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, disaster recovery context in order to better understand how LFCs interact with those concepts. Primary research considered (1) recovery from Cyclone Nargis as an _ex post facto_ proxy for resilience and (2) “the structural dimension of social capital – relating to elements such as networks, roles, rules, precedents” and “the cognitive dimension – relating to norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs.” (Krishna, 2007, pp.945). The unit of analysis for this research was the community\(^5\), defined as “an entity that has geographic boundaries and shared fate.” (Norris et al., 2007, pp.128). Henceforth, the terms “community” and “village” will be used interchangeably.

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\(^5\) “Community needs to be minimally viewed as a dynamic interactive set of relations between given individuals.” (Brown and Kulig, 1996/97, pp.43).
2.1.1 Observing Resilience

The IFRC, in a comprehensive effort to identify basic characteristics of resilient communities, reviewed over 25 documents, analysed over 15 resilience frameworks and over 10 years of resilience theory to arrive at the following:

Disasters can diminish resilience in recovering communities (Berkes, 2007; Dynes, 2005).

Since all the villages were still recovering even six years after the cyclone, the IFRC’s characteristics were supplemented with field observations of physical signs of recovery in:

- Homes, schools, religious buildings, etc.
- Roads, bridges, boats, water, sanitation, etc.
- Population changes
- Livelihoods

(Baron et al., 2008; Twigg, 2009)

2.1.2 Observing Social capital

To investigate the structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital, research paid special attention to the following:

- Bonding Social capital
  - “sense of community”
  - social exclusion (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001)
- Bridging and Linking Social capital
• “network structures and linkages”
• “social support”
• “information and communication”

• Citizen Participation
• Leadership (Nakagawa and Shaw, 2004)

The primary field research consisted of 15 semi-structured interviews, 10 focus group discussions (FGDs), 6 transect walks, and personal observations. Semi-structured interviews were performed with key informants in the villages, in MBC headquarter offices in Yangon, and via Skype calls with MBC and Tearfund representatives. FGDs were held in all villages along gender divisions. By permission of participants, FGDs were further separated between Christian and Buddhist participants.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools with slight modifications were employed during each FGD. Venn diagrams were used to understand participants’ views on the importance of local organisations to the recovery from Cyclone Nargis and the intensity of daily interaction with them. Participants were then given beans with which to vote for the organisations they personally trusted most in the cyclone recovery.

A Radar Graph tool was developed specifically for use in this research. Three concentric circles representing the distance of social networks were subdivided into three “slices”. The inner circle represented social networks within the village. The middle circle represented regional networks (within

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6 For a detailed itinerary in each village, see Appendix 1).
7 http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x5996e/x5996e06.htm
10 miles) and the outer circle represented networks more than 100 miles away. The three slices each represented family, friends, and others; respectively (see example photo above). Participants were then given beans and asked to place their beans in each quadrant corresponding to the networks upon which they relied most during the cyclone recovery.

A transect walk was taken in each village paying particular attention to signs of unity/disunity, integration/segregation, religious partisanship, connection/disconnection in the following:

- Physical layout of homes, livelihoods and utility infrastructure, and religious facilities
- Important social and religious iconography
- Daily village life, social attitudes, and religious and cultural customs
- Remnants of damage/changes from Cyclone Nargis

Finally, primary research was done in conjunction with S’Lont Mun, my Research Assistant (RA). S’Lont, a Karen Christian born and raised in Myanmar, has intimate knowledge of the context and spoke Burmese and all relevant dialects of Karen fluently. With a Masters degree from a US university and having worked in development, he was well versed in development terminology and participatory methodology. The RA’s role, under my direction, was to facilitate and translate all FGDs and semi-structured interviews and conversations. Nightly debrief sessions were held with S’Lont in order to better triangulate and confirm each day’s data collection and findings. In the months following the field research, follow-up questions were sent to the RA and relayed to key informants for answers.
A field journal was kept throughout the research to capture notes, data and other observations.

### 2.3 Secondary Research

Secondary research consisted of authoritative, academic literature review of books, print and electronic journals, online web-content[^8], documentation provided by Tearfund on past and current development programs and projects, and other case studies. Additional secondary information was provided to me in the field in the form of village maps and village demographic information provided by the MBC and Christian Social Service and Development Department (CSSDD)[^9].

### 2.3 Ethical Considerations

Access to each village was facilitated through and granted by village leaders: chiefs, religious leaders, and village elders. Arrival to each village was approved and scheduled in advance. Upon entrance to a village, village elders promptly announced a village-wide meeting to introduce me, my RA, and provide an opportunity for us to brief them on the

[^9]: For a brochure on CSSDD, see Appendix 2.4.
research and for a question-and-answer session before more in-depth studies began. Interviews and FGDs were scheduled to ensure minimal disruption to daily lives and livelihood activities. Interviewees and FGD participants were fully informed of the nature of the research being conducted before beginning and ensured that they could terminate the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the line of questioning or simply could not continue due to conflicts in schedule.

Given the topic of research, interviews and FGDs with children were deemed unnecessary and avoided. Any interview with a female key informant was held in a public place in the presence of one observer in addition to myself and the RA. Since audio recorders were culturally unacceptable, no narratives or life stories were recorded or used in this research. Names were changed to maintain anonymity of all informants who consented to photographs of themselves being used in this dissertation. A copy of this dissertation will be provided to each village upon request.
2.4 Research Limitations

It should be noted that, because resilience, social capital, and religion are all highly context-specific, any findings and conclusions should also be limited to the context (Bankoff, 2001; De Ulzurrun, 2002; Sobel, 2002; Haynes, 2007).

2.4.1 Timing

The research was performed approximately six years after Cyclone Nargis struck the river delta. This ensured ample time for the villages to substantially recover from the disaster, thus providing sufficient recovery data. However, since much of the collected qualitative data relied on the imperfect memory of those affected which may have eroded over time resulting in insufficient detail or potentially erroneous recall of events and feelings from that time, the integrity of data collected may have suffered.

2.4.2 Duration

Due to time and financial constraints, only 14 days were possible in Myanmar. Slow travel by boat further limited time in each village\(^{10}\). While this in no way offers a representative sample of the hundreds of villages scattered throughout the delta region, it does provide opportunities to explore the key concepts from literature review in context.

Myanmar law prohibited me, as a foreigner, from spending nights in the villages. Therefore, there were no opportunities to observe local activities at night. Additionally, being required to stay in nearby cities necessitated, on average, two hours of additional travel time by river to and from the villages each day, further limiting time on-site. To mitigate this, interviews were held on the boat going to and from the villages, when possible.

2.4.3 Bias

Tearfund’s role as a key donor to MBC and village churches makes anonymity impossible and fears of confidentiality may have diminished the quality of data. Regardless, participants were assured that there would be no negative consequences nor would there be any rewards or projects funded in exchange for information. Additionally, despite concerted efforts to minimise bias, my own Christian faith and that of my RA may have hindered impartiality and objectivity in data collection and analysis.

\(^{10}\) For a detailed itinerary, see Appendix 1.
In several of the villages, I was the first foreigner to have ever visited. My own ethnicity and large physical frame may have made some participants uncomfortable and limited collection of data.
Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 What is disaster resilience?

Resilience is “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.” (UNISDR, 2007b)

In other words, resilience is the capacity of materials, people, or societies to “bounce back”, “recoil”, “snap back”, or “spring back” to their original shape or state after being stressed by external forces. Resilience describes elasticity, like that of a rubber band. If external stresses or shocks “stretch” a resilient system without compromising its internal integrity, the system will return to its original condition without permanent damage. However, if the external stress or shock exceeds the system’s capacity to resist or absorb it, the system’s internal structure will be damaged or broken, preventing it from returning to its original, unaltered state. Figure 4 is a representative sample of definitions by various levels of analysis. Note the common verbiage: the “ability”, “capacity”, to “absorb”, “adapt”, or “recover” from “stress” or “disaster”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation first author, year</th>
<th>Level of analysis</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gordon, 1978</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>The ability to store strain energy and deflect elastically under a load without breaking or being deformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodin, 2004</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>The speed with which a system returns to equilibrium after displacement, irrespective of how many oscillations are required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holling, 1973</td>
<td>Ecological system</td>
<td>The persistence of relationships within a system; a measure of the ability of systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waller, 2001</td>
<td>Ecological system</td>
<td>Positive adaptation in response to adversity; it is not the absence of vulnerability, not an inherent characteristic, and not static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein, 2003</td>
<td>Ecological system</td>
<td>The ability of a system that has undergone stress to recover and return to its original state; more precisely (1) the amount of disturbance a system can absorb and still remain within the same state or domain of attraction and (2) the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization (see also Carpenter et al., 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longstaff, 2005</td>
<td>Ecological system</td>
<td>The ability by an individual, group, or organization to continue its existence (or remain more or less stable) in the face of some sort of surprise...Resilience is found in systems that are highly adaptable (not locked into specific strategies) and have diverse resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience Alliance, 2006</td>
<td>Ecological system</td>
<td>The capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still remain essentially the same function, structure and feedbacks—and therefore the same identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adger, 2000</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>The ability of communities to withstand external shocks to their social infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronnense, 2003</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>The ability of social units to mitigate hazards, contain the effects of disasters when they occur, and carry out recovery activities in ways that minimize social disruption and mitigate the effects of future earthquakes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While the notion of resilience is nothing new to engineers, ecologists, psychologists, and business people, resilience has become a popular topic for development and humanitarian professionals for its potential benefits for those vulnerable to disasters in developing contexts. In fact, performing a quick search of articles with keywords “resilience”, “disaster”, and “development” in Google Scholar returns the following results year-by-year from 1960-2013; a 900-fold increase:

![Google Scholar Articles Containing All Keywords RESILIENCE, DISASTER, and DEVELOPMENT Year-By-Year](http://scholar.google.com)

(Norris et al., 2007, pp.129)
Resilience is also becoming the primary framework and paradigm for many (Béné et al., 2012). The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) is dedicated to resilience as their “core approach to tackling disasters” (DFID, 2011, pp.5). One of the most influential humanitarian agencies, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), released its “IFRC Strategy 2020” in 2010. In a subsequent document, they state, “To meet these ambitions [IFRC Strategy 2020] the IFRC is further developing and improving its resilience approaches and programming” (IFRC, 2012, pp.6).

What is driving this exponential increase in the prevalence of resilience in disaster discourse? One response is the “semantic ability [of resilience] to represent a readily recognisable concept” (Bahadur et al., 2010, pp.4). Described as a “metaphor”, resilience offers a common ground on which people from disparate backgrounds can quickly and easily visualise a single idea (Norris et al., 2007; Béné et al., 2012). Indeed, Béné et al. claims that the “relatively loose meaning of resilience…creates communication bridges and platforms between disciplines and communities of practices” who ordinarily would not collaborate (2012, pp.12).

Resilience moves beyond traditional, technocratic, interventionist approaches of vulnerability reduction to “train the spotlight once again on human agency as the main vehicle for change” socio-economically (Weijer, 2003). As disasters become “covariant, i.e. simultaneously affecting groups of households or even entire communities (Heltberg 2007)...the interrelation of vulnerabilities and capacities of socially-connected stakeholders take on particular significance (Béné et al., 2012, pp.11-12). Covariant shocks emphasise social aspects of disaster vulnerability and resilience. In short, resilience describes a community’s ability (Brown and Kulig, 1996/97) as a social system of correlated units to “resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner” (UNISDR, 2007b).

Taking a “resilience approach” may also help “bridge” humanitarian aid and development action (IFRC, 2012, pp.14). A community’s resilience can be improved upon by development practitioners prior to a disaster and utilised by aid practitioners as it manifests itself during and after a disaster, bringing more continuity to the relief-development continuum.
However, despite its meteoric rise, resilience is, to some, “inappropriate, imprecise, or ‘glittery’ (e.g., Bodin and Winman 2004; Carpenter et al. 2001; Cowen 2001; Klein et al. 2003)” (Norris et al., 2007, oo.128). Specifically, some are calling for more research to clarify the role of social networks in resilience (Béné et al., 2012; Folke, 2006; Pelling, 2003; Aldrich, 2012), claiming that, “a simple and unreflecting application of the resilience concept into social and political matters will inevitably run into substantial difficulties (Duit et al. 2010; Cannon and Muller Mahn 2010; Davidson 2010)” (Béné et al., 2012, pp.14). Therefore, the following paragraphs review the social aspects embedded in current resilience discourse. It is important to point out here that this review addresses social sources of a community’s resilience to shocks and stresses.

### 3.1.1 Social Concepts in Resilience Discourse

In a brave attempt to survey the resilience landscape entitled *The Resilience Renaissance*, Bahadur and his colleagues examine 16 professionally-vetted conceptualisations of resilience in development. Of those, only six mention social sources of resilience. The following briefs describe the social component contained in each conceptualization.

**Migration, Remittances, Livelihood Trajectories and Social Resilience in Coastal Vietnam – Adger et al., 2002**

Adger and his associates focus on the criticality of social relations for migration and remittances necessary to access natural, economic, and political assets in a Vietnamese coastal community.

**Social and ecological resilience: are they related? – Adger, 2000**

This additional work from Adger echoes his earlier socio-economic view of resilience. He argues that social connections are critical for resilience as they facilitate diversification of resources, livelihoods, and assets.

**Resilience: The emergence of a perspective for social–ecological systems analyses – Folke, 2006**

In Folke’s meta-survey of the state of resilience-understanding amongst researchers, he flags the improved “understanding of social processes like social learning and social memory” and “leadership, agents and actor groups, social networks” but stops short of evaluating their dynamics (pp.263).
Understanding uncertainty and reducing vulnerability: lessons from resilience thinking – Berkes, 2007
Berkes references Folke et al. and discusses briefly the importance of “social memory” – shared information among members of a group – and capitalizing on it for self-organization. Berkes proposes the idea of information, critical for resilience, as socially-accessed capital.

A place-based model for understanding community resilience to natural disasters – Cutter et al., 2008
Cutter et al., proposes a “Disaster Resilience of Place (DROP) model” to describe the interrelation of resilience and vulnerability to natural disasters at the community level, mainly focused on social resilience. In explaining the complexities of the DROP model, Cutter et al. discusses the capacity of “social learning”, to reduce pre-existing vulnerabilities and institutionalize social memory for resilience and post-disaster recovery (pp.603). They also identify indicators of social resilience such as “demographics, social networks and social embeddedness, community values-cohesion, and faith-based organizations” (Cutter et al., 2008, pp.604).

Understanding and Applying the Concept of Community Disaster Resilience: A capital-based approach – Mayunga, 2007
Mayunga argues that existing community resilience frameworks do not take a broad enough view, focusing on only one dimension like economics or infrastructure (2007). In response, he proposes a “Capital-Based Approach” (borrowing from sustainability discourse) as an extension of Kathleen Tierney’s social capital approach to resilience. Mayunga delineates five forms of capital: social, economic, human, physical, and natural. He states that “social capital”, in resilience terms, “reflects the quantity and quality of social cooperation” described in terms of “social structure, trust, norms, and social networks” (Mayunga, 2007, pp.7). Essentially, higher levels of social capital indicate more unity, cohesion, coordination, cooperation, and harmony within the community to collectively address development and disaster challenges. They are able, collectively, to access and utilize economic, physical, human, and natural capital more effectively and efficiently to sustainably recovery from shocks or stresses.

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12 Tierney’s work was inaccessible during the execution of this work.
3.2 What is social capital?

Like resilience, the term social capital holds much of the same discursive appeal as an “interdisciplinary concept” (Wetterberg, 2004, pp.1) having “purchase across the range of social sciences” (Adger, 2003, pp.388). However, as with resilience, the “indiscriminate applications” of the “wide variety of meanings” of social capital can lead to confusion and misunderstanding (Woolcock, 1988). In order to fully appreciate the conceptual value of social capital, it is important to understand its history. The following section reviews the history and definitions of social capital theory and other theoretical contributions.

3.2.1 Origins and History

Social Policy Analyst and Advisor Anna Wetterberg called social capital a “conceptual shooting star” (2004, pp.1). Upon closer examination, the term “comet” is more appropriate; periodically returning to prominence on its decades-long orbit. Even before it was named, social capital was “merely new language for a very old debate” in economics (Farr, 2004, pp.10).

The “concept without term” appears as early as 1835 from Alexis de Tocqueville, “the patron saint of contemporary social capitalists” (Farr, 2004, pp.10). Tocqueville discussed the vital role of associations for democracy, explaining the social form of capital created when people coalesce politically for greater voice. An explosion of economic theory followed through the 1800s, beginning with Karl Marx using the term “social capital (gesellschaftliche Kapital)” to offer an alternative, socio-economic theory to modern, individual, industrializing capitalism. Marx proposed “capital viewed socially” and the pooling of human capital, capacities, skills, and other labour resources, followed in rapid succession by Henry Sidgwick’s incorporation of social capital ideas into utilitarian discourse, John Bates Clark’s radical socialization of economic production and distribution, Max Weber’s connections between production, capitalism, social capital, and religion, and Georg Simmel’s social distance theory - a precursor to Granovetter’s “strong and weak ties” (ibid, pp.22-23).

13 Democracy in America, 1835
14 Principles of Political Economy, 1883
15 Principles of Economics, 1890
16 The Philosophy of Wealth, 1886
17 The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, 1905
18 The Stranger, 1908
John Dewey’s philosophy of “critical pragmatism” came to prominence during the Progressive Era of the early-1900s in America, which argued that “collectivities” furnished “the network of social activities that bind people together” and “the ‘native fund of power’ that individuals have when organized in society, drawing upon the ‘resources of the whole group’” (Dewey, quoted in Farr, 2004, pp.15). Ultimately, the Progressive Era saw further institutionalization of social capital theory as increased access to resources (natural, economic, human, and political) via social networks.

Robert Putnam, “the bellwether in all these discussions”, claims that social capital was first named by Lyda J. Hanifan, a rural teacher in West Virginia, in 1916 (Farr, 2004, pp.28). Hanifan transitioned from the purely tangible, economic conceptions of Marx and others to a more abstract, relational form of equity that we recognize as social capital today:

[…] I do not refer to real estate, or to personal property or to cold cash, but rather to that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of a people, namely, goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit […]

(Hanifan, quoted in Farr, 2004, pp.11)

It is not until 1956 that the “comet” reappears with any real scholarly acumen. Putnam claims that J.R. Seeley and colleagues reassert social capital as “the ’status’ that individuals accrued or lent as a result of their group activities”, a “commodity similar to money” (Farr, 2004, pp.9). Scholars continued to grope with the concept for the next thirty years until the emergence of modern, formalized conceptualizations. The following discussion seeks to consolidate much of the recent “staggering flood of discourse” to arrive at a useful definition of social capital (Mondak, 1988, pp.3).

Generally, the “concept of social capital refers to a differentiated context-specific, quintessentially social set of resources.” (Szreter, 2002, pp.580). However, social capital embodies more than just resources exchanged (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003). While “the general premise that social capital is network-based is acknowledged by all scholars who

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19 Hanifan was most likely drawing upon the work of Dewey and Edward Bellamy (Equality, 1897).
20 Crestwood Heights: A Study of the Culture of Suburban Life
have contributed to the discussion” (Lin, 2005, pp.4), analysis beyond this dyadic distinction of network and resources leads to divergent conceptualisations. The following paragraphs discuss three widely accepted conceptualisations of social capital put forth by Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam.

3.2.2 Modern Definitions

Pierre Bourdieu: Resources and Network
Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (1986, p.248). From Bourdieu’s perspective, social capital is held by an individual and depends on (1) the breadth and diversity of her network and (2) the quantity and quality of resources accessible to her (Wetterberg, 2004). As such, Bourdieu’s utilitarian conception of social capital supports the notion that actors seek to diversify and expand their social networks in order to access higher quantities of more relevant benefits for “their own social trajectory” (ibid., 2004, pp.3). Naturally, social position/class/caste greatly determines accessible networks and the types of resources residing in such networks (Bourdieu, 1986; Szreter, 2002; Wetterberg, 2004).

Bourdieu’s social capital is best described as a plumbing system. The amount and varieties of water (resources) flowing through the pipes (the network) is determined by the quantity and variety of contributing supply connections (members of the network). Naturally, the quantity of resources flowing through the network depends directly on the wealth of those members connected. The size of the pipes (quality of the relationships21) affects the flow of available resources. An individual has two options for improving access to relevant resources: (1) increase and diversify connections and/or (2) strengthen existing relationships. Unfortunately, Bourdieu’s definition neglects one of the most important social resources to the poor and marginalised: collective action.

James Coleman: Function
James Coleman, in 1988, further developed Bourdieu’s definition to include the functions that social relations facilitate. Coleman agrees that social capital is, partly, a resource

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21See discussion of Granovetter’s “strong and weak ties” on p.22.
exchanged between individuals and/or groups, but takes a fundamentally different perspective when defining it. According to Coleman,

Social capital is defined by its function. […] Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievements of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. […] Unlike other forms of capital, social capital…is not lodged in the actors themselves…(1988, pp.S98). xii

For Coleman, the value of social capital is found in the “obligations” or “expectations” of reciprocation (“credit slips”) from exchanges of goods, services, information, norms, and sanctions and the “trustworthiness” required to facilitate such exchanges (Coleman, 1988, pp.S102-104). The more “credit slips” outstanding between network actors, the more social capital is said to exist within that network. Coleman’s further integration of political economic theory of associational collective action and arguments for “shared norms and accompanying sanctions” broadened social capital, inviting scholars of culture, anthropology, and religion to re-examine it (Wetterberg, 2004).

Coleman’s conceptualisation can be metaphorically represented as cogs (each member of the network working together to perform a function) in a machine. Here, nothing is “flowing” per se. Instead, the network itself becomes a “machine”, producing a “mechanical advantage” of sorts, with each member of the network pitching in, collectively enabling members of the network to perform actions in ways previously impossible or difficult at best.

**Robert Putnam: Trust, Norms, and Networks**

If Coleman’s definition is a more mechanical conceptualization with obligations and “credit slips”, Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam’s social capital is best represented as the grease or lubricant (norms and trust) which facilitates the flow of information, goods, or collective action (Fukuyama, 1996). In his comparative analysis of democracy in northern and southern Italy, Putnam emphasized the collective value of social capital to the community as a whole. Furthering Coleman’s work, Putnam defined social capital as the “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, 1993, pp.167)xiii.
“Social capital is thus a collectively held resource, such as generalized trust or norms of reciprocity, that provides benefits for the community” (Wetterberg, 2004, pp.3). In other words, social capital is the resource and the by-product is collective action (Farr, 2004). The quantity of social capital within a network, then, is a function of reciprocity expressed through norms and trust. These norms and trust, arising from regular, honest interaction, aid in forming new, additional connections.

**Final Selection**

Each definition emphasises certain aspects of a collective understanding of social capital. Indeed, today’s discourse draws heavily from Putnam’s theory of social capital and any robust discussion of the topic must include his work. Since “Coleman’s less precise definition gave rise to some of the confusions that have undermined social capital’s explanatory potential”, it will be avoided in discussions that follow (Wetterberg, 2004, pp.3)\(^\text{iv}\). Woolcock later reiterates that any definition must include its outcome; positive or negative and sums up social capital by stating, “Intuitively, then, the basic idea of “social capital” is that one’s family, friends, and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and/or leveraged for material gain.” (2000, pp.22). For the following discussions, Bourdieu’s definition with support of Putnam’s contribution of networks, norms, and trust will be a foundation upon which other contributions are incorporated.

### 3.2.3 Other Theoretical Contributions

As discussed earlier, Pierre Bourdieu’s definition of social capital included two parts: (1) the breadth and diversity of an individual’s network and (2) the quantity and quality of resources exchanged within that network. Putnam’s contribution began to unpack key network components of Bourdieu’s definition. Major thinkers like Granovetter, Gittell, Vidal, Woolcock, Fukuyama, Shaw, and Szreter have also contributed to the network quality discussion. The following paragraphs highlight a few of the most influential contributions in recent decades.

**Granovetter’s Strong and Weak Ties**

Mark Granovetter, a well-known American sociologist in his work\(^{22}\) on “strong and weak ties” explores the nature of social relationships and its consequences for the “diffusion of influence, and information, mobility, opportunity, and community organization” (1973,

\(^{22}\) *The Strength of Weak Ties*, 1973
granovetter’s nuanced elaboration introduced a dyadic distinction between “strong” and “weak” ties. for him, “the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie.” (granovetter, 1973, pp.1361).

strong ties are exemplified by small, “close-knit” or dense networks. granovetter quotes george homans by saying, “the more frequently persons interact with one another, the stronger their sentiments of friendship for one another are apt to be’ (1950, p. 133)” (1973, pp.1362). unfortunately, strong ties come with opportunity costs. time is a finite resource. time spent with one person will decrease time with another. therefore, individuals hold fewer strong ties.

weak ties, then, are critical for exposing individuals to broader, more diverse networks without the time and energy commitments of strong ties. beggs et al. agree: “weak ties are likely to be found in networks or portions of networks of high range” and “are more likely to link dissimilar individuals, to connect individuals to more diverse parts of the social structure and, therefore, to provide access to the nonredundant information that leads to successful instrumental action.” (1996, pp.205). investment in weak ties broadens an individual’s network and introduces him to other individuals less like himself and with potentially more diverse resources to share (information, physical or otherwise). “intuitively speaking, this means that whatever is to be diffused can reach a larger number of people, and traverse a greater social distance (i.e. path length), when passed through weak ties rather than strong.” (granovetter, 1973, pp.1366). this has serious implications for individuals’ access to material and information critical to their wellbeing or survival.

a precursor to gittell, vidal, and woolcock’s work on “bonding, bridging, and linking social capital”, granovetter’s notion of strong and weak ties helps to shed light on the detriments of “cliques” or tightly-knit, “bonded” groups who, for lack of weak ties to extended networks, are unable to “bridge” communication gaps and access more and diverse resources.
**Bonding, Bridging, and Linking**

When Granovetter stated, “those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own” (1973, pp.1371), he unknowingly introduced a catalyst that would lead to Gittell and Vidal’s further distinction of “bonding” and “bridging” social capital. In fact, even “Putnam finds Gittell and Vidal's distinction between "bonding" and "bridging" social capital, a further development from Mark Granovetter's celebrated distinction between "strong" and "weak" ties, to be of particular analytical value” (Szreter, 2002, pp.575). Whilst calling it a “revision” is debatable, using Granovetter’s notion of strong and weak ties to further develop a horizontal, “us and them” narrative of “bonding capital” within groups and “bridging capital” between groups is noteworthy. “As Fox (1996), Heller (1996), and Bebbington (1999) have stressed, social capital also has a vertical dimension…this vertical dimension can be called ‘linkages.’” (Woolcock, 2000, pp.26). Linking social capital is “vertical” in the sense that it does not describe peer-to-peer, horizontal relationships or networks, but refers to networks which span “vertically”, connecting actors “across explicit, formal or institutionalized power or authority gradients in society” (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.6). The following paragraphs further explore these concepts of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital.

Fig. 6
**Bonding Social capital**

Those with whom we share strong ties “tend to be concentrated within particular groups” (Granovetter, 1973, pp.1376). Bonding social capital happens within groups and refers to strong “ties between immediate family members, neighbours, close friends, and business associates sharing similar demographic characteristics” (Nakagawa and Shaw, 2004, pp.4).

A common purpose (Carron and Brawley, 2000) and norms of trust, which “take time to accumulate and tend to persist” (Bourdieu referenced by Wetterberg, 2004, pp.8), are necessary for bonding social capital development:

> For trusting social norms to develop, there needs to be a minimum degree of understanding among the participants in the network in their mutual dealings with one another that they share each other’s goals and purposes, and are working together towards mutually compatible ends.

(Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.7)

Lin uses slightly different language to describe the same bonding concept. Lin describes bonding social capital or “internal social capital” within a “collectivity” as “intimate and confiding relations” characterized by “reciprocal and intense interactions – strong ties in a dense network (e.g., kin and confidants)”, “shared membership and identity”, which “provide members a sense of belongingness” (Lin, 2005, pp.12).

“Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue” (Putnam, 2000, pp.23). Here, it is helpful to briefly discuss Carron and Brawley’s influential work on cohesion. While not directly analogous to bonding social capital, cohesion “may be defined as “the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs’ (Carron et al., 1998, p. 213).” (Carron and Brawley, 2000, pp.94). Cohesion depends on beliefs of group members about “its closeness, similarity, and bonding as a whole and the degree of unification of the group” and “the individual’s personal motivations to remain in the group” (2000, pp.90). In short, groups that display high levels of cohesion and unity are likely to be more tightly “bonded” and therefore will find bonding social capital more abundant and easier to access and utilize than groups without it.
**Bridging Social capital**

Bridging social capital is found in relationships between networks or groups who do not share a common identity or membership. The term “bridging” is metaphorically appropriate as it explains the act of spanning a river, partition or divide. As opposed to bonded groups, bridged relationships horizontally span group boundaries, putting people into contact with “others” unlike themselves. It “comprises relations of respect and mutuality between people who know that they are not alike in some socio-demographic (or social identity) sense (differing by age, ethnic group, class, etc.).” (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.6). The reasons for social engagement remain the same: to secure additional resources and perform collective actions otherwise impossible individually. However, bridging social capital, provides access to new diverse resources and collective action (Szreter, 2002) and allows individuals to “draw on these links when local resources are insufficient or unavailable.” (Wetterberg, 2004, pp.7).

**Linking Social capital**

So far, the discussion has focused on horizontal relationships of relative equality with no “considerations of power, inequality, and the role of government and the state.” (Szreter, 2002, pp.578). Formally introduced by Woolcock, linking social capital is the networks, norms, and trust found in connections that cross “explicit ‘vertical’ power differentials” (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.6).

Regular and cooperative interaction across power differentials is often absent and the opportunities to develop Putnam’s norms are rare. Simon Szreter’s work highlights Putnam’s special norm of “generalized reciprocity” as the “widespread and transitive trust” which “requires belief on the part of a critical mass of the citizenry, both rich and poor, in the merits and virtues of the wider collectivity, in the value of the state and of government.” (Szreter, 2002, pp.595).

“When citizens are disillusioned with government, they engage predominantly in defensive, self-interested bonding social capital only; when they have faith in the state and in their subsidiary levels of

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23 The *heterophily principle* claims that “as one reaches out of one’s inner circle, one is more likely to encounter ties with more diverse characteristics and resources… Heterophilous resources not only reflect different and new resources, but also increase the chances of containing better resources.” (Lin, 2008, pp.14).

24 *The State of Social capital: Bringing Back in Power, Politics, and History*
government, they are more likely to participate in bridging and respectful, democratic linking social capital.”

(Szreter, 2002, pp.602)

The trust that then develops between state and citizen can then be leveraged as linking social capital. Linking social capital distinctly features vertical social networks and the vast resources they provide. “We would define linking social capital as norms of respect and networks of trusting relationships between people who are interacting across explicit, formal or institutionalized power or authority gradients in society.” (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.6). Political maturity is required for collectivities to effectively interface vertically with powerful network actors. Politically immature communities, unable to coalesce around common objectives, must rely on the unifying nature of good leadership.

**Leadership**

Nakagawa and Shaw’s research lists two basic attributes of a developing community “which are universal in nature” – “social capital and leadership”, citing NGO workers who claimed “community leadership was the most essential aspect of the successful rehabilitation in both urban and rural areas.” (Nakagawa and Shaw, 2004, pp.18). Why leadership?

Leadership is critical for addressing the “the collective action dilemma” in communities attempting to mobilize social capital (Krishna, 2007, pp.942). According to Krishna,

[…] communities achieve the best results where capable agents are available along with high social capital. Social capital represents a potential—a propensity for mutually beneficial collective action. Potential needs to be mobilized, however, and directed toward carefully selected ends. Agents assist in these tasks, and they help enhance the productivity of social capital.

(Krishna, 2002, pp.ix)

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25 Field research done in Gujarat, India following the 2001 earthquake as part of a comparison study against the earthquake of Kobe, Japan in 1995.

26 The collective action dilemma describes a two-fold problem: (1) the reluctance of rational actors to invest in social capital and the tendency of them to free-ride and (2) the difficulty in reaching a consensus for collective action and mobilizing the group towards those objectives.
Nakagawa and Shaw concur, calling leadership “the most important in gearing and facilitating” a collective action or “movement” (2004, pp.11). Leaders help to identify and communicate the need, and motivate people to assist one another with resources they currently hold or to “network” outside their normal circles through bridging and linking social capital for resources to meet that need. In fact, “it is entirely unrealistic to expect spontaneous bridging social capital to form between haves and have-nots” but it “must be carefully created” by leaders who “create the shared sense of fairness, including mutual respect between all concerned” (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.7). Leaders, however, must be trustworthy (Granovetter, 1973), well-known, and well-respected (Krishna, 2007).

Ultimately, collective action dilemmas highlight just one of social capital’s limitations. Bebbington suggests, then, “it is important to distinguish between criticisms of its coherence as a concept, criticisms of its potential normative effects, and criticisms of the types of policy and practice to which it might give rise.” (Bebbington, 2002, pp.800). The following paragraphs will outline key conceptual criticisms and the negative outcomes of social capital.

### 3.2.4 Conceptual Criticisms of Social Capital

While its usefulness as a metaphor is often cited as one of social capital’s positive attributes, it is feared by some to also be its Achilles’ heel. An authoritative cannon of literature has been written criticising social capital’s unclear multiplicity of meanings, definitions, and conceptualisations and the liberal application of an overly versatile term (Mondak, 1988; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Baron et al., 2002; Farr, 2004; and Wetterberg, 2004; to name a few).

Meanwhile, Kenneth Arrow, Samuel Bowles, Robert Solow and other economists flatly dismiss the concept altogether claiming it fails to qualify as “capital” (Arrow, 1999; Sobel, 2002; Nakagawa and Shaw, 2004). Sobel does, however, go on to say that “contributions to the World Bank volume provide convincing evidence that the topics under the social capital umbrella are worthy of study” and “a vague keyword is not sufficient reason to condemn a promising line of research.” (Sobel, 2002, pp.145). In a final, conciliatory nod, Sobel concedes: “As Dasgupta (1999, p. 398) concludes, ‘social capital is useful insofar as it draws our attention to those particular institutions serving economic life that might otherwise go unnoted.’” (2002, pp.145).
3.2.5 Practical Criticisms of Social capital

Moving on from purely conceptual objections to social capital, some practical outcomes of exercised social capital are surprisingly undesirable. Even Bourdieu acknowledges its negative, exclusionary effects. The following paragraphs will explore the complex web of interactions between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital and the consequences of imbalances in the three types.

Exclusivity

In perhaps the most stinging criticisms of social capital, entitled *Bad Civil Society*, Chambers and Kopstein discuss the selective reciprocity of bonded, inward-facing, “bad” groups. They define “particularist civility” as “all the goods that are associated with participation (trust, public spiritedness, self-sacrifice), but only between members of a particular group, and it often encourages the opposite sort of attitude to members outside the group.” (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001, pp.841). “Private-regarding” groups, as described by Banfield and Wilson, only assist those within the accepted group (1963, pp.224-242).

Reciprocity, “democratic civility”, or at a more basic level, “equal moral consideration” must exist not only between those within the group, but for everyone “regardless of group membership”, “even [for] those with whom one has deep disagreement” (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001, pp.839-840). In the absence of these basic principles, “defensive, sect-like bonding” can lead to “profoundly divisive and separatist” memberships (Szreter, 2002, pp.584-585). Indeed,

if these associations are sectional in their goals and too exclusionary in their membership, this may remain primarily bonding social capital only, and thus may impede the articulation of collective interests and the development of extensive bridging and linking social capital.

(Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.10)

Naturally, individuals find it easiest and most comfortable to connect with and bond with other individuals who are most like themselves. Bridging social capital, conversely, requires focused intentionality to overcome language and cultural barriers, physical distance, racism, religion, caste, ethnocentricity – and even fear – to build useful
networks. Therefore, bridging social capital is not easily developed (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003).

Discrimination is perhaps the most accurate antithesis available to bridging social capital. Timothy Gill, in his research on caste-based discrimination in the response and recovery following the December 2004 tsunami, cites multiple consequences of a lack of bridging social capital (Gill, 2007). Refusal to bridge caste boundaries resulted in “rice thrown in the sea rather than given to Dalit victims” (pp.29), refusal to provide Dalits with proper protective equipment while clearing dead bodies and human waste (pp.33), “using the tsunami to evict entire Dalit community” (pp.36), “dominant caste dominating Dalit temporary shelter” (pp. 41), exclusion of the Dalit community by the local churches (pp.44-45) (ibid., 2007). In sum, large amounts of social capital enjoyed by dominant castes allowed them to exclude, oppress, and benefit from the Dalit community.

The Dalits, heavily marginalised, lacked the ability to bridge and effectively link vertically with more powerful networks. “Linking social capital, it should be added, like bonding and bridging, can also be put to unhappy purposes—e.g. nepotism, corruption, and suppression.” (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.6). Nepotism and corruption of the socially well-connected allows the powerful to effectively side-step their political responsibilities to listen to their voiceless constituencies. Szreter and Woolcock rightly worry that “without attention to the quality of the relationships between those with differential access to power […] efforts at poverty alleviation, economic development, and service provision to the poor are unlikely to succeed.” (2003, pp.7).

Additionally, exclusive reliance on linking social capital—vertical connections across power differentials—often bypasses horizontal obligations for reciprocation. “If the first individual can satisfy his need through self-sufficiency, or through aid from some official source without incurring an obligation, he will do so—and thus fail to add to the social capital outstanding in the community.” (Coleman, 1988, pp.34). In short, linking social capital alone does not benefit the wider community with additional “credit slips” upon which they may call in the future.

Ultimately, “despite, or even because of, its problematic nature, social capital has, at this juncture, enormous potential for opening up new issues and providing fresh perspectives” (Baron et al., 2002, pp.23).
3.3 Social Capital in Development

The distinctions between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital made above highlight the importance of social capital optimization – finding a healthy balance between the private-regarding bonding social capital and the public-regarding, bridging and linking social capital (Woolcock, 2000). This discussion of optimization leads naturally to an examination of social capital for uses in development and disaster management. What role does social capital play in humanitarian aid and development? While it is certainly not a development panacea, “it is reasonable to argue that something resembling a coherent theory of development is coalescing around the idea of social capital” (Woolcock, 2000, pp.36).

Every World Bank *World Development Report* for the last fifteen years has included some discussion of social capital in economic development. In fact, “An enormous canon of literature in sociology and political science connects higher levels of civil society, defined as networks of trust and reciprocity among citizens, to better economic and government performance” (Aldrich and Crook, 2008, pp.379). Two of the most well-known development thinkers of the past two decades, Robert Chambers and Amartya Sen among others, have revolutionized the way we view social dimensions in poverty reduction and human development (Chambers, 1997; Sen, 1999). Chambers, a development practitioner and scholar, and Sen, an economist, both argued effectively for the dignity of the poor and the importance of their capabilities and freedoms to act as social beings in the pursuit of better lives.

For the poorest of the poor, social capital is one of the only assets available (Fukuyama, 1996; Dordick, 1997; Woolcock, 2000). According to Szreter, “social capital of the poor primarily manifests itself as bonding social capital only” as they coalesce with others around shared values, norms, or plights. (2002, pp.577).

These distinctions have particular significance for understanding the plight of the poor, who typically have a close-knit and intensive stock of bonding social capital that they leverage to “get by” (Briggs, 1998; Holzmann and Jorgensen, 1999), a modest endowment of the more diffuse and extensive bridging social capital typically deployed by the non-poor to “get ahead” (Barr, 1998; Narayan, 1999; Kozel and Parker, 2000), and almost no linking social capital enabling them to
gain sustained access to formal institutions such as banks, insurance agencies, and the courts (see World Bank 2000a, Chapter 7).

(Woolcock, 2000, pp.26-27)

The implicit aim, then, of economic and social development programs should be to help the poor diversify their ties to include an optimized mix of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital.

In the development literature, those communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic associations have been shown to be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability (Moser, 1996; Narayan, 1996), resolve disputes (Schafft and Brown, 2000), and share beneficial information (Isham, 1999). As several sophisticated econometric studies have shown, diffuse sets of social ties are crucial for providing informal insurance mechanisms (Coate and Ravallion, 1993; Townsend, 1994) and have important impacts on the success of development projects (Isham, Narayan and Pritchett, 1995; Galasso and Ravallion, 2000).

(Woolcock, 2000, pp.22)

3.4 Social Capital and Resilience

“From a critical community development perspective, capacity building can be understood as a program of enhancing personal and collective resiliency through the critique and transformation of social structures.” (Brown and Kulig, 1996/97, pp.45). Resilience must always be understood in relation to a stressor, shock, or strain; a disaster. Disasters are often covariant: “Members are exposed together and must recover together.” (Norris et al., 2008, pp.145). Therefore, “To say that people are resilient is to say something about how they engage in social action” (Brown and Kulig, 1996/97, pp.41). For Brown and Kulig, “community resiliency refers to the capacity of community members to engage in projects of coordinated action within the context of their community…as social groups proper” (1996/97, pp.43). To Norris et al. “community resilience [emerges] from a set of networked adaptive capacities.” (Norris et al., 2008, pp.135). In Fig. 7 below, they illustrate community resilience as “four primary sets of adaptive capacities” (Norris et al., 2007, pp.127).
Thus, “For developing a theory of community resilience, a highly relevant theme is social capital.” (Norris et al., 2008, pp.137). Qualitative and follow-up quantitative research by Tatsuki and Hayashi on post-earthquake recovery in Kobe, Japan empirically supports the significance of social capital for resilience. Spanning four years from 1999-2002, the research identified seven factors that “predicted the level of life recovery with moderate to strong significance” and showed that “housing and social ties were the two most critical factors when people evaluated recovery of everyday life from the earthquake disaster” (Tatsuki and Hayashi, 2002, pp.1,3). (See Fig. 8)
Social capital, unlike physical or human capital, is the least damaged by disaster and is, therefore, relied upon most for response and recovery (Dynes, 2005). Aldrich adds, “social resources, at least as much as material ones, prove to be the foundation for resilience and recovery.” (Aldrich, 2012, pp.viii). Yet, post-disaster policy and practice generally address physical facets of recovery and “lack attention to social recovery” (Nakagawa and Shaw, 2004, pp.5). Fig. 9 below summarises findings from research in Gujarat, India by Nakagawa and Shaw which that a direct connection between recovery speed and satisfaction (moving left to right, fastest and most satisfied to slowest and least satisfied) and social capital indicators, irrespective of physical aid.

Fig. 9

3.4.1 Informal Insurance and Mutual Assistance

“Put another way, reconstruction is less a technical issue than it is a social matter.” (Dynes and Quarantelli, 2008, pp.4). Aldrich also argues that “higher levels of social capital —
more than such factors as greater economic resources, assistance from government or outside agencies, and low levels of damage – facilitate recovery and help survivors coordinate for more effective reconstruction.” (Aldrich, 2012, pp.2). High levels of social capital manifest as a “sense of community” – “an attitude of bonding (trust and belonging) with other members of one’s group or locale...including mutual concerns and shared values...an attribute of resilient communities” (Norris et al., 2008, pp.139). Mutual, shared concerns within bonded groups results in exchange of mutual social support critical to disaster recovery. Tatsuki and Hayashi’s research concludes that, “Those who were resistant to and resilient from disaster damage utilized multiplex social ties, while those who were vulnerable tended to rely on a single network.” (2002, pp.4). Again, optimisation of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital enhances the quality and quantity of resources available to a recovering community (Aldrich, 2012).

3.4.2 Collective Action
While physical reconstruction is important, “to mobilize each member of the community in this collective action (community development), social capital is a crucial need.” (Nakagawa and Shaw, 2004, pp.5). The devastation of disasters results in deaths or the relocation of affected populations (Aldrich, 2012). As a result, the social make-up of a community already decimated by death and injury is further diminished. “Since relocation disrupts the community fabric, it delays recovery.” (Dynes and Quarantelli, 2008, pp.3). While environmental change research debates the merits of migration as an adaptation strategy, those displaced by disaster are less able to act collectively given the separation and difficulty in communication. So, not only is the local physical and social resource pool diminished, but collective decision-making and advocacy is hampered. In order to effectively “bounce back” from disaster, fellow neighbours must hold enough bonding social capital to effectively determine and communicate their own needs, enough bridging social capital to access non-redundant information and coordinate with other groups for recovery, and enough linking social capital to effectively access physical resources unavailable locally (Aldrich, 2012).

3.4.3 Voice
In resilient communities, members possess enough social capital – i.e. are sufficiently bonded, bridged, and linked to the proper networks – that their needs are heard,

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27 Coleman defines multiplex social ties: “persons are linked in more than one context (neighbour, fellow worker, fellow parent, coreligionist, etc.)” (1988, pp.S109).
understood, and have a higher likelihood of being addressed (Narayan et al., 2000). Aldrich refers to this impact on resilience as “strengthening voice” (2012). This information exchanges “is included as a type of social support” (Beggs et al., 1996, pp.204). Indeed, “reconstruction requires actors to share information as to where the most pressing needs may lie, how those needs may be addressed, and then to coordinate implementation” and healthy community participation is a prerequisite (Kage, 2010, pp.182). “‘Citizen participation’ is the engagement of community members in formal organizations, including religious congregations, school and resident associations, neighborhood watches, and self-help groups” and “is widely believed to be a fundamental element for community resilience.” (Norris et al., 2008, pp.139-140). Involvement in institutions helps give voice to its members.

3.5 Religion, Social Capital and Local Faith Communities

Finally, “disaster resilience is based on social capital and social events such as rituals play a significant role in building community resilience.” (Bhandari et al., 2010, pp.146-147). Their research on the Danjiri Matsuri, an important ritual festival and parade in Kishiwada, Osaka, Japan, revealed that “community participation and social inclusion; repetition; social dynamics during rituals such as, sharing roles and responsibilities, […] loyalty among actors in different levels; the deliberative process of selecting leaders; and spiritual attachment of the residents to the ritual” helped foster “community identification and collective responsibility” (ibid., 2010, pp.139, 142). The study assessed the effectiveness of ritual in enhancing trust, bonds, and hazard awareness, key indicators of resilience (Twigg, 2009). Rituals also helped develop a sense of community and increased awareness of local culture. Regarding hazard awareness, rituals increased bonding and bridging social capital resulting in “higher trust on information from friends, relatives and close” (ibid., 2010, pp.145-146). Since ritual is present in nearly every culture (Fukuyama, 1996), it is a valuable tool for the development of social capital and resilience.

One of the most ritualized social institutions is religion (Haynes, 2007; Fukuyama, 1996). However, much like social capital, development and religion “were regarded in the West as emphatically separate concerns” since the 1960s with religion having been “progressively excluded over time” (Haynes, 2007, pp.1). Yet,

Peter Berger, an eminent sociologist of religion […] argued that ‘far from being in decline in the modern world, religion is actually
experiencing a resurgence [...] The world today is as furiously religious as it ever was’ (Berger 1999: 3).

(Haynes, 2007, pp.28)

Most people in developing countries are religious and hold worldviews of religious and secular integration. The poor tend to trust religious leaders more than politicians and consistently rate local faith communities (LFCs) higher than government on trust (Narayan et al., 2000; UNICEF, 1995). With much less division between the secular and religious in terms of worldview (Haynes, 2007), “Religious organizations are increasingly seen in development studies as important generators of social capital through building networks between people and fostering trust relationships between their members.” (Deneulin and Bano, 2009, pp.47).

For the religious, faith constitutes much of their identity and helps bring spiritual meaning to life and physical support (Sen, 1999; Narayan et al., 2000). Additionally, “the hundreds of thousands of local congregations and parachurch organizations are critical members of the social sector.” (Todd, 2011, pp.154). As such, they provide “powerful, benign socio-cultural forces for motivation, inclusiveness, participation, and sustainability” for members (Haynes, 2007, pp.62). “LFCs utilise their pre-existing local networks and buildings, plus their shared identity, social vision, religious narratives and public leaders, to mobilise, coordinate, register, train, console, encourage and help resolve conflict. This approach builds on existing community coping mechanisms and assets, harnesses social capital and thus strengthens community resilience.” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013, pp.6).

Indeed, LFCs effectively promote bonding social capital by involving members in regular, ritualized activities, bolstering trust and forming mutual obligations to one another (Brown and Brown, 2003; Fukuyama, 1996; Djupe et al., 2007). Campbell and Yonish go further regarding the Christian church stating, “as networks of reciprocity are formed among churchgoers, they become more civic-minded. That civic-mindedness, in turn, leads to a willingness to engage in voluntary activity.” (2003, pp.105). Unfortunately, as is often the case with bonding social capital, “church-based voluntary activity is not always directed to the wider community. Rather, among volunteers, the more one attends church, the less likely one is to engage in non-church voluntary activity.” (Campbell and Yonish, 2003, pp.105). On the other hand, LFCs offer convenient opportunities for
bridging with others in inter-faith dialogue and cooperation alliances. Likewise, highly institutionalized LFCs offer excellent linking opportunities with state agencies and international NGOs and funding agencies for representation, advocacy, and material resources (Wetterberg, 2004).

It is precisely the highly private-regarding and exclusive bonding capacity of LFCs that led Appleby to coin the phrase “the ambivalence of the sacred” (Appleby, 2000). This ambivalence describes two roles: (1) social motivation in the pursuit of common, construction developmental objectives and (2) social exclusion in the preservation of values from erosion by outsiders (Haynes, 2007). LFCs range “from being a balm for the body and soul to being a divisive force in a community.” (Narayan et al., 2000, pp.222). Much of this is determined by “ideological content and substantive messages that members receive” within the LFCs (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001, pp.842). While it is not the intent of this paper to debate the value of religious ideologies, it bears noting that, “Religious exclusivist truth claims can be a serious challenge to religious toleration and diversity, essential to our co-existence in a globalised world.” (ibid., 2007, pp.80). Where religion is “exclusive, encourages hatred of unbelievers, and divides people instead of bringing them together, it diminishes economic opportunities.” (Lewis, 1955, p.103).” (quoted in Deneulin and Bano, 2009, pp.35).

How, then, can the poor, living in increasingly religious societies, increase and optimize social capital with one another for disaster recovery? “Faith groups are often central to strengthening resilience and reinforcing the local processes of identity and connection that comprise the social fabric of communities disrupted by disaster or conflict.” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013, pp.3) The world’s major religions “broadly share a set of theological and spiritual values that, theoretically, should facilitate efforts in this regard.” (Haynes, 2007, pp.39). The central focus, then, of the following research was to better understand this “ambivalence of the sacred”, in particular of the local Christian church in Myanmar, and the practical implications it has for building social capital and resilience to disaster in multi-faith societies.
Chapter 4: Field Research
The role of LFCs in optimising social capital for resilience to Cyclone Nargis
Ayeyarwady River Delta, Myanmar

According to the IFRC\textsuperscript{28}, Cyclone Nargis struck the Ayeyarwady River Delta region of Myanmar on May 2, 2008, killing over 140,000 people and affecting over 2.4 million people. Nargis made landfall with winds of over 140mph, storm surge of 3.5 meters and was Myanmar’s deadliest disaster on record (EM-DAT\textsuperscript{29}). The Ayeyarwady River Delta is situated directly in the storm’s path, along Myanmar’s southern coastline midway between its borders with India and Thailand. The delta region is a low-lying patchwork of 26 townships covering 35,964 km\textsuperscript{2}, crisscrossed by thousands of streams and rivers of murky, turbid tidewaters. The estuary is home to over 8 million rice farmers, fishermen, and day-labourers, with 88\% living in rural areas\textsuperscript{30}. Decades of oppressive, military rule have ostracized Myanmar from the international community, leaving one-third of the population in the delta region impoverished. Additionally, years of inter-ethnic conflict between the three major ethnicities – Burmese, Karen/Kayin, and Rakhine – have

\textsuperscript{29} http://www.emdat.be
\textsuperscript{30} http://www.themimu.info/states_regions/ayeyarwady
hampered development efforts and caused widespread fear, anger and distrust between the Burmese Buddhist majority and the Karen/Kayin Christian and Rakhine Muslim minorities.

It is within this broader context that 14 days of field research were carried out in a representative sample of six small villages in order to better understand the role of the Christian church in supporting or hindering growth and optimisation of social capital for use in resilience to Cyclone Nargis.

Thar Pyan Gyi (TPG)

TPG, a small, remote village, straddles a backwater of the Bogale River 15km (or two hours by boat) south of the town of Bogale. Prior to Cyclone Nargis, TPG was only accessible by boat and consisted of about 50 poor households\(^{31}\) relying on fishing, rice cultivation, animal husbandry, and day labour. Only about half the village is literate. Families averaged five members and occupy housing constructed of bamboo and thatch.

\[^{31}\text{Average wages = 500-200 Kyats per day (roughly}$\mathbf{0.50-2.00}$ USD).\]
Cyclone Nargis struck TPG directly, leaving nothing standing in its wake except the Christian church (a concrete, masonry structure). 87 people were killed. High winds and several meters of flooding destroyed nearly every home and boat; except one, “John”.

“John” the boat, our mode of transportation to and from TPG.
Evidence of Vulnerability and Resilience

Population changes
While children and the elderly were initially sent away after the disaster for better care until conditions in TPG improved, the devastated village actually served as a relief centre for five surrounding villages. The population grew from 50 to 62 households. Through links with outside agencies, TPG was able to construct 60 homes in 20 days, an astonishing exhibition of community resilience in the face of such devastation and additional population burden. Population increases, however, heightened demand for food and livelihoods.

Livelihoods
Livelihoods in TPG consist of fishing, rice cultivation, animal husbandry, and day labour. Between rice seasons, over half of adults and youth in TPG temporarily relocate to larger towns, including Yangon, in search of work. Remittances, then, account for much of TPG’s income. All of these livelihoods were vulnerable to disaster as evidenced by the loss of boats for fishing, the salinization of rice paddies from storm surge, livestock deaths from exposure, and the temporary loss of available, wage-earning labour. This livelihood vulnerability indicates a lack of community resilience. Fortunately, TPG was well-linked to humanitarian NGOs and received food and material aid during the relief phase.

32 Rice season occurs between June and December (the rainy season).
TPG Today

“The current situation now is better than before Nargis.”
– Church Pastor

Many positive changes have taken place in TPG over the six years since Nargis. When asked why TPG has recovered so well, village members responded with the following reasons:

- Village unity (male and female FGDs)
- External assistance (male and female FGDs)
- Grace of God (female FGD)

In fact, they were quite accurate in their assessments, as will be seen later.

Highly Organised

Now, there are about 70 households in TPG, a highly organised village. Every home has a house number correlating to a family, each accounted for in a monthly census that tracks population changes and family needs. Village communication is done via megaphone and regular village-wide meetings. Meetings are called with slow, steady rings.
of the church bell while warnings are conveyed through a hand-cranked siren and quick rings of the church bell.

**Improved Infrastructure**

New and stronger links to external agencies have resulted in infrastructure improvements. In 2009, the Myanmar military with assistance from China, built a road from the main dock to the village, improving access for citizens and future relief, if necessary. Sturdy bridges and raised walking paths make TPG a truly “walkable neighbourhood”\(^{33}\) while rainwater catchment barrels and a cistern provide water to every home\(^{34}\). According to U Myint Win, a Burmese Buddhist resident of TPG, “In terms of infrastructure, we are doing well. But individually, in terms of business, we still have work to do. There are no job opportunities here.”\(^{35}\) TPG’s livelihood vulnerabilities severely dampen community resilience. Meanwhile, observations and interviews with key informants corroborate FGD claims that village unity and external assistance has accounted for infrastructure improvements and community resilience.

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\(^{33}\) For a detailed discussion of how walkable, mixed-use neighbourhood designs promote positive social capital, see (Leyden, 2003).

\(^{34}\) There are no wells in the village.

\(^{35}\) For interview notes, see Appendix 4.12.
Access road built by Myanmar Government, in conjunction with China.

Cistern built with the help of outside agencies.
**Htan Bin Chaung (HBC)**

The other primary research village, HBC, is slightly larger than TPG and situated on a tributary of the Pyamala River 18km (or three hours by boat) southeast of the town of Labutta. HBC is only accessible by boat and consists of 80 households relying on fishing, rice cultivation, animal husbandry, and day labour. Two-thirds are Christian, one-third is Buddhist, and 90% of the village is literate. Families average four members and occupy housing constructed of bamboo and thatch.

Cyclone Nargis decimated HBC\(^36\). High winds and three meters of flooding killed approximately 400 people (two-thirds of the village), 80% of these were women\(^37\). Every home was destroyed and 15 families were completely lost\(^38\). The church, a wood and brick structure was reduced to the foundation. The simple, wood-framed monastery was also destroyed along with all 35 boats in the village.

HBC exhibited very few signs of resilience. The utter devastation and death toll in the village made data on the relief phase scarce. Therefore, data on resilience of any kind consisted mainly of qualitative observations of the current state of recovery.

**Infrastructure Recovery**

Most shelters, provided by external church groups, have not been improved in six years, beyond the original bamboo frames and blue tarpaulins, indicating a lack of resources and self-efficacy (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003). Access to the village remains limited to boat traffic only. Surrounding villages are accessible by 20-45 minute walks. Rainwater catchment barrels (provided by UNICEF and AusAID) along with five rainwater cisterns

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\(^{36}\) Cyclone Nargis was unprecedented. One informant stated, “Our parents and grandparents never told us stories of storms like this. If they had, we would have reacted differently.”

\(^{37}\) According to one informant, “So many women died because they were physically unable to hold on.”

\(^{38}\) Every household lost at least one family member.

\(^{39}\) For interview notes, see Appendix 5.12.
provided by external church groups, all post-Nargis, provide limited water\textsuperscript{40}. An assembly hall was built adjacent to the church site in 2009 with funds from the Myanmar Campus Crusade. The church remains unreconstructed. The monastery, however, was rebuilt last year. The slow pace of infrastructure reconstruction indicates an overall lack of resources and an inability to organise collectively for recovery. One significant development, however, is the storm shelter provided by the Consortium of Dutch NGOs (CDN).

\textsuperscript{40} There are no wells in the village.
Vulnerable Livelihoods

One reason for the slow recovery and evident lack of community resilience in HBC is the vulnerability of livelihoods to cyclones. Much like TPG, livelihoods consist of rice cultivation (25 households, predominantly Christian, with 5-30 acres each), fishing (35 households, all Buddhist), day labour (30 households) and animal husbandry (15 households). While the rice paddies have recovered from salinization, the loss of boats, animals, and wage-earning labour has severely crippled HBC’s recovery capacity.

Population Loss

Loss of family members (and their labour) has meant that rice farmers must hire day labourers or rent out their fields. However, without sufficient day labourers left in the village, workers from surrounding villages are channelling wages (and, thus, potential communal resources) out of HBC. Coming-of-age youth, unable to find work in HBC, are leaving in search of jobs in Yangon. This recent phenomenon (in the last two years) is increasing reliance on remittances.

“The process that produces adapted outcomes is resilience” (Norris et al., 2008, pp.132). In this case, the only observable “adapted outcomes” in HBC is an increased reliance on labour in Yangon, remittances, and a storm shelter. With storms like Nargis also affecting
Yangon, day labour remains a vulnerable livelihood. A community whose sole adapted outcome is a storm shelter (provided by an external agency with which they have no continuous relationship) cannot be called particularly resilient.

**Social Capital**

In addition to drastically different manifestations of community resilience, both villages exhibited divergent findings of social capital. The following sections will discuss the available evidence of structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital within each village around the following evaluative scheme:

- Bonding Social capital
  - sense of community
  - social exclusion
- Bridging and Linking Social capital
  - network structures and linkages
  - social support
  - information and communication
- Citizen Participation
- Leadership

**Thar Pyan Gyi (TPG)**

Of the 70 families in TPG, 54 are Karen Christian, nine are Burmese Buddhists, and seven are a combination of Buddhist and Christian. TPG’s rich Christian heritage dates back to its establishment as a village. Prior to 1975, the few homes located in what is now called Thar Pyan Gyi were simply referred to as “The Annex” of Thar Pyan, the larger, predominantly Karen Christian village nearby. As this “annex” began to grow, a Baptist church “Thar Pyan Gyi” was established. After Cyclone Nargis, the village administrator began using the name of the church, “Thar Pyan Gyi” on official government documentation to refer to the entire village. Today, the official name of the village is Thar Pyan Gyi. In fact, the centrality of the church to the village’s sense of community and identity is a critical element of its social capital and resilience.

For instance, when asked who they trusted most in the village, six out of seven interviewees responded with “Pastor” (including three Buddhists) and the seventh responded with “Pastor’s wife”. When asked why he responded with “Pastor”, U Myint Win, a Burmese

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41 For additional notes, see Appendix 4.1.
Buddhist, replied, “Because he is honest and has integrity. Being a religious leader, he is just and he is on a righteous path. He is unbiased.”

When asked to indicate in a Venn diagram which organisations they trusted most, participants of the Buddhist/Christian mixed, all-male FGD identified the “church” as the largest disc and placed it first and closest to the village, indicating most frequent interaction. Participants of the Buddhist/Christian mixed, all-female FGD, when asked to place beans on the discs in the Venn diagram which they trusted most, placed 11/65 beans on the “church” disc (second-most overall behind the “health association”).

**Bonding and Bridging Social capital**

The strong narrative of church centrality continues when evidence of bonding social capital is considered. In fact, there is so little evidence of social exclusion from Christian church members against the “outsider” Buddhists that it appears that bonding social capital extends well beyond the church and is shared by nearly everyone in the village. In other words, the Christian and Buddhist groups within the village are so well “bridged” with one another, that they indeed appear to be “bonded.” A married couple’s responses regarding “sense of community” or “belonging” highlight the blurred lines between church and village. The husband, a Christian, stated, “I belong more to the village than to the church.” His wife, a former Buddhist, responded by saying, “The church and village are the same.”

A Buddhist couple stated that they donate to and attend the annual Christmas celebration hosted by the church and that the church hosts the annual Buddhist New Year festival and that Christians also donate to and attend. Every year, a memorial service is held for the 87 who died in Cyclone Nargis. While the memorial is held at the church, Buddhists and Christians share leadership of the event.

Iconographic observations in TPG reveal a general lack of religious and ethnic symbols, indicating diluted religious or ethnic partisanship. Buddhist flags, so prevalent in the delta region were not seen in TPG. The only iconography found in the village was the Christian cross on the roof of the church. In fact, even the “ahsin” – skirts typically worn by men – exhibited generic patterns, not Buddhist or Karen (Christian) patterns.

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42 For interview notes, see Appendix 4.12.
43 For additional information, see Appendix 4.4.
44 For additional information, see Appendix 4.5.
45 For interview notes, see Appendix 4.7.
46 For interview notes, see Appendix 4.6.
While religion can certainly promote social exclusion and an “us-them” narrative, this is not the case in TPG. The terms “sar phyu” (“white letter”)
47 and “sar mei” (“black letter”)
48 are derogatory terms used pervasively in the delta region to refer to Christians and Buddhists. These terms were not used in TPG, nor was the term “non-believer”; also a derogatory term. These social norms of exclusion are discouraged by the Pastor who stated, “People are made in the image of God. So, we are all the same.” His message of human dignity, equality, and acceptance, though rooted in a Christian worldview, help promote a strong sense of community
49. This strong sense of community is held by both groups. Immediately following Nargis, Chief Saw Thar Maung, a Christian man, heard of a newly-opened IDP camp and suggested to several Buddhist households that they relocate there fearing that the church would not have enough food to feed them. They responded, “We will stay. If we eat, we eat together. If we starve, we starve together.”
50

Other evidence of the church’s inclusive, public-regarding attitude includes the management and maintenance of communally-owned tools/equipment and the administration of a women’s group who look after the needs of the elderly, sick, and needy
51.

Because groups within TPG are so well bridged and bonded, true “bridging” between people who do not share membership within the same socio-demographic group is mostly found between TPG and other villages. Inter-village bridging social capital is strongly linked to kinship
52. These social networks are used to access social support such as education (school is in nearby village), a health clinic, loans, information, and boats for emergencies
53. This, coupled with interviewee stories of hosting neighbouring villagers after the cyclone, indicates strong bridging social capital between TPG and nearby villages.

47 “White letter” was a term originally used to refer to white, Anglo-saxon missionaries who brought Christianity to the region and was later applied to all Christians.
48 “Black letter” referred to darker-skinned Buddhists.
49 For interview notes, see Appendix 4.8.
50 For interview notes, see Appendix 4.11.
51 Because of this, the women in the village are most well-connected. Their FGD responses indicate that everyone in the village is either “family” or “friend” (Appendix 4.5).
52 Reliance Radar Graphs from the Buddhist/Christian mixed all-male and all-female FGDs each indicate a high reliance on “family” and “friends” living in villages within 10 miles of TPG; 20-45 minutes away by boat (see Appendices 4.4 and 4.5).
53 For interview notes, see Appendix 4.9.
Linking Social capital

The church in TPG also figures prominently in discussions of linking social capital. As a “hub” of TPG’s various networks (Norris et al., 2008, pp.138), the church can link those in its network vertically, across political power differentials.54 The church’s vertical network includes the Myanmar Baptist Convention (an association of nearly 5,000 churches nationwide with nearly 1,500,000 members) and all its vast resources.55 Additionally, the church has linked the village with NGOs like Good Neighbour International (GNI) and others.56 Success of the church-GNI partnership has sparked interest from others like Welt Hunger Hilfe (German Agro Action, GAA) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to work with TPG. In fact, one interviewee, when asked what facilitated recovery most, replied, “Support from outside” and that “leaders of our community went out and connected with others.” Both FGD groups indicated a high reliance on outside help; 49/131 and 82/140; respectively. The vast majority of these social ties were with “others”; 10/49 and 54/82 respectively.58 TPG is, by all accounts, a well-connected village. Yet, individual communication with the outside world is severely hampered. The only method of communication is via human messengers and one shortwave radio. It serves the entire community and is housed and stewarded by the church. No one owns cellular phones. So, even communication with the outside world is a truly “social” affair. Villagers must rely on social connections to send messages via a messenger or to utilize the radio at the church. The church clearly acts as a “hub” in this broader network (Norris et al., 2008, pp.138).

Leadership

This increased social capital is largely due to the leadership of the church pastor. Interviewee responses indicate a high degree of respect and appreciation of the pastor.59 The Pastor ensured the equitable distribution of disaster relief and even feared that the Christians in TPG would view this as an abuse of his power. Stemming from his reaction to the previous pastor’s detrimental, highly exclusive, discriminatory actions, the Pastor strives to remain unbiased and inclusive, stating “Because we can’t go far [figuratively regarding development], my vision is to cut a path and invite the village to walk it. As we

54 See the organizational chart in Appendix 2.1.
55 Refer to Appendix 2.4.
56 For a list of other organisations, refer to Appendices 4.4 and 4.5.
57 For interview notes, see Appendix 4.12.
58 FGDs defined “others” as “Koreans”, “Sri Lankans”, “Philippinos”, “Americans”, etc. See Reliance Radar Graphs from both FGDs in Appendices 4.4 and 4.5.
59 For interview notes, see Appendices 4.6, 4.7, 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12.
walk it, the path gets wider and smoother.” Perhaps the social capital resulting from his leadership has helped to widen and pave the path to resilience.

The outside assistance deemed so critical to recovery by villagers was able to flow relatively unimpeded from NGOs, government, and church associations to the networks of recovering villagers, all the way down to the minority Buddhists, elderly, sick, and needy, facilitated by the galvanizing, unifying presence of an inclusive, non-discriminatory “hub” in the TPG network: the church (Norris et al., 2008, pp.138).

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60 The previous pastor claimed that only he could own a store in the village, appropriated leftover wood from the construction of the church to build a boat for his private use, and expelled several members from the church for donating to Buddhists in TPG.

61 For interview notes, see Appendix 4.8.
Htan Bin Chaung (HBC)

Before continuing, it is important to reiterate that the social and economic fabric of HBC were decimated by Cyclone Nargis. The massive loss of life and property meant that the inter-and-intra-village networks and resources were no longer available for recovery purposes. In other words, if social capital is a three-legged stool supported by bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, two of the legs – bonding and bridging capital – were cut from underneath it.

Indeed, there was no mention of any physical resources at all when asked what helped them recover most. The aggregate responses from FGD participants were:

- Attitudes (compassion, humility, etc.)
- Minds (intellect)
- Blessings from God

One female FGD participant highlighted the despair of having no one to rely on, “I have no other family members left. They were all killed.” Another FGD participant stated that he couldn’t rely on friends or family in the village “because we were all in the same situation after Nargis”. The chief of the village agreed, “When we look around, we see only people like us who have lost everything.”

Bonding and Bridging Social capital

Even if more villagers had survived and more resources had been spared destruction, it seems doubtful that villagers would have been able to socially access those resources as existing networks were extremely “private-regarding”, exclusive, and discriminatory. Buddhists in HBC only spoke Burmese while Christians spoke Sagaw and Pwo Karen, effectively dividing fellow villagers. Much of the exclusion and prejudice between the two-thirds Christian and one-thirds Buddhist population can be linked to two things:

- the “ideological content and substantive messages that [Christian] members receive” (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001, pp.842)
- livelihood differentiation between Buddhist and Christian households and the resulting physical seclusion

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62 For FGD notes, see Appendix 5.5.
63 For interview notes, see Appendix 5.9.
Ideological Content and Teachings

The previous pastor stated unequivocally, “Prejudice still remains because of religious teachings that only faith in Jesus will save you. If you don’t believe, you are Satan.” This is a strong statement and illustrates how messages like this of religious ideology can severely decrease the likelihood of forming ties between tightly bonded Christian and Buddhist groups. On one hand, the current pastor says, “There is a sense of unity within our church.” On the other hand, with the exception of the occasional festival, funeral, or birthday party, very little interaction across the religious divide happens between Christian and Buddhist. When asked why the church disc was placed so far away from the Buddhist community (indicating very little interaction) in the Venn diagram exercise, a female Buddhist FGD participant responded simply: “This is not our religion.” Religious discrimination is prominent in HBC.

In contrast to the pastor’s leadership in TPG, this statement describes HBC’s church Pastor prior to Nargis:

> The previous pastor does not want us to associate with the Buddhists. Whatever he says is the rule. […] The pastor is my uncle. He says they [Buddhists] come here to take our women. Because he is “pastor”, what he says goes. He is our elder. He is older. And, he has a wider perspective. There are some good Burmese and some bad Burmese. Maybe he is trying to protect us. (current church Pastor)

This exclusionary approach to church leadership is corroborated by testimony from the village chief of the top-down, authoritative leadership: “The Pastor maintained power and control in the village by refusing the share information and continuing to make decisions autonomously.”

Livelihood Differentiation

Based on data collected in HBC, fishermen in the village are exclusively Buddhist. By contrast, rice farmers in HBC are almost exclusively Christian. The physical layout of

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64 See Appendix 5.7.
65 For interview notes, see Appendix 5.12.
66 Traditional church governance required conferring with church elders. For interview notes, see Appendix 5.9.
67 Buddhists engage in animal husbandry and day labour to a lesser extent.
the village is a direct result of this livelihood differentiation. Buddhist households, and consequently the monastery, are clustered along the riverbank for ease of access to fishing. Christian households, and consequently the church, are clustered farther from the river and closer to the rice paddies (see map below). This physical separation by distance results in essentially two communities within a village; further exacerbating the lack of social interaction and resulting in low bridging capital.

Ideology and livelihood differentiation translated directly to perceptions of trust in the community. When asked which organisation they trusted most, both Buddhist FGDs rated the church dead last. By contrast, the Christian male FGD rated the monastery dead last in trust with 7/200 votes and the Christian female FGD did not even identify the monastery as a disc in the Venn diagram! While distinct religious groups are well-bonded, the evident social segregation of each group indicates very little inter-religious bridging social capital in TPG. The current Pastor’s sentiments, however, indicate a positive outlook:

68 Only one Buddhist household farms rice.
69 Buddhist male FGD gave two votes out of 70 to the church, tying for last with the “Farmers Group”, which also has an almost exclusively Christian membership. The Buddhist female FGD gave the church six out of 30 votes. See Appendices 5.5 and 5.7.
70 Conversely, in the Christian male and female FGDs, the church predictably drew 104/200 and 53/160 votes respectively. See Appendices 5.6 and 5.8.
I don’t think we have to worry about the Buddhist danger. Nargis killed so many from the community, both Christian and Buddhist, that we are starting fresh with relationships. All the alcoholic Buddhists who bothered us are all gone. They went to another village. The Buddhist girls who misbehaved are also all gone.\textsuperscript{71}

**Linking Social capital**

Therefore, the remaining third leg of the stool, linking social capital, is critical to HBC’s, albeit limited, recovery. Communication with the outside world, even more limited than TPG, consists of only a handful of cellular phones and an occasional messenger. Vertical linkages must, then, come through institutional networks. An examination of Reliance Radar Graphs from each FGD illustrates stark differences between Buddhists and Christians in HBC\textsuperscript{72}.

*Buddhist Men*\textsuperscript{73}

Male Buddhist FGD participants indicated that they did not rely upon friends for recovery from Nargis, but rather upon “others” located outside a 100 mile radius of the village (47/70 votes). Reliance upon fellow HBC villagers was least at 8/70. This is attributable to daily commerce of male Buddhist villagers with others well-outside the village, male-dominated interaction with government officials, and monastery connections. Given the disconnect between Buddhists and the Christian church in HBC discussed earlier, it is unlikely that connections with outsiders came via the church for them.

*Buddhist Women*\textsuperscript{74}

Female Buddhist FGD participants indicated no reliance on others outside the 100 mile radius, but a heavy reliance upon family and friends within HBC and surrounding villages (24/30). This is attributable to a more domestic daily life and little interaction with government or monastery leadership outside the village.

*Christian Men*\textsuperscript{75}

Male Christian FGD participants indicated an overwhelming reliance on others outside the 100 mile radius of HBC (65/120 votes) and only one vote for “other” within the

\textsuperscript{71} For interview notes, see Appendix 5.12.
\textsuperscript{72} See Appendices 5.5-5.8.
\textsuperscript{73} See Appendix 5.5.
\textsuperscript{74} See Appendix 5.6.
\textsuperscript{75} See Appendix 5.7.
village. While none of the Buddhist FGD participants indicated reliance upon friends or family outside the 100 mile radius of HBC, Christian men indicated slightly more (14/120 and 13/120, respectively). This is likely attributable to strong bonds between family and friends within the church and the linkages that the church facilitates with the larger Myanmar Baptist Convention.

Christian Women

Female Christian FGD participants, on the other hand, indicated a more even mix of reliance on people within the village, within a 10 mile radius, and within a 100 mile radius (37/170, 52/170, and 81/170, respectively). A more domestic life and increased involvement with children and youth account for the increase in family and friends within HBC and surrounding villages.

Summary

Differentiation in vertical linkages, in HBC’s case, falls along gender lines with women in the village relying more on family and friends nearby and men relying mostly on “others” well outside the village. The socio-cultural factor of male dominance in this society played a major role here. Regardless, linking social capital upon which each religious group relied for recovery seems to be found in different sources. As evidenced by FGD statements, Christians and Buddhists differ in opinion on where their assistance comes from, with Buddhists preferring to access assistance from a majority-Buddhist government and Christians staying within church and NGO networks:

- Female Christian FGD participant: “Because of the church, we have connections with other people. If outside assistance comes, it usually comes through the church.”
- Female Buddhist FGD participant: “We can rely on government because for every situation we have to rely on them. They are dependable and consistent.”

In short, linking social capital for each religious group is distinct and separate. This, coupled with low bridging social capital between religious groups, diminishes greatly the probability that the resources accessed vertically by each group will be shared across religious boundaries. Indeed, this differentiation has resulted in poor overall recovery for HBC.

76 See Appendix 5.8.
77 See Appendices 5.7 and 5.8.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

“There is no generalised formula to put social ties to use in development.” (Portes and Landolt, 2000, pp.547). To contribute to this end, this research sought to understand the impact of local faith communities (LFCs) on social capital and the production of resilience to disasters by (1) understanding the role of LFCs, particularly the Christian church, in local resilience and coping strategies of villages in the Ayeyarwady River Delta of Myanmar as they recover from Cyclone Nargis, (2) placing these strategies within broader existing theories and frameworks of disaster resilience and social capital to better understand how these concepts interrelate in practice and, (3) ultimately, identify characteristics of these local churches which support or hinder the optimisation of social capital in order to inform future resilience-building programs of NGOs working with LFCs in the region.

To accomplish those objectives, authoritative academic literature was reviewed to better understand resilience and social capital as interrelated concepts. As shown, “For developing a theory of community resilience, a highly relevant theme is social capital.” (Norris et al., 2008, pp.137). In fact, Aldrich clarifies community resilience as “the ability of a neighbourhood, ward, or area to engage in positive, networked adaptation after a crisis...through coordinated efforts and cooperative activities.” (2012, pp.7). If the basic idea of “social capital” is that one’s family, friends, and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and/or leveraged for material gain” (Woolcock, 2000, pp.22), then it naturally follows that increased levels of social capital would result in more resilient communities. However, further research reveals that, in fact, social capital has a “dark side” (Putnam, 2000). Chambers and Kopstein highlight the main criticism of social capital: when communities develop unbalanced levels of bonding social capital, they become “particularist” and exclusive of others outside their tightly bonded groups (2001, pp.841). At a minimum, “Private-regarding” groups, as described by Banfield and Wilson, only assist those within the accepted group (1963, pp.224-242). Additionally,

if these associations are sectional in their goals and too exclusionary in their membership, this may remain primarily bonding social capital only, and thus may impede the articulation of collective interests and the development of extensive bridging and linking social capital.

(Szreter and Woolcock, 2003, pp.10)
For the marginalised, linking social capital can be difficult or nearly impossible to access. Conversely, overreliance upon linking social capital for support effectively bypasses members of local networks, depriving them of future bonding and bridging capital.

Clearly, then, optimisation of social capital is critical — finding a healthy balance between the private-regarding bonding social capital and the public-regarding, bridging and linking social capital (Woolcock, 2000; Aldrich, 2012). In order to optimise the mix of social capital in a community, close attention must be paid to the highly contextualised, local network structures and the “hubs” who connect groups to the wider populace (Norris et al., 2008, pp.138).

With religion and religious leaders increasing in prominence and influence among developing communities worldwide (Haynes, 2007; Deneulin and Bano, 2009; Sen, 1999; Narayan et al., 2000; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013), local faith communities (LFCs) “are increasingly seen in development studies as important generators of social capital through building networks between people and fostering trust relationships between their members.” (Deneulin and Bano, 2009, pp.47).

However, LFCs range “from being a balm for the body and soul to being a divisive force in a community.” (Narayan et al., 2000, pp.222). Field research in the Ayeyarwady River Delta region of Myanmar has highlighted positive and negative contributions from LFCs, the Christian church in particular, to the optimisation of social capital. “The question is about whether their stated values, beliefs, creed, agenda, ideology, or platform is clearly incompatible with a belief in equal moral consideration” (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001, pp.840) and how those are presented and reinforced by church leadership.

Based on data and findings from the field research, several recommendations for improving community resilience through social capital can be made for LFCs and their leaders. These are not intended to be comprehensive, but represent ways to contribute to an optimised mix of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital.
Recommendations

Recommendations to LFCs and their leaders:

- Seek to be inclusive and public-regarding of other LFC:
  - Care for the needs of all elderly, sick, or needy, regardless of religious affiliation.
  - Encourage reciprocal donations between LFCs.
  - Share resources with other LFCs, where possible.
  - Seek to include other LFCs in festivals and events. Encourage reciprocation.
  - Network/connect with outside sources of help and be equitable in resource distribution to all LFCs in the community, especially in disaster recovery phases.
  - Strategize with religious leaders and village elders for a community-wide vision.
  - Where possible, encourage cooperation and collaboration between those with different livelihoods.

Recommendations to NGOs:

- Include social capital assessment and analysis in appraisal methodology for programming; specifically focusing on the roles of LFCs in the target community
- Engage with religious leaders and LFCs:
  - Acknowledge the critical role of LFCs in the socio-economic fabric of communities.
  - Provide leadership training to religious leaders
  - Engage in conflict-resolution programming, where applicable
  - Provide space for inter-faith dialogue
Endnotes

i “Community resiliency research should also be comparative in the sense that researchers and what would appear on the surface to be a stubborn ability to survive despite circumstances and external pressures to the contrary.” (Brown and Kulig, 1996/97, pp. 46)

ii “‘Sense of community’ is an attitude of bonding (trust and belonging) with other members of one’s group or locale (Perkins et al. 2002, p. 37), including mutual concerns and shared values. [...] It is also believed to be an attribute of resilient communities (Ahmed et al. 2004; Landau and Saul 2004; Pfefferbaum et al. 2005; Tse and Liew 2004).” (Norris et al., 2008, pp. 139)

iii “‘Citizen participation’ is the engagement of community members in formal organizations, including religious congregations, school and resident associations, neighborhood watches, and self-help groups (Perkins et al. 2002; Wandersman 2000). [...] Citizen participation is widely believed to be a fundamental element for community resilience.” (Norris et al., 2008, pp. 139-140)

iv “Longstaff (2005) highlighted the importance of “keystones” or “hubs,”—“super-connected” network members who link one network to another (see also Fullilove and Saul 2006).” (Norris et al., 2008, pp. 138)

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vii “Other agencies such as the World Bank, USAID, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), AusAID, OECD and numerous UN agencies have also given resilience a prominent place in their disaster recovery discourse (Béné et al., 2012; Weijer, 2013).”

viii “Longstaff (2005) highlighted the importance of “keystones” or “hubs,”—“super-connected” network members who link one network to another (see also Fullilove and Saul 2006).” (Norris et al., 2008, pp. 138)

ix Berkes defines “social memory” specifically as “institutional learning that emerges out of society’s response to previous crises” and is “stored in the memory of individuals and communities.” (Berkes, 2007, pp. 287).

xii Bourdieu defined social capital from an individual’s perspective while Coleman took the perspective of the network itself and its “enabling action” (Wetterberg, 2004, pp. 3). Coleman also argued that the network benefited as much, if not more, from individual investment as the individual himself.

xiiiConspicuously absent from the definition is any mention of resources exchanged through the network. To Putnam, the goods or services exchanged within the network are completely irrelevant conceptually to the definition of social capital.
“In particular, Coleman’s functional definition leaves unclear whether social capital refers to the social structures that individuals participate in or the benefits that flow through the structures: ‘Defining social capital functionally makes it impossible to separate what it is from what it does (Edwards and Foley 1997, p. 669).” (Wetterberg, 2004, pp.3).

Granovetter supports this by citing “empirical evidence that the stronger the tie connecting two individuals, the more similar they are, in various ways (Berscheid and Walster 1969, pp. 69-91; Bramel 1969, pp. 9-16; Brown 1965, pp. 71-90; Laumann 1968; Newcomb 1961, chap. 5; Precker 1952).” (1973, pp. 1362).

Szreter and Woolcock even go so far as to call this “an important conceptual revision within social capital theory” (2003, pp.5; emphasis added).

Carron and Brawley define a group as “two or more individuals who possess a common identity, have common goals and objectives, share a common fate, exhibit structured patterns of interaction and modes of communication, hold common perceptions about group structure, are personally and instrumentally interdependent, reciprocate interpersonal attraction, and consider themselves to be a group. (Carron & Hausenblas, 1998, pp. 13-14).” (Carron and Brawley, 2000, pp.94).

“Trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community. […] The group, moreover, has to adopt common norms as a whole before trust can become generalized among its members.” (Fukuyama, 1996, pp.26-27).

Cohesion has “historically…been considered to be the most important small group variable (Golembiewski, 1962; Lott & Lott, 1965)” (Carron and Brawley, 2000, pp.89).

Cohesion is not a group trait, but a group property that “can (and most likely does) change over time” and it “has an affective dimension. The social bonding and/or task unity that develops in groups is pleasing to members.” (ibid., 2000, pp.95). Carron and Brawley go on to use the terms “unity” and “cohesiveness” interchangeably (2000, pp.95).

The extent to which a “community is accustomed to consensus building by having meetings and discussions among community members.” (Nakagawa and Shaw, 2004, pp.4).

Baron et al., in response to this “theoretical indefiniteness” (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993, pp.1322), “recognize the relative immaturity of social capital as a concept” and argue that the “qualitative” and intangible nature of social capital, much like its conceptual cousin human capital, means that it has as yet “failed to attain a proper status of accepted intelligibility” (Baron et al., 2002, pp.24).

Arrow dismisses the term based on three unfulfilled requirements to be called “capital”: “(a) extension in time; (b) deliberate sacrifice in the present for future benefit; and (c) alienability (Arrow, 1999, pp.4). He particularly objects to (b) claiming that “People may get jobs through networks of friendship or acquaintance, but they do not, in many cases join the networks for that purpose.”, thus claiming that “deliberate sacrifice” was not purely for economic reasons (ibid., 1999, pp.3-4).

According to Portes and Sensenbrenner, we are sociologically predisposed to attribute positive societal effects to causes of social capital and negative consequences to “the behavior of homo economicus” (1993, pp.1338).

Amy Gutmann, cites the KKK in the United States as a particularist, private-regarding, “bad” group: “Among its members, the Ku Klux Klan may cultivate solidarity and trust, …[but]…the associational premises of these solidaristic ties are hatred, degradation, and denigration of fellow citizens and fellow human beings.” (Gutmann quoted in Chambers and Kopstein, 2001, pp.841).

“A multi-dimensional approach allows us to argue that it is different combinations of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital that are responsible for the range of outcomes we observe in the literature, and to incorporate a dynamic component in which
optimal combinations change over time.” (Woolcock, 2000, pp.26; emphasis added).

**xxvii** Not only does optimized social capital offer “costless” ways for the poor to help themselves, but it has also been empirically linked to higher overall mental, emotional, and physical health (Szreter and Woolcock, 2003).

**xxviii** However, “a collection of resilient individuals does not guarantee a resilient community (e.g., Pfefferbaum et al. 2005; Rose 2004).” (Norris et al., 2007, pp.128).

**xxix** In fact, Dynes points out that “social capital is the only form of capital which is renewed and enhanced during the emergency period.” (2005, pp.7).

**xxx** Aldrich supports this by stating, “Empirical studies of the effect of aid and government expenditure have failed to provide evidence of a causal link between more aid money and enhanced recovery.” (Aldrich, 2012, pp.9).

**xxxi** “Social support refers to social interactions that provide individuals with actual assistance and embed them into a web of social relationships perceived to be loving, caring, and readily available in times of need (Barrera 1986).” (Norris et al., 2008, pp.138)

It often takes the form of “information, financial help, and physical assistance” as well as “tools, living space, and other help” (Aldrich, 2012, pp.45).

**xxii** (Bettini, 2012), (Black et al., 2012), (GOS, 2011), and (Myers, 2001), to name a few.

**xxiii** Kates et al., in their research on the reconstruction of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina, found that, “The far-flung poor are also less able to participate in post flood deliberations” (2006, pp.14657).

**xxiv** **Linking social capital** is critical for accessing additional, diverse, and locally-unavailable resources on the order of magnitude necessary for disaster recovery (Buckland and Rahman, 1999; Nakagawa and Shaw, 2004). These are often held only be governments and NGOs.

**xxv** Haynes goes on to say, “According to Berger, processes of ‘modernisation’ did not weaken religion – but actually strengthened it, often increasing its public significance […] with social, political, economic and developmental influence in many parts of the globe, especially the developing world.” (2007, pp.28).
Appendices
Appendix 1 Trip Itinerary

May 11, 2014
Depart Oxford, England

May 12, 2014
Arrive to Yangon, Myanmar
Orientation with Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC), Yangon, Myanmar
Overnight in Yangon, Myanmar

May 13, 2014
Travel to Pyapon, Myanmar (car)
Meetings with Pyapon church leaders
Travel to Bogale, Myanmar (car)
Debrief with RA
Overnight in Bogale, Myanmar

May 14, 2014
Travel to Thar Pyan Gyi, Myanmar (boat)
Semi-structured interview with Pastor of church
Mixed Male Focus Group Discussion
Mixed Female Focus Group Discussion
Travel to Bogale, Myanmar (boat)
Overnight in Bogale, Myanmar

May 15, 2014
Travel to Thar Pyan Gyi, Myanmar (boat)
Semi-structured interviews
Transect Walk of TPG
Further discussions with Pastor of church
Travel to Myaungmya, Myanmar (boat, car)
Debrief with RA
Overnight in Myaungmya, Myanmar

May 16, 2014
Travel to War Taloke, Myanmar (boat)
Village-wide meeting
Meeting with church elders
Transect walk
Travel to Myaungmya, Myanmar (boat)
Debrief with RA
Overnight in Myaungmya, Myanmar

May 17, 2014
Travel to Palaw Neh Moo, Myanmar (boat)
Village-wide meeting
Meeting with church elders
Transect walk
Travel to Myaungmya, Myanmar (boat)
Debrief with RA
Overnight in Myaungmya, Myanmar
May 18, 2014
Travel to Nant Hta Minn Gone, Myanmar (car)
Attend church services with village
Meeting with church elders
Transect walk
Meeting with village
Travel to Labutta, Myanmar (car)
Debrief with RA
Overnight in Labutta, Myanmar

May 19, 2014
Travel to Htan Bin Chaung, Myanmar (boat)
Semi-structured interviews
Male Buddhist and Christian focus group discussions
Travel to Labutta, Myanmar (boat)
Debrief with RA
Overnight in Labutta, Myanmar

May 20, 2014
Travel to Htan Bin Chaung, Myanmar (boat)
Semi-structure interviews
Female Buddhist and Christian focus group discussions
Transect Walk
Travel to Labutta, Myanmar (boat)
Debrief with RA
Overnight in Labutta, Myanmar

May 21, 2014
Travel to Yangon, Myanmar (car)
Debrief with RA
Review field notes and triangulation of data
Semi-structured interview with female Pastor of HBC church
Overnight in Yangon, Myanmar

May 22, 2014
Continued review at MBC offices with RA and other staff
Overnight in Yangon, Myanmar

May 23, 2014
Semi-structured interview with wife of TPG Pastor
Semi-structured interview with boy from TPG
Further discussion with Pastor of TPG
Semi-structured interview with Rev. Mahn Tin Aye (MBC)
Overnight in Yangon, Myanmar

May 24, 2014
Depart Yangon, Myanmar
Arrive to Oxford, England
Appendix 2.1 General Contextual Notes

- Road infrastructure in Delta region has vastly improved in last 10-15 years, improving access to/from villages.
  - In past, only access by boat (ex: Yangon to Laputta took 48 hours by boat)
  - Better for BRIDGING and LINKING cap.
  - CHECK INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES IN DELTA REGION

Myanmar Baptist Convention (a national convention)
- 18 Conventions (Some are based on language and some on region.
  - See Word documents sent in email from MBC guy
    - English version has outdated numbers on churches and associations
    - Burmese version (to be translated by S’Lont) has update numbers.

VIOLENCE:
- Late 1940s
- Continuous violations and torture
- 1991 – Continuous, on and off, in Bogale and Laputta area – most pastors taken to jail

VILLAGE TRACT ADMINISTRATOR:
- Each village has a chief. The Administrator of the village tract rotates from chief to chief periodically.

![Organizational Chart](image)

*(Typical village organisational chart, triangulated from several interviews with chiefs, elders, and pastors)*
Appendix 2.2 General Cultural Notes

- Men eat first while women fan. Only for meals with special visitors.
- Burmese hospitality is famous (social capital)?
- Always give and shake hands with two hands (one hand touching the right arm).
- When walking between people, show respect/reverence by making yourself lower than them (bow).
  - The two points above illustrate a HUGE emphasis placed on respect for those older than you and in higher positions than you. VERY socially embedded…almost a habit or instinct.
- Don’t touch the head (sacred).
  
  “Saw” means “Mr.”

  “Thra” means “Sir” or “Teacher”

  - White Letter refers to Christians – the white missionary who brought the Bible (scripture – “letter”)
  - Black Letter refers to Buddhists

Buddhists chant in Bali language
- Over loudspeakers in towns and cities
- “Sacred language”
- Most cannot understand it…only the monks.
- As it fills the air, it cleanses the air of evil spirits and wards off evil spirits.
- Usually not found in villages – not enough money for a loudspeaker

*Perhaps, if it really were “sacred”, villages would find a way to afford the loudspeaker. Perhaps this is just a propaganda tool to serve the Buddhists in power by ensuring that Buddhism retains its grip on the population?*

  “Tar Tu Sar Kaw Sar” – *resilience* in Sagaw Karen

  “Sa Hgant Sa Khan” – *resilience* in Pwo Karen
Appendix 2.3 Local Iconography

Buddhist:
- Flag
- Red and orange robes
- Water stations along side of road for everyone (special benefits for Buddhists)
• Temples

• Monasteries
• Shrines
• Statues of 2 elephants at entrance to monastery
• “969”
• Chanting over loudspeaker in…
• Colors: red, orange, dark brown
• Banana
• Coconut
• Bo Tree

Karen:
• Flag
• Horn
• Drum
• Ahsin (skirt) pattern – Karen will sometimes where the “generic” pattern, but Buddhists would NEVER wear the Karen pattern (source: S’Lont)

THAR PYAN GYI
• No Buddhist flags present anywhere in village
• Crosses on church
Appendix 2.4 Documentation provided by Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC)

Myanmar Baptist Convention
Christian Social Service and Development Department

A Brief Presentation About CSSDD

1. Background: About Myanmar Baptist Convention

The History of the Myanmar Baptist Convention was started with the arrival of committed missionary couple, Dr. Adoniram and Ann Judson from USA, on July 13, 1813. The Gospel spread very slowly among the Bamar Buddhists. But joyously accepted by the Kayins, Kachins, Chins, and other ethnic groups who adhered to traditional faiths. The rapidly growing number of Christians finally led to the formation of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention on the 15th December of 1865, later known as Burma Baptist Convention, and today as Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC).

Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC) is the largest church denomination in Myanmar with 4,722 local churches across the country. Being a local faith-based organization, MBC enjoys significant influence in the country and has vast spread and reach across the nation. It is coordination body comprised with 18 Language and Regional Conventions and 2 direct affiliated churches at present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Language and Regional Conventions</th>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>Churches</th>
<th>Members (total)</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
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<td>80</td>
<td>21900</td>
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<td>2)</td>
<td>Asho Chin Baptist Convention</td>
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<td>13006</td>
<td>162</td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>Eastern Shan Baptist Convention</td>
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<td>11648</td>
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<td>Kayin Baptist Convention</td>
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<td>Liu Baptist Convention</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Myanmar Baptist Convention 107  4,722  1,458,960  9,877

(Updated data on churches in the Myanmar Baptist Convention nationwide.)
(Slightly dated data on churches in the Myanmar Baptist Convention nationwide.)
MYANMAR BAPTIST CONVENTION

Christian Social Service and Development Department (CSSDD)

Office Address:
Christian Social Service and Development Department (CSSDD)
Myanmar Baptist Convention
143 Minye Kyawswa Road
Lamadaw, Yangon 11131
Myanmar

Phone (Office): +95 1 212502; 95 1 221465
Email: mbc-cssdd@gmail.com
http:\\: www.mbc-1813eng.org

Director: Mahn Aung Zaw Moe
\+95 095 096016

Associate Director: Rev. Mang Khan Sum
\+95 094 50034132

Assistant Director: Saw Harry Htang Nau
\+95 095 096017

OUR VALUE
1. Christ Centered
2. Commitment
3. Stewardship
4. Transparency
5. Participation and cooperation
6. Responsibility and Accountability
7. Holistic Development

OUR VISION
The church is active for Holistic Mission.

OUR MISSION
MBC-CSSDD mobilizes and facilitates network among churches: facilitate communication and create possibilities for information sharing, resource sharing, and collaboration.

The CSSDD is committed to the Ministry Diakonia since 1997, Working with 18 Language and Regional Conventions all over the country in Myanmar.
STRATEGIES

Strategy (1): Empowering the church to holistic mission
MBC-CSSDD will create opportunities for churches to mobilize each other, sharing and net-working about existing integral mission.

Strategy (2): Creating opportunities for learning
Conventions, associations and other partner organizations of CSSDD are already doing high quality integral mission. MBC-CSSDD will organize churches and partners who are doing integral mission or interested in doing integral mission, to share information, have discussions and go on exchange visits to each other’s churches and mission work.

Strategy (3): Identify and share local resources
CSSDD will develop and implement a system to help villages and local churches to identify local resources, share programs, mobilize and help each other effectively.

Strategy (4): Develop a management system in CSSDD based on Vision, Mission, and Values
CSSDD will build an internal system based on CSSDD’s vision, mission and values as a tool to help make decisions throughout all of CSSDD’s work.

Strategy (5): Using appreciative feedback systems for learning and growth
Develop an appreciative feedback system and use with partner organizations to accomplish CSSDD’s vision and mission. Using the system to give appreciative feedback, identify strengths and ask appreciative questions.
Appendix 2.5 Documentation provided by Tearfund UK

Emails exchanged between Tearfund UK, Josh Ayers, and RA S’Lont Mun (sensitive information has been redacted):

From: "S' Lont Mun" <slont.mun@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Good morning!!
Date: September 9, 2014 at 9:20:26 AM EDT
To: Josh Ayers <ayers.josh@gmail.com>

Hi Josh,

Good afternoon!

Guess what, I am now in Tearfund for the orientation. My trip was delayed due to the visa problem.

I thought of you and Alison intensely on the 17th of last month. I decided to communicate you later knowing that you might be busy with the baby. How is your child? Is that a son or a daughter? How is Alison doing. Please tell me more when you have a chance.

I could contact to Tharpyan but not to Htanbin Chaung. There was no looting and big violence after the Nargis. But there were some small stealing in the community. There was also a warning through the mobile loud speakers. But people didn't give much attention on it.

The domographic of Wartalote was same as what you receive in the paper. I talked to the director of that association and he referred to the document that was given to you.

I will be here for the next 10 days and hopefully we will be able to talk at some point.

Have a great day Bro.,

S Lont

On Sep 3, 2014 7:13 PM, "Josh Ayers" <ayers.josh@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello S'Lont,

Good afternoon from the USA. I was wondering if you had a chance to speak with the Pastors? Also, I was interested in the War Taloke demographics.

In addition, I was also wondering if and how Thar Pyan Gyi and Htan Bin Chaung villages were warned of the approaching cyclone.

Thanks,

Josh Ayers
Hi Josh,

I met with Pastor Htoo a while ago. I talked to him last week on phone. I learned that he is coming this week and I waited until today to have more information about your question.

Yes, there were two groups of people in the village after Nargis. One group cared only about themselves. They were busy going around collecting valuables from the dead bodies while other were busy with reconstructing the community immediately after Nargis. They did get some valuable items, but they use up for themselves in various ways, including illegal activities. They finished everything within two years. The other group joined the pastor to rebuild the community. They also worked with people from outside to mobilize the resources. Along the process they receive some training and their capacity were increased dramatically. In the mean time the situation of other group worsen and eventually many people from that group join the second group. The first group bounced back slower while the second group bounced back quicker.

I tried to get in the touch with the people who know about Wartalote. But not successful yet. I will get in touch with you soon with some more updates.

Blessings to you,
S Lont

On 29/05/2014, Josh Ayers <ayers.josh@gmail.com> wrote:
S'Lont,

Good morning! I hope your trip has gone well. I was continuing to process my notes from the trip and ran across an entry where the Pastor of Thar Pyan Gyi said that there were 2 groups in the village: those who only cared for themselves and those who cared for others. He went on to say that those who cared for others had bounced back from Nargis better than the other group.

Can you ask him to elaborate on that a little more? Why does he think they have bounced back better? What has that meant for the village?

There's no rush. Just get back to me when you have time. Thanks brother!

Josh
Hey, Josh,

Thanks for your kind note. I just returned from the trip yesterday and I really got a great trip. The place was very pleasant. I still think a lot about our trip. It was such a wonderful trip with a lot of new experiences for me.

I used to have a skype address. But now I forgot my account because I haven't used it for a long time. I will try to reclaim it and will let you know.

Yes, the people in Thar Pyan mainly use Burmese language. But Karen family often use their own language in their circle. I could say this because I heard they spoke broken Karen in the community.

I also remember the pastor mentioned two groups of people recovering from the disaster, one work for their own and another work with others. I will call him for the elaboration and will let you know.

I wish you all the best for the completion of the report. Please kindly get in touch for any questions that you have.

Best, S Lont

On 29/05/2014, Josh Ayers <ayers.josh@gmail.com> wrote:

S'Lont,

Also, I have a note here that the dominant language in Thar Pyan Gyi is Burmese and that not much Karen is spoken. Is that correct?

Thanks,

Josh

____________________________________
Notes from Pwo Natta Min Gone Village (meaning white flower on the hill) PKC Myaung Mya Association

Summary:
- key learning is importance of bible study - they study during the week in groups and then come together to learn from each other on a Sunday
- lots of joint initiatives - particularly significant is building primary school with community
- facilitators are sharing knowledge and vision with churches in other villages which are starting similar approaches. This has meant less personal profit (e.g. sharing the technology of bamboo vinegar) but for community benefit (this year many households producing so the facilitator cannot sell much compared with last year).

Notes:

Facilitator - Pastor XXXX, Trainer - Saw XXXX.

The church in Pwo Natta Min Gone was established in 1926. During the civil war in 1958, it was almost destroyed along with all the other houses in the village. However because it was used as a school building it was spared. After a few months, families came back to the village and rebuilt their homes and resettled until now.

There are now 80 families in the community and 26 belong to the Christian group. The Christian group is Pwo Kayin and the non Christian community is a mix of Bamar and Karen Buddhists.

Pastor XXXX (meaning brave one) has led the church since 2001.

Saw XXXX recounted that Eden started in 2011. At the first training there were many learnings but most important was bible study. The church was divided into four groups - women, men, youth and children and now weekly they study a topic and bible passage together and then come together before the Sunday service to discuss the passage and learn as a group - last week was psalm 31.

Pastor XXXX 'There has been a big change - before the church used a traditional style of service but after attending the Eden workshop we changed totally. We started studying the bible in groups and the discussion was two way. Before our church community struggled for daily life and couldn't give time to attend church but now it is different. More people are interested and studying the bible and contributing. For our livelihood we are working together to raise spigs. Last year there was disease and there are only 2 pigs left out of 11 but we are still trying. Also the church has set up a rice bank. At the moment we are just saving but we hope that in the next rainy season people in need will be able to use the bank'.

With emotion the mother of the pastor state 'When we think of the garden of Eden it reminds me that it is very peaceful and I want that joy and peace for our community. We want Eden'.
Mahn XXXX (facilitator) - we have been inspired by the bible studies as well as learning new technical things. We also got the chance to make friends and learn from each other. We started a rice bank in our church three years ago - we now have 70 baskets of rice and Ks 290,000. We are starting with saving and then we will loan out the rice to the needy people with little interest. Our vision is to help beyond our church community in the future.

XXXX attended special technical training in agriculture (photo from phone). He has learnt how to take care of animals and how to prevent and treat animal disease as well as learning how to make bokashi and bamboo vinegar. He vaccinates animals in the village and nearby areas but asks people to buy their own medicines - this is both with the church and non-Christian community. In the first year XXXX sold 400 bottles of bamboo vinegar (cost Ks 2,000 each). This year he has sold 50 bottles but the cost is Ks 5000. He has sold this year as he has shared the idea of bamboo vinegar to other families and now 20 families are producing it. Also 6-7 families are producing bokashi. People are doing from the whole community.

Four people have started raising chickens and now one person has 20 hens and 70-80 chicks. Bamboo vinegar is used to keep the chickens healthy and the chicken droppings can also be used for bokashi thus improving agricultural production and income.

One way that the church mobilised money was for everyone to make some snacks and sell them at the church. With this the church bought 3 pigs for church members that are interested. The need to give the first 3 piglets back to the church and then they can keep the rest.

Another significant achievement of the church and community together was the construction of a new primary school. The church and community worked together and managed to raise money from a fertiliser company and arrange for the school to be built. 60 children study in the new building and 30 (Kindergarten) in the old building. Children come from 6 neighbouring villagers. The government has provided 6 primary school teachers (1 is Christian). The future plan is to upgrade this to a middle school as the nearest middle school is 5 miles away. They are now starting to discuss with the government about support for the future.

Saw XXXX is a pastor from a neighbouring village and he said that he had been 'stealing the ideas of Eden and applying them in his village'. He has a good relationship with Pastor XXXX and after training he has shared the lessons learnt with Saw XXXX. In his church people have become much more interested in bible study and children are starting to memorise the bible and recite 80-100 verses by heart. Some people can't attend church services so they have started doing home visits. XXXX is also learning about livelihoods although chicken raising is not successful yet.

Pastor XXXX hopes that there will be more spiritual growth in the village and also development of education. He wants to reach out to the Christian community.

Over lunch we also learnt that migration was a serious issue in the community too especially amongst youths due to lack of livelihood opportunities. However the pastor tries to talk to young people before they migrate and he makes sure they study a map and know where places are in case they get into trouble. He also gives a telephone number that they can contact if in need. There has been one case where Pastor XXXX has gone and rescued 2 youths who had migrated and got into trouble.

Sent from my iPad
**Reports from Tearfund UK:**
Data from these reports were used in the production of this dissertation. However, confidentiality requirements of Tearfund UK, no data were referenced or quoted directly within the dissertation. The following documents were provided to me prior to the execution of field research.

*Evaluation Report for KBC Tearfund.doc*

*Nargis Report.doc*

*DRR Project Final End Narrative Report Finalized.doc*

*DRRP Accomplishment Report.doc*

*Concept Note for DRR.docx*

*Final Report to Jersey Overseas Aid Commission.doc*

*Combined Sections Report.docx*

*AF Notes from Eden Visit 10-11 Dec 13.doc*
Appendix 3
Research Tools
Appendix 3.1 Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. In five words, how would you introduce yourself?
2. Where does your “sense of belonging” come from?
3. If I gave you a camera and asked you to photograph the place where you feel safest, what would you photograph?
4. What are the most meaningful things you participate in here in the village?
5. What is your hope for the future?
6. Who, in the village, do you trust the most?
7. Is there anyone in the village that you don’t trust?
8. Would you say that you trust most, few, or none in the village?
9. Would you say that others trust you more or less than others?
10. What have been your greatest achievements and greatest struggles?
11. Who do you feel connected to the most?
12. In one word, describe the Buddhists in your village. Christians.
Appendix 3.2 Venn Diagram

1. 5-10 minutes: Began with ice-breaking exercises to get people feeling more comfortable and relaxed.
2. 5 minutes: Introduction of myself and S’Lont and what we were doing in the village
3. 10 minutes: Discussion of “resilience” using a bamboo shoot and of social capital (bonding, bridging, linking)
4. 5 minutes: Explanation of VENN DIAGRAM exercise
5. 10-15 minutes: Brainstorming of orgs, groups, etc.
6. 10-15 minutes: Assigning sizes of circles to each of above.
7. 10-15 minutes: Placing circles on the paper with proper distances and overlaps.
8. 5-10 discussion of decisions before taping down the circles in place.
9. 5 minutes: introducing beans
10. 5 minutes: placing of beans as votes for TRUST
11. 5-10 minutes: Discussion of trust decisions with beans.
12. Photograph page.
Appendix 3.3 Reliance Radar Graph

RELIANCE RADAR

Radar graph consists of 3 concentric circles. The inner circle represents social networks within the village. The middle circle represents social networks within ten miles of the village (other surrounding villages). The outer circle represents social networks within 100 miles of the village (Yangon, perhaps). To my surprise, nearly every group placed beans outside the circles (on their own accord, without me offering this as an option) to indicate what they considered international help from people outside the country. Those circles were then divided 3-ways (by a “peace” symbol). The three groups were (1) Family, (2) Friends, and (3) Others. So, each group had a piece of the inner, middle, and outer circles.

Question: Who did they rely on most for response/recovery from Nargis?

1. 5-10 minutes: Explanation of the radar graph and voting with beans.
   Placement of beans was to indicate their reliance
2. 5-10 minutes: Placing of beans by participants
3. 5-10 minutes: Discussion of placement of the beans and why some categories got more votes and others got fewer or no votes.
4. Participants were allowed to alter their choices after some discussion.
5. Photo was taken after all participants felt confident in their choices.
Appendix 4

Thar Pyan Gyi Field Notes
4.1 General Notes: Thar Pyan Gyi

- Village is highly organized (house numbers (see pic), for census purposes which are taken on a monthly basis!)  
- ~50% are literate  
- “The current situation now is better than before Nargis.” – Pastor Thara Tanar Htoo  
  - Because of support from humanitarian agencies. (LINKAGES)  
- 70-80 Bodies washed up to the village  
- 87 were killed from TPG  
- LANGUAGE: Burmese mainly. Some Karen will speak Karen in the house only…but they only speak broken Karen.

NOW:

- No one is leaving.  
- Population is increasing  
- Equals = higher demand for food and livelihoods  
- Equals = increasing prices for rice paddy land  
- Only ~20 HH own rice land  
  - Ownership ranges from 3-15 acres (majority own ~3)  
  - Others work for them as day laborers  
  - 3-15 acres is considered “small land holdings”. **So, this village is considered very poor.**

While the fact that no one is leaving indicates strong social networks, interconnection, and dependence, the increasing population is putting strain on the local economy to support the added demand for food and livelihoods. The lack of mobility (population shifts coming/leaving the village) could also be explained by lack of options and networks elsewhere, funds to afford the relocation, family ties to the area, etc.

Displacement (after Nargis)

- People came TO the village for assistance.  
- Villagers did send children and elderly away for better care outside the village until things improved.  
- COMPARE THIS TO BEAN DIAGRAMS IN FGDs!

WAGES & DONATIONS

- Ave. wage = 500-2000 Kyats per day ($0.50 - $2.00)  
- Thatch makers – 100pcs. = 500Kyats (average 200pcs per day)  
- Ave. contribution/donation to special events = 500 Kyats  
  - Village imposed a limit of 30,000 Kyats on single donations!  
- Church Donations:  
  1. Tithe (10% of wages) – to care for people in need.  
     a. About 20% of church tithes (average in US as well!)  
  2. Contribution to Pastor’s Wages  
     a. One donation per year from families  
     b. Pastor’s Wage = 20,000 Kyats per month ($20)  
  3. Donation to General Fund  
     a. Donations are given only if possible (sometimes nothing)  
     b. Money goes to MBCU
4.2 Physical Notes: Thar Pyan Gyi

- Road from dock to village built by Myanmar military with Chinese equipment (2009)
- Farm equipment workshop (run by church members)

(Village map of TPG, provided by TPG. Developed by TPG with assistance from UNICEF.)
• No monastery or temple

• NARGIS:
  o After Nargis, EVERYTHING was gone – ONLY THE CHURCH BUILDING REMAINED (concrete structure)
  o Only boat to survive (“John”, the boat we took, see pic) survived because they placed it in a ditch and a tree fell on it to hold it down.
    ▪ All other boats were destroyed or swept away.
  o Took 3 days to clear the small river to access the big river to go for help.
  o **TPG served as center of relief for 5 other villages w/in 5 miles.**
  o **Shelter/Housing:**
    ▪ NGO said build 3 per day or materials would stop. They were concerned that supplies would pile up at the bridge and be dangerous.
    ▪ The generator would kick on in the mornings, lights would turn on and noise from the generator would wake up the village and serve as a signal to come to the church – “You have work to do.” (to unload boats and build homes)
    ▪ Built 60 homes in 20 days!!

LIFEJACKETS:
• Have 10 on-hand
• **Some kids go to school in neighboring village – send jackets with them.**

LIVELIHOODS (see seasonal calendar in notebook):
• Fishing
• Rice Farming
  o Ties with International Institute of Rice Research
• Thatch roof making (see pic, video)
• Pigs (all houses?)
• Chickens
• **Everyone does everything (men, women, kids)**

VILLAGE SPLIT BY RIVER (see drawing in notebook)
1. Eastern side is side with church – belongs to Thazin Gone Village Tract
2. Western side – belongs to Gayan Village Tract

ACCESS TO VILLAGE:
• At time of Nargis: Only access is via small creek, making access to outside difficult and delivery of assistance difficult.
• After Nargis, government/military with equipment assistance from Chinese installed a road from the main river.

DIVISION OF VILLAGES and VILLAGE TRACTS
• Village tracts are delineated or formed by boundaries made up of rivers.
• However, some villages straddle rivers.
• So, sometimes ½ a village will be in one administrative tract and the other ½ will be in another tract!
• **IN NARGIS RESPONSE:** Assistance was often administered by village tracts (because of leadership structures, etc.), NOT by village. So, this greatly hindered
the response and recovery effort and *caused some division within the village.*
  o **HOWEVER, SOCIALLY THERE IS NO DIVISION!**

**COMMUNICATION**
- 1 radio phone serves entire community – located in community center adjacent to church.
  - **Most calls are from relatives living outside the community**
- Messages are also sent with people when they go on boats to town

**POWER**
- Church is only building with power (1 solar panel (3yrs) and generator and battery bank)
- Only run the generator when they need extra power (festivals, events, etc.)
- Small Battery Packs (see pics) – households have a small battery that they come to the church to charge.
  - Runs light at night in home
  - Contribute 100-200 kyats to church for charging

There doesn’t SEEM to be much economic stratification. Everyone seems to be relatively on the same economic level...poor (compare photos of houses, etc.).
4.3 Social Notes: Thar Pyan Gyi

***most information is from Pastor and observations.

- **Population Changes**
  - Pre-Nargis = 50 households
  - Immediately after Nargis = 62 households
  - Now = 70 households
  - After Nargis, everyone stayed
    - Immigration TO TPG – village added 12 new households of people who were from TPG and were moving BACK to TPG
      - Because of child-friendly spaces and school (daycare)
      - A mixture of Buddhist and Christian returnees
        - Intermarriage is PREVALENT in TPG (7 households)
        - Only about 10 households are purely Buddhist

ONLY generic ahsin patterns (No Karen patterns, even though mainly a Sagaw Karen village)

Census – taken at every development meeting (once per month!!) – shows HUGE organization and administrative capacity!

CHURCH BELL – meetings are called using the bell
  - Quick rings indicate an emergency
  - MORE PROOF OF ORGANIZATION/COHESION

Forms of COMMUNICATION:
  - Siren (hand crank)
  - Megaphone

**PART OF MBCU BECAUSE THEY SPEAK BURMESE IN CHURCH**
  - More comfortable speaking Burmese in church (not proficient preaching in Sagaw Karen)

10 Surrounding Villages are important:

“White letter” (“sar phyu”) vs. “Black letter” (“sar mei”) – derogatory and used PERVASIVELY in the rest of the Delta Region

- They don’t use these words in TPG! Only “Buddhist” and “Christian”
- “non-believer” is also considered discriminatory and is NOT used in TPG.
  - See interview with husband/wife – “they don’t believe, so I just call them Buddhist”.
    - It seems that it is still a way that people differentiate others, even if only internally. The differentiation is done internally but is socially unacceptable. So, inner thought life vs. social norms is a huge discussion area!

Prior Pastor (left the position in 2005, but remained in village (from village)):
- 1990-2005
  - Promoted ethnic identities/differentiation
- **STORY:** Some Christian families with Buddhist relatives would contribute to family members’ obligatory short-term monkhood (1wk – 1mth). Pastor EXPELLED some church members who did this.
Nargis Assistance = schools and increased women involvement in village
  - This is peaking the interest of other NGOs. They are coming into the village to work with such a socially functional village!
This shows that they are leveraging the assistance provided after Nargis in a sustainable way to continue activities and social changes well after 2008. NGOs are seeing the changes in the village and that they are sustained and are interested in doing more work there. Linkages are increasing because of past linkages! This is perfect sustainability.

Festivals (Buddhists and Christians support each other’s festivals.)
SEE CHART!!
Buddhist Festivals:
  - Church allows them to rent their sound equipment
  - Christians donate money and attend
    o ~1/3 of Christians in village attend

Christian Festivals:
  - ~1/3 Buddhists attend
  - Buddhists donate and attend
  - Christmas – Buddhists also attend!

Memorial Service is held every year for 87 dead from Nargis
  - Buddhist and Christians are both in charge of and attend ceremony
  - Ceremony held in church building

Programs & Projects:
  - Church & Community Mobilization (CCM), also known as “EDEN”
    o Review the material I have on this for any social capital building info!

What drove women’s group growth/change?
  - Women’s group was formed at the same time the church was established in 1975 – leader of the church at that time was a woman (from Yangon, of Indian (from India) descent).
  - Majority of women in FGD were over 45 yrs. old. This means they were around for the founding of the church and women’s group!
  - There is also a youth group of women who are invited to the women’s group meetings.

Forms/Sources of Social Protection:
  - Church: the center of village for:
    o Conflict negotiation
    o Material assistance
    o Money
  - In the past, people were afraid to go to uniformed officers (police or military), so there was no protection or ways to seek justice or peace. Now they go to the church (see trust in Venn Diagrams)

National IDs
  - In the past, people didn’t bother getting IDs because travel to/from village was difficult and limited (people never needed to show it to anyone because they seldom left the village)
  - Pastor encouraged them to get them in order to facility bridging and linking with other villages and towns outside.
Again, this illustrates the Pastor’s ability to think about people’s futures and lead them towards a change in social norms that will put them in better situations.

**Tuberculosis**
- The village was suffering from high rates of tuberculosis.
- Pastor encouraged people to use separate utensils and wash hands.
- This was met with criticism from village – “if you don’t want to eat with my utensils, then don’t come at all”
- After people saw improvements, they began to teach others in nearby villages.  
*Pastor’s ability to change social norms!*

**COMMUNAL PROPERTY**
- **Welding Machine** – owned by the village, but managed and maintained by the church.
- **Tiller** – owned by church, maintained by President of church, Saw Htoo Htoo Eh (43)
- Money from sale of any communal property goes to community development projects.
- **Cistern (see pic)** – for use by whole community during dry season

**EXAMPLE OF WILLINGNESS TO HELP OTHERS:**
On the boat ride home from TPG on the first day, a large boat had broken down. Our boat (carrying 4 Christians and a little boy) stopped to take on 2 Buddhists with a broken engine part to take them to Bogale to replace the part (a 1.5 hour boat ride away).

*This is a clear indication that they were willing to help others, even others outside the village who were not like them and that they did not know (see stories of hosting IDPs after Nargis…could this be connected to that experience?).*
Mixed Male Focus Group Discussion

Thar Pyan Gyi

Seemed very comfortable coming to the church for the meeting. Preferred to meet as a mixed group, NOT separately as Buddhist and Christian.

**Buddhist Attendees:**
U Myint Win (Burmese)
U Aung Myint (Burmese)
*One unknown, late-comer. (Burmese)*

**Christian Attendees**
Saw Thar Peter (Karen)
Saw Po Htoo (Karen)
Saw Pyu (Karen)
Saw Pwee Maung (Karen)
Saw Thar Maung (Chief, Karen)
Saw Pwe (Karen)
Saw April Eh (Karen)
Saw Marget (Karen)

**Offered reasons for resilience:**
1. International assistance (LINKAGES)
2. Village unity (BONDING)

**VENN DIAGRAM:**
- GNI *(Good Neighbor International approached MBCU for permission to enter village through MBCU…official partnership with signed agreements)*
  - Focus on children, development, education
- German Agro Action (GAA) *(in German: “Welt Hunger Hilfe”, see pic).*
- Women’s Development Group *(sponsored by MBCU)*
- Church
- Aux. Fire Brigade
  - Unsure of importance, because they hadn’t seen any action from them yet.
- Pre-School
- Middle School
- Child Friendly Spaces *(child-friendly day, every week)*
- Government
  - Importance was about approval/permission for activities/visitors
  - Daily interaction (communication)
(FGD Participants)

(FGD Participants placing beans)
MIXED MEN

(Venn diagram showing organisations active in the village)

(Reliance Radar Graph with beans)
4.5 Mixed Female Focus Group Discussion
Thar Pyan Gyi

Held in church
Afternoon: 1-3pm

Attendees:

- Lar Khin (Karen, Christian)
- Paw Say (Karen, Christian)
- Kyi Thei Tun (Karen, Christian)
- Eh May (Karen, Christian)
- Shee Hser Paw (Karen, Christian)
- Hlay Hwe (Burmese, Buddhist)
- San Sint (Burmese, Buddhist)
- Marina (Karen, Christian)
- San (Burmese, Buddhist)
- Than Nwel (Burmese, Buddhist)
- Eh Thyar Paw (Karen, Christian)
- Hlay Moo (Burmese, Christian)
- Paw Khu (Karen, Christian)
- Juna Paw (Karen, Christian)
- Cho Kyi (Burmese, Christian)
- Thaw Hla Htoo (Karen, Christian)
- Than Thi (Burmese, Christian)
- Tin Nyunt (Burmese, Christian)
- Mar Mar Aye (Karen, Christian)
- Daw Win (Burmese, Buddhist)
- Daw Moo Hla (Burmese, Buddhist)
- + 3 Babies
- + 1 Late-comer

Reasons why village bounced back:
1. Support from outside
2. Grace of God
3. Unity of village

VENN DIAGRAM
- Asked for groups, orgs, etc. (formal and informal) active in the village
- Size of circle represented IMPORTANCE to them.
- Distance between village and circles indicated FREQUENCY OF INTERACTION
- Overlaps of circles indicated COOPERATION BETWEEN circles
- Gave each woman 3 beans and had them vote for what groups or organizations they TRUSTED

RELIANCE RADAR
- Others in Outer Circle (100mi.):
  o NGOS (World Concern was one)
  o Korean
  o Sri Lankans
  o American
  o Philippino
- Friends in Outer Circle (100mi.):
  o Church ministers from Yangon (HQ)
  o MBCU
- Friends in Village – NONE!!! Why?
  o They said they were only thinking of material assistance, but not the rest.
  o Because of this, THEY ADJUSTED THEIR VOTES!!!
(Venn diagram showing organisations active in the village)

(Reliance Radar Graph with beans)
4.6 Semi-Structured Interview: Buddhist Couple
Thar Pyan Gyi

Male, 54 years old
Female, 59 years old
Not married: “We are like brother and sister.” We believe they were distantly related and close friends. Karen National Union insurgence in this area in 1990s.

Sense of belonging?
• (man) He was born and raised here. “Everyone is my relative. I belong to everyone here.”
• “On full moon and new moon day, I go to the monastery in the next village and I feel like I belong to them too. But when I return, I know I belong here.”

Take a picture of place where they feel safest?
• Woman – “home”
• Man – “church”
  o Why? “Because it is the strongest place. It is twenty times stronger than anything else in the village.”

Who do you trust the most?
• Man – “The pastor because he is a Christian man who does the right thing.”
• Woman – agreed.

What kinds of things do they participate in?
• Ceremonies
• Donation to festivals
• Christmas celebration (attend)
• Festivals at monastery in the next village – must bring food for festivals
• New Year – a tent is erected in the field North of the church in open space. They hold a Buddhist ceremony and Christians attend. (SEE CHART)

How does it make them feel that there is no monastery?
• “We’re used to it.” (man)
• Was there ever one here?
  o “Yes, there was one in the time of their parents, but but it was destroyed in the times of ethnic violence (Karen insurgence).” (man)

What is their hope for the future?
• “I want to see these children educated.” (Especially for the boy they’re taking care of.)
• But, they fear that education leads to people leaving the village. “Then, who will be left to work the rice fields?”
  o He owns about 8 acres. “I will be forced to rent the work out to others.”
  o Since Nargis, rice yields have decreased because of diseases.
  ▪ How does it make him feel to have to rent out the fields, with no family to carry on the work?
  ▪ “It’s ok. I’ll work it till I can’t. When I die, it is theirs if they want it.”
In the 90s, the Karen insurgency, this village witnessed to the government that they were NOT involved (the military was going around to villages and arresting, beating, or abusing anyone they suspected of collaborating with the Karen…since this was a majority Karen village, the military were especially concerned with TPG). This witnessing saved them from interrogation and torture. They did this collectively as a village with no leader!

4.7 Semi-Structured Interview: Church Treasurer and Wife
Thar Pyan Gyi
- Saw Ler Hser (38)
  - Treasurer of men’s group in church (Karen, Christian)
- Ma Cho Thei (34)
  - Burmese, but “felt she was a Christian her whole life”
  - Lost 3 children (boy (3), girls (7, 9))
  - Still have one child

What’s it like to be Burmese married to Karen?
Woman: “I was born somewhere else and raised here. I’ve always been connected to this community. I’ve always felt Christian.” Her family lives here (lost her father and mother), but they all approved of the marriage.
- 3 other siblings remained Buddhist. She is the youngest. They all live in the village.

From where do you derive your sense of belonging?
Man: “I belong more to the village than to the church.”
Woman: “The church and village are the same.”
- Why?
  - “Church is where we worship and the community is where we get involved and help out.” How are they connected? “I get involved in the community, not because the church asks me to do that, but because I feel responsible for my neighbors. I want to develop and improve my community.”
    - The conversation made it clear that this responsibility came from an inner sense of obligation or responsibility to her community.
While the husband clearly differentiated the church from the community, the wife viewed them as one and the same. This could be due to their separate roles as men and women in the community (investigate this in the FGD responses).

If I gave you a camera and asked you to take a picture of the safest place in the village, what would you photograph?
Man: “Church”
Woman: “Church”
Why?
Woman: “Because there I have the protection of God.”
This indicates a spiritual reasoning for feeling safe at the church. However, it could also indicate that they believe God protected those who took refuge in the building during Nargis because it was a strong enough structure to withstand the storm.

Who do you trust most, besides each other?
Man: “The Pastor. When we are in trouble, he always comes and prays for us.”
Woman: “The pastor’s wife. She is like my mother. She always gives us advice and guidance. If I don’t understand something, she gives me a good answer.”

**Most meaningful things they participate in?**
Woman: women’s activities at the church (impromptu speaking competition: pick a card and tell a story from life on that topic…who can tell the best story)
Man: village development work

**What do they want for their son’s future?**
Man: Finish high school.
Woman: Graduate college and study at an even higher level.

**Is there a likelihood that he would then leave the village?**
Woman: “Yes, it’s possible. But even if he settles somewhere else, he will come back to visit us.”

I can’t help but notice the nonchalance with which they speak of children leaving and settling somewhere else and only visiting from time to time. It’s strange when you think about this in light of how tightly knit the villages are with one another based on kinship. But, I think this stems from the fight to survive and the acceptance that sometimes this means children move away in search for better life. I also wonder if remittances are assumed here and that by “coming back to visit us” she means he will also help support them financially.

**One word to describe Buddhists?**
Man: “Burmese”
Woman: (after much thought) “They don’t believe. So, I just call them Buddhists.”

**Would you say that you trust most in the village, many, few, or none?**
Man: “No one.”
- **Why?**
  - “I can only trust myself. I have to work for myself. I can’t rely on anyone else.”
Woman: “Many.”

This is a strange response from the husband since he earlier said that the person he trusted most was the pastor. However, he said he trusted the pastor only because he came and prayed for them.

**What separates those they can trust from those they can’t?**
Woman: “Some people keep their promises. Others don’t.” Example: Someone borrows money and they say they will give it back in ten days. Some don’t.

The example given centers around money and seems pretty specific (10 days).

**4.8 Semi-Structured Interview: Church Pastor**
Thar Pyan Gyi

52 years old

INTERVIEWS TOOK PLACE OVER THE COURSE OF SEVERAL DAYS
- From Yangon.
- 2003 – Came to the village as an intern. Saw the need in the village for an inclusive leader and saw the poor relational skills of the pastor. Began praying then for his future in the village.
  - Pastor had “us and them” mentality
  - Owned a store in the village. He could be the only one to own a store.
  - Built the boat “John” out of wood left over after building the church. He then used that boat for personal gain.
• Current Pastor
• Took over in 2005
• No alcohol is sold in village. The few who drink must go to neighboring village. This was the Pastor’s decision with approval of administrator.
  o This is an anecdote of the kind of authority and support the Pastor has in the village, not only from the gov’t administrator but the villagers themselves that they accept the passive of these kinds of rules.
• 2 Groups in the Recovery
  o those who only cared for themselves
  o those who cared for others
    ▪ this group is the one that he sees as bouncing back better after 6 years!
• Was afraid that he was abusing his power by ensuring that everyone was treated fairly and received a fair share of the assistance.
• IT SEEMS THAT HE IS THE CHAMPION LEADER OF THE VILLAGE!!!
  o Incredible social skills for peacebuilding!
  o 2 Fundamentally Different Approaches:
    ▪ Past Pastor – sought to improve his own situation and bring others up with him
    ▪ Pastor Htoo – seeks to elevate others first and he will rise with them.

Importance of Name of Village:
• Originally, the village was officially called the “Thar Pyan Main Annex” by the gov’t administrator. As the population of TPM grew, there was less space and people moved further out…to Thar Pyan Main Annex.
• There was a church established there in 1975 called “Thar Pyan Gyi”.
• After Nargis, the village began using “Thar Pyan Gyi” on official government documents to refer to the village (not only the church). So, now the gov’t also refers to the village as “Thar Pyan Gyi”.
• The adoption of the name for the entire village from the church indicates a social normalization or acceptance of the church as identification for the entire village. The church has become such a central, integral part of village life that the village has taken on the church’s identity as that of the village also. HUGE!

“Eventually, I have come to see each difficulty as an opportunity.”
This speaks to his positivity and his creativity in finding solutions to difficulties. He’s a motivator and encourager.

“Because we can’t go far (figuratively regarding development), my vision is to cut a path and invite the village to walk it. As we walk it, the path gets wider and smoother.”
This speaks to his leadership role in finding a way forward through the difficulties the village is facing. By inviting the rest of the village to walk together on it, as a group, they’re able to make the path easier to follow for future generations. The path becoming “wider and smoother” could refer to sustainability of the path?

“People are made in the image of God, so we’re all the same.”
This is an example of where Christian theology actually serves to help bring people together, to assist in bonding for social capital. By putting everyone on the same level (humanity), equality and acceptance are promoted rather than seeing people as ethnically divided from the outset. Biblically, man is made in the image of God before any mention of sin or salvation or any other divisive arguments are made!
4.9 Semi-Structured Interview: Church Pastor’s Wife, young Buddhist boy, and Pastor
Thar Pyan Gyi

May 23 @ 11am
Location: MBC Office in Yangon
Boy (18), from TPG
Wife (40), from TPG
Pastor (52), from Yangon

(both) “villages are very organized” – examples:
- “house numbers”
- development activities
- census
- ringing of the bell
- finish school – every child from village comes to play. So, if there is something to tell parents, they can convey that through the children during that time.

(wife) Women's Group evolution over time:
- 1975, church and women’s group established at the same time.
- Organic growth over time as people began to see it work.
- She is the president of the group. She is also volunteer for child protection activities supported GNI.
- Activities:
  - When started, “tasote san” at every meal, set aside one handful of raw rice for other people (before washed). Women were active in collecting this rice to the church and give to community women when in need.
  - Also have a savings box. Once a year, donate to general fund and goes to sick and needy and elderly.
  - We also use that rice to make snacks and feed children of village (mother’s day and summertime)
  - Every 3 months, come together and make snacks and sell to community. That money goes to saving box.
  - Sometimes give interest free loans to parents who need take children to town for medical treatment.

(wife) Average age of women at marriage: 21-22 in the past. Some are getting married later now. Only widows are getting married after Nargis.

More men died in Nargis than women. “Men were very brave and tried to do too much.”

43 children died in Nargis. Wife: “I only remember the children.”

Treatment of or attitude towards newcomers to village?
(wife) It doesn’t happen very often.

Do Buddhists in TPG speak Sagaw Karen?
(boy) They can’t speak it. But they can understand it. Some people can speak it, but they won’t. If they can, its broken.
Youth moving to Yangon to work. Is this common in TPG?
(wife) Over 50% leave temporarily to work at ages 18-30+. Most come back during the rainy season. Sometimes they send money back monthly, other times they save it until family members need it.
Adults (both those who own rice land and those who don’t) go to town between rice seasons to work (nothing else available in the village).

Buddhists, when nothing else to do, go fishing. Mainly Buddhists are the fishermen.

Ownership and usage of boats:
(wife) Individuals own the boats. When we need to use one, we ask. We pay for the diesel. Or we also pay some money to use the boat when we need to go to town or send/bring something to/from town.

Borrow boats from other villages or other villages borrow their boats?
(wife) Yes. In times of emergency, people come to village to borrow our boats. Sometimes, if there are some who are feeling ill, they will borrow boats.

Surrounding villages they rely most on.
(Pastor and wife)
- Thar Pyan Main – school – 20min
- Ywa Thit – Social – 30min
- A Kai Chaung – Health Clinic – 30 min
- Thazin Gone – chief (administrator’s) village – 45min
- Zee Phyu – Social – 30min
- Mai Taw Su – to get loans – 45min
- Sar Ma Laut – social – 30min

Elaborate on the split from TPM:
(Pastor and wife)
A couple of families were living in outlying area (where TPG is now) and it began to grow. TPM is Karen Bapt. Those living in this area received invitations from MBCU to start a “discipleship community”. Called it TPG. When people in this area applied for school with government, they applied as “Thar Pyan Gyī”…the name of the church!

Pyan – means “seal” like the animal. Many seals in the area. Or, “pyan pyay” means “settling disputes”….the leaders of the community at that time were armed insurgents from Karen group. They named village this.

Ever had to ask someone to leave the community?
(wife) Never happened.
(Pastor) People have committed a crime and ran away from village.

Negative coping strategies in TPG immed. After Nargis?
- (Pastor) Some drinking, but rarely seen. “I diverted attention and energy toward recovery and reconstruction efforts to keep them busy.”

Examples of conflict between villages in the past?
(Pastor) Social problems:
- sometimes children get into a fight, parents get involved
• 2 girls in village who are not mentally well, both of them were abused by one from within the village and the other from another village.
  o One from village was originally from village but didn’t return to village until after Nargis. Afterwards, he disappeared.
  • Family members of this man looked after this woman to this day!
  o One from other village is still in jail.
  o Children were the ones who alerted adults to this and identified the offenders.

4.10 Semi-Structured Interview: Church President
Thar Pyan Gyi

43 years old – seemed to provide answers that he thought I wanted to hear. (note, this was after the FGDs)
- President of church (3 years)
- Mechanic in charge of maintaining tiller
- Lost 7 yr. old daughter and mother-in-law in Nargis
- Has 3 kids:
  o 2 boys (8, 19)
  o 1 girl (16)

Introduce yourself with five words.
1. Name
2. Address
3. Occupation
4. (blank)
5. (blank)

In your three years as president, what have been the greatest achievements and struggles?
Achievement: “The way we have worked with the pastor.”
Struggle: “When we work with the youth. They have a different focus than the older people (fun).”

If I gave you a camera and asked you to take a picture of the safest place in the village, what would you photograph?
“The church. This is the place where we worship and God’s dwelling place.”

Would you say that you trust most in the village, many, few, or none?
“Most. Because when we work together, we have similar thoughts, ideas, and goals.”

What goals do you have in common?
“If we have a meeting, everyone tries to be supportive of everyone’s ideas.”

What’s your biggest goal?
“To develop the church.”

How?
“More participation of the Buddhists in church.”

What do you mean?
“If we can inspire them with the way we work and live, they may become Christians.”
His motivation is clearly evangelical.

Is there anyone in the village that you don’t trust? “No.”
Who do you trust most? Why?
“The pastor. He cares about us. He always pays attention to us and our needs and tries to fulfil them.”
I’m beginning to see a trend in why people trust others. It seems to center around what others do for them.

Who do you feel connected to most?
1. Pastor
2. Administrative committee of village
3. Outside NGOs

One word to describe Buddhists and Christians (separately)?
Only gave one word for both: “Honest.”

4.11 Semi-Structured Interview: Village Chief
Thar Pyan Gyi

54 years old
Born and raised in TPG
CLOSE TIES TO INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IRRI)

Became chief after military government left (Year?)
- Elected by village
  - To be representative of village to the government
- Travels to neighboring village 2 miles away to meet with village
  - Village Tract – 8 villages in the group

Picture of place feel safest?
- “The church because this is a very sacred place. I trust in God to protect me.” (safety tied to spirituality)

Trust people in the village (most, many, few, none)? Why?
- “Many, not all, because there are some who are two-faced. They act one way to your face and another in private. Sometimes they don’t do what they say.”
  - His trust is based on consistency, dependability, fidelity.

Who do you trust most in the village? Why?
- Pastor
- President of the church
- Assistant president of the church
- “Because of their attitude and actions. They are calm, stable, actively participate in community activities and have capacity to forgive.”

5 Words to introduce himself (what is his identity based on)?
1. Name
2. Name of village
3. Occupation
4. What he does in community work
“Name of village” came second, “occupation” (rice farmer…see article on rice farmers and collectivism) came third, and what he “does in community work” came fourth. These both indicate a collective identity.

Most meaningful community work?
“There are times when we are satisfied; times of unity and going in the same
direction. We listen to each other and respect one another. Church work is very
meaningful because it has a connection with eternity…my future life.”

Biggest achievement and biggest struggle as chief?
- Biggest achievement: Things get accomplished together. One thing I remember
  most is that after Nargis, no one moved out of the village. Since we maintained our
  people, we were able to rebuild our lives. I am very proud of this.”
- Biggest struggle: “We are a village with many needs. We are not able to meet the
  needs we have with what we have.”
  o He recognizes the need to go beyond there own resources within the village
    (bonding) and reach outside the village (bridging and linking capital). He also
    recognizes the importance of social cohesion to the resilience of his
    community (evidenced by his biggest achievement – people not leaving the
    community).

Why do you think they stayed?
- “Because they trust us in our work and the things we do.”
- Story: “A week after Nargis, the government people from Bogale came here and
  invited us to go to the camp (IDP camp in the city). I asked a couple of Buddhist
  families to go to the camp because I didn’t think we had enough food. They said,
  ‘We will stay. If we eat, we eat together. If we starve, we starve together.’”

4.12 Semi-Structured Interview: U Myint Win
Thar Pyan Gyi
Interview with U Myint Win (56)
- Burmese, Buddhist
- 6 children, 3 are with him (girl (13), boy (18), boy (30))
- Wife is also Burmese, Buddhist
- Born here, raised here, lived here all his life.

“The village has changed. When I was young, the houses weren’t so close together. Now
there are more families and more houses.”

If I gave you a camera and asked you to take a picture of the safest place in
the village, what would you photograph?
“The church, because the building is the strongest in the village. My family took refuge in
the building during Nargis. But, I and the Pastor clung to a tree the whole night by the
trash pile.”

When you were a child, where did you feel safest?
“My house.”

Would you say that you trust most in the village, many, few, or none?
“Most. Most people have knowledge and understanding.”

Who do you trust the most?
“The pastor because he is honest and has integrity. Being a religious leader, he is just and
he is on a righteous path. He is unbiased.”

Describe Buddhists and Christians in TPG with word (each).
He began with words like “majority” and “minority.”
“They believe different things, but they work together and relate to each other.”

**In your opinion, has the village fully recovered or do they still have work to do?**
“In terms of infrastructure, we are doing well. But individually, in terms of business, we still have work to do. There are no job opportunities here.”

**In your opinion, what helped the recovery most?**
“Support from outside. Our attitudes. Steadfastness, because of outside help.”

**What was the key to accessing outside help?**
“Our communication. Leaders of our community went out and connected with others (religious leaders and administrators).”

**Would you say that others trust you more or less than others?**
“More than others because I live up to the level of trust others give me…the way I speak and do things.”

**Biggest hope for the village?**
“Infrastructure development.”
Appendix 5
Htan Bin Chaung Field Notes
5.1 General Notes: Htan Bin Chaung

*most of information courtesy of village chief*

Name: “Htan Bin” is a certain type of palm tree and “Chaung” means “a small creek or river”.

- ~100 yrs old
- ~80 households
- ~2/3 Christian, 1/3 Buddhist
- ~400 killed (2/3 of village)
  - 80% of those killed were women

Literacy rate = 90%
Woman pastor
80 Households, but 90 families (10 are sharing)
Church attendance ~70 people
1 monastery in village

Current **population** ~315
- growth is through births and marriages to women from other villages (because of loss of 80% of village’s women in Nargis)
- 15 households lost every family member (completely gone)
- Every household lost at least one family member

**Livelihoods:**
- Rice
  - 25 families with 5-30 acres each
  - Only one Buddhist family (the rest are Christians)
- Day Labor (30 families)
- Fishing (35 families, all Buddhist)

PRE-NARGIS – 35 boats
POST-NARGIS – 0 boats

Rice paddies have fully recovered.

**COMMUNICATION:**
- 5-6 families have cell phones
- Messengers to nearby village of Be Tut (40 minutes)
- Radios
- TVs

A few houses have **solar panels** (wealthiest!)

MOST INTENSE PART OF STORM LASTED 5-6 HOURS!

**Youth:**
- go to Yangon at age 15-18 to work, depending on families’ financial situation
- remittances
- only started happening in last 2 years
- Return once per year or every 2 years to visit
  - No one has returned permanently yet.
5.2 Physical Notes: Htan Bin Chaung

*Most of information courtesy of village chief*

Only access to village is by boat
7-8 villages are accessible by foot – 20-45 minute walks

Flooding was 8-12 feet high
Every house was destroyed

**Church** – wood frame with brick infill. Only foundation remains. NOT YET REBUILT.
- **Assembly Hall** was built in 2009 next to the church with help from Myanmar Campus Crusade. Crusade wasn’t willing to finance construction of the church. Why?
- **During Nargis** – many took refuge in the church, but it was blown away…all were lost.
- **Church bell** – saved and reused it in the assembly hall (see pic). Also use siren and flags for emergencies

**Monastery** – wood frame. Completely lost. REBUILT LAST YEAR.

SEE MAP/DIAGRAM IN NOTEBOOK:
Buddhists live in a separate section of the village (along the river)
- closest to river for fishing
Church building and monastery are built at exact opposite corners of the village from each other!
5.3 Social Notes: Htan Bin Chaung

*Most of information courtesy of village chief*

Receive funeral assistance from Baptist Association (a form of social insurance)

Supposedly, Christians founded the village and Buddhists arrived only to fish. Some stayed.

Village speaks Pwo Karen in church, but Sagaw Karen in village (because surrounding villages are Sagaw Karen)

Buddhists only speak Burmese (only a few can speak Sagaw Karen)

Monastery Reconstruction:
- Only Buddhists worked on it.
- Took donations from other Buddhists in other villages only.
- No Christians helped with anything.

Loss of family members affects ability to work rice paddies – must hire day laborers or rent the fields out.

10 families are sharing housing with others because some were sole surviving family member and could not afford to rebuild a house of their own.

Family housed family, for the most part, following Nargis.
5.4 Transect Walk: Htan Bin Chaung
Performed with 7 male members of village, including the chief

15 Families own 1-2 buffalo (~$250 each)

Communal Property (see pics)
Farm equipment is owned separately by individuals
Church used to own things (1 tiller, 4 buffalo for work), but sold them
(Buffalo are not typically eaten…only for work)

Walkway (see pics)
- Mainly only in the Christian section
- Some bits in the Buddhist section
- Buddhists were not involved in building or financing the walkway in Christian section, and vice-versa
- Christians were able to raise money to rent equipment for the raised-earth portion of the walkway. Buddhists were not.
  - Buddhists raised the walkway by hand.
  - No bricks in Buddhist section

Nargis Houses (see pics)
- Myanmar church group provided structure of house (frame, walls, roof)
- Simple rectangular cube, one room
- Corrugated metal roof
- 40 in total
- Some households have since added on (SEE PICS)

Cisterns (see pics)
- NO WELLS in the village
- 5 total, all are rainwater catchment
- Provided by Myanmar church group (no one could remember their name)
- Everyone has access to them.

The fact that no one, not even the chief, could remember the names of the churches or organizations that provided certain things says something. It says that they have had very little additional connection with those churches or organizations since the provision of the cisterns, houses, etc. The links are not strong, if they can be called “links” at all. There seem to be mostly one-time things were someone was just looking to provide some assistance.

Rainwater Catchment Pots (see pics)
- UNICEF, AusAID
- Part of Nargis response

“Fire Extinguishers” (see pics)
- Provided by government Fire Brigade from Labutta

All Man-Made materials come from Labutta.
**5.5 Buddhist Male Focus Group Discussion**

*Htan Bin Chaung*

**7 Attendees**

**May 19, 2014**

Meeting was held in chief’s house also! They felt comfortable coming there because that is where meetings have happened in the past.

STORM SHELTER (See pics) – built by Consortium of Dutch NGOs (CDN)

**Interview with U Aung Gyi (former chief):**

- They use the shelter as a guest house and for religious social events
- UNDP has helped the village create a map and census to collect village data. (see hard copies) – 2009-2012
- Everyone has gotten remarried since Nargis.

**VENN DIAGRAM:**

- Health committee is village-wide
  - Not even mentioned by Christian men
- MMCWA = Myanmar Mother & Child Welfare Association
- Church and monastery work closely on social events, but not in worship
- “Administration Group” got most trust because they are elected and are most informed (based on Nargis response)
- 2 women’s groups received no bean votes for trust because they’re for women only. The men don’t know them very well and don’t understand their work.

**RELIANCE RADAR GRAPH:**

- No reliance on friends in the village – “because we were all in the same situation after Nargis.”

Opinion: “So many women died because they were physically unable to hold on.” Also, women were clustered together, caring for children and each other. The men were dispersed, looking after other things during the storm.

“Our parents and grandparents never told us stories of storms like this. If they had, we would have reacted differently.”
(FGD Participants)

(FGD Participants placing beans)
(Venn diagram showing organisations active in the village)

(Reliance Radar Graph with beans)
5.6 Christian Male Focus Group Discussion
Htan Bin Chaung

May 19, 2014

What helped you recover most?
1. Attitudes
2. Minds
3. Blessings from God

Seemed reluctant to assign “least important” to VENN Diagram.

After the VENN, seeds illustrate who they TRUST most. (see notebook for counts, if necessary)

After Nargis, there was nothing. No one could stay in the village. So, they stayed in nearby villages.
(FGD Participants placing beans)

(Venn diagram showing organisations active in the village)
5.7 Buddhist Female Focus Group Discussion
Htan Bin Chaung

May 20, 2014

3 Women Attended:
Daw Phyu (4 years, from another village)
Thet Mon (4 years, from another village)
Thuzar Oo (17 years old, local)

Not many attended – busy drying shrimp? Shrimp season. (See pics)
I'm not totally convinced of this. We saw, in Transect Walk Part 2 (Buddhist section), that there was only one woman doing this. The rest were around the homes. They didn’t seem that busy.

Oldest married woman (on the right in the photos) and her husband moved here because of better working conditions (REALLY??), better fishing.

The youngest lost her mother and younger brother. (mother was Christian)

The two oldest women moved here after Nargis.

VENN DIAGRAM
Government – interaction 2-3 times per month
Monastery – interaction 2-3 times per week
Health – interaction 2 times per month
Church – only when there is a concert!
- 4-5 times per year, there are concerts, fun fair, eating, etc.

**BEANS (VENN)**
Health – only placed two beans because they don’t interact very much them and thus don’t trust them.

“We can rely on government because for every situation we have to rely on them. They are dependable and consistent.

Church: “This is not our religion.”

**RELIANCE RADAR**
“I have no other family members left. They were all killed.”
“I don’t have any family outside the village.”

**Why are there no “others” shown “in the village”?**
“We know everybody in the village.” (including Christians)

No “others” outside Labutta.
No “friends” outside Labutta.

*(FGD Participants)*
(FGD Participants placing beans)

(Venn diagram showing organisations active in the village)
5.8 Christian Female Focus Group Discussion
Htan Bin Chaung

May 20, 2014
17 women, 9 kids
Most women were not in village at time of Nargis (80% of originals died)

Naw Nelly (6 years, from another village)
Nant Mee Pa (27, local)
Naw Paw (24, from another village)
Ka Tayar Gay (25, local)
Naw Rebecca Moo (3 years, from another village)
Naw Hser Paw (6 years, from another village)
Naw Wah Htoo (local)
Naw Sein Bay (4, from another village)
Nant Tin Aye (local)
Nant Alis (local)
Naw Thwe (6, from another village)
Naw Shec Moo (local)
Nant Hei (1, from another village)
Naw Bla Paw (local)
Naw Gay Moo Cho (local)
Naw Paw Chaw (4, from another village)
Naw Augusta Glee (64 yrs old, oldest in village, local)
What things do you think contributed/help recovery?

1. Attitudes  
2. Unity  
3. Compassion  
4. Humility

**VENN DIAGRAM**

“Administrative Group” = Government  
“Children’s Group” = Sunday School group  
“Health Committee” is village-wide

- Care for the sick  
- Provide health assistance  
- Members are trained by NGO “Malteser”
  - Receive drugs once a month from visit  
  - Vaccinations every 2 months
    - Polio  
    - BCG  
    - Hep  
    - MMR  
    - Tetanus for pregnant women

Church and Administrative Group work together (Church secretary and chief of village)

**What is it about the church that engenders so much trust?**

“Because of the church, we have connections with other people. If outside assistance comes, it usually comes through the church.”

**RELIANCE RADAR GRAPH**

10 miles = Yabutta  
“Others” in the village also include “people (mainly women) who move to the village and are not yet ‘friends’”

It takes about a year for others to feel comfortable calling them “friends”

Mostly Christian/Christian marriages, although one man married a Buddhist woman and when they returned, she got baptized.

*This seems to be a normal phenomenon. People seem to change religions for socio-economic reasons. She either truly converted or she wants acceptance from her new-found Christian community. Acceptance is a very strong motivator.*

**CHURCH INVOLVEMENT GIVES SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE AND ACCESS TO ITS SOCIAL NETWORKS AND CAPITAL.**

Marriage ages within the group:  
20, 21, 21, 21, 27, 28, 25, 18, 18, 24, 19, 21, 19, 22, 24, 21 (one 24 yr. old not married yet...seemed left out)

**SEPARATE FGD WITH WOMEN NEW TO THE VILLAGE:**

7 women (2 were widows)

**How did you feel moving to a different village?**

“Happy because we had our husbands.”

OLDER WOMEN: “There were only a few people here, so we felt accepted and wanted.”
One woman: “Yes, I felt uncomfortable and nervous. I felt unaccepted at first.”
Chief’s wife: “After Nargis, we got married quite quickly. So, there were times when I wondered if I had made a mistake. We were disoriented.”
One woman: “It took time for this community to feel like my home. It took 2 or 3 years.”

**What kinds of things helped it to feel like home?**
“making more friends”
“A year after Nargis, we still felt lonely, but slowly as more people moved to the village, we felt better.”

After weddings, people come to visit the newly weds – helps with making friends. Also after child birth, people visit.
(FGD Participants placing beans)

(Venn diagram showing organisations active in the village)
5.9 Semi-Structured Interview: Village Chief
Htan Bin Chaung

May 19, 2014

- Chief of Htan Bin Chaung (elected 3 years ago)
- Church elder
- Development Leader
- Civil Engineer

(PROVIDED A LOT OF GENERAL CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE VILLAGE AND DAILY LIFE!!! APPENDIX 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 FOR THIS INFORMATION)

Lost his parents, 2 older brothers, and 1 younger sister.

“When we look around, we see only people like us who have lost everything and it gives us comfort knowing we share the same experiences.”
5.10 Semi-Structured Interview: Past Church Pastor
Htan Bin Chaung
- Pastor from ’88-’08
- Father and grandfather were both Pastors of the church in the village (this is typical of many churches across Myanmar)

Lost his wife and 2 children (daughters 3, 13) in Nargis
Resigned in 2009, but remained in village.

Mainly only dealt with needs of Christians in village.

He wrote the brief (1/2 page) church history document (see pic).

VILLAGE HISTORY:
Pastor was born in 1962 – the year of the first military takeover
- He spent most of his youth under military control
  o His life has been based on fear and mistrust.
The village in the 1960s was only a few houses.
Villagers were transient.
Church population hit 40 (min. required by Myaungmya Baptist Association to establish a church) and village began to grow.
Livelihoods were insufficient = people had to borrow money.
  - Village became heavily indebted
  - Pastor (his grandfather) sold a pig to pay off the debts
1988 – big political uprising
- During this time, if you didn’t like someone, you simply told the military that that person was a traitor or collaborator and the military would instantly haul them off.
- “During those times, there was a lot of fear. You couldn’t trust anyone. We wouldn’t have even had these conversations; not even within families.”

***Did not recall anything between 1991 and 2008 (Nargis).***

Refers to the family members he lost in Nargis (2 sons, 2 daughters, and wife) as: “my Nargis family”. Only the middle child remains.

“The country is opening up. People’s minds are opening also. More information is available which is improving knowledge and understanding of others. Trust is increasing because of freedom and increased communication.”

Biggest force for good in the village:
1. God, faith
2. Commitment

Biggest hindrance to good in the village:
1. Selfishness, corruption, looking out for your own interests

The villages feel cheated by the government on Nargis assistance from the UN which never reached them.
PER MAHN ISSAC: “There were no records during the Nargis recovery. The Pastor maintained power and control in the village by refusing the share information and continuing to make decisions autonomously.”

All power, control, decision-making rested with one man. The Pastor thought that this was necessary in the response and recovery phase after Nargis since the village was so devastated. The issue that the village chief mentioned was that the Pastor never relinquished control after things had settled down. Also, it does not seem that anyone is caring for him now. **He is not a very effective team-builder.**

*(Church history, written by past church Pastor.)*
5.11 Semi-Structured Interview: Rev. Mahn Tin Aye
Htan Bin Chaung
- Group Secretary
- Pathein Myaungmya Pwo Karen Baptist Association

“Prejudice still remains because of religious teachings that only faith in Jesus will save you. If you don’t believe, you are Satan.”

“Leaders in the villages carry a lot of the burden for positive or negative consequences in the village.”

5.12 Semi-Structured Interview: Current Church Pastor
Htan Bin Chaung

May 21, 2014. 4pm at Pwo Karen Baptist Association office. (2 hr. intrvw)
Female, 29 yrs. old
Interim Pastor of HBC
Born and raised in HBC
Previous Pastor that she replaced is her uncle.

Not in village during Nargis (was away in Ein Me for summer language school)

“We have to go to the next village to go to school.”

“Things are good in our village.”

“The previous pastor does not want us to associate with the Buddhists. Whatever he says is the rule. When we go carolling at Christmas time, we go to their houses. We invite them to Thanksgiving. We don’t ask them for money. The pastor is my uncle. He says they [Buddhists] come here to take our women. Because he is “pastor”, what he says goes. He is our elder. He is older. And, he has a wider perspective. There are some good Burmese and some bad Burmese. Maybe he is trying to protect us.”

How much influence does he have now?
“None. I meet with the elders for advice and I make decisions.”

She returned to village in 2009.
“I lost my mother and two younger sisters.”

“After Nargis, we didn’t celebrate the church’s birthday. The church is 77 years old. I thought we should. So, we invited 50 people from other villages. There is a sense of unity within our church.”

Have regular contact with 4 villages:
- Mainly for special occasions, trade pastors for Sunday sermons
  - She feels accepted
  - 2 churches are paired for one year. Exchange pastors once.
- All Pwo Karen
- All in Pathein Myaungmya Pwo Karen Baptist Assoc.
- All within 30min. – 2 hour boat ride
  - Village 2 hrs. away is interacted with because the pastor of that church is the HBC previous pastor’s brother.
• The nearest village (not 1 of 4) is not interacted with because it is in different association.

**What would happen if she made a decision unilaterally?**
“The previous pastor and elders would scold me. The community wouldn’t say anything to me; maybe behind me.”

**Does she feel accepted?**
“When I started in 2009, some didn’t accept me. They [community] thought that I took the Pastor’s position from him. It took 2-3 years for me to feel accepted because they expected him to come back. My uncle invited me to be pastor for 3 years and then he would return.”

**Process of becoming temporary pastor:**
“In the beginning, they [elders] didn’t give me the title of “Pastor”. They only asked me to work in the church and that the Pastor needed some time. For 3 years I rotated sermons with the pastor and some elders. Then, they had a meeting with me, the pastor, and church members. They all asked the pastor first. He then asked me to be pastor. I told him it was time for him to come back. He said he wouldn’t come back because he had “weaknesses”. I wanted him to be please do something. I only wanted to be a Sunday School teacher. But, this was my own church. So, I didn’t want to deny this. We invited him to the church advisory board, but he didn’t come.”

**Biggest topic at church prayer meetings (happen a lot):**
“That the pastor would come back; even today! He has a lot of connections.”

**Has church attendance changed since Nargis?**
“It has increased from 30 to 70 now.”

**How did relationships with other change after becoming pastor?**
“The women at the beginning were very reluctant to pray or take responsibilities in the church. Those who died in Nargis were the ones with experience and roles in the church.”
No changes with relationship with husband.
Relations with church members became very formal.
“They refer to me as ‘teacher’ and refuse to open up. Even my relatives spoke to me as ‘teacher’ or ‘pastor’. When I spoke casually, they rebuked me and said I should be more formal, more serious.”
She has to dress a certain way…like a pastor….hairstyle also. *This was corroborated by S'Lont and the Development Director of Pwo Karen convention.*

“The village is about 50% recovered.”

**Relationships with Buddhists in village:**
“We visit each other and buy and sell pigs and fish from each other. We attend funerals and birthday parties. I don’t think we have to worry about the Buddhist danger. Nargis killed so many from the community, both Christian and Buddhist, that we are starting fresh with relationships. All the alcoholic Buddhists who bothered us are all gone. They went to another village. The Buddhist girls who misbehaved are also all gone.”

- Alcoholism increased rapidly within Christian and Buddhist populations in the village immediately following Nargis. A NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGY.
  o More money from assistance made it possible
  o More stress from Nargis
Why has village only recovered 50% in 5 years?

“There are three kinds of people. (1) Those who owned land, sold it, and moved away. (2) People who worked hard to save and build up. Many of them had connections with Chinese in Labutta. They do business with the Chinese, so they came to help them out. (3) People who spent all the assistance.

The numbers of people leaving (out-migration) that she refers to is a HUGE indicator of weak social cohesion and social capital.
Appendix 6

Pyapon Field Notes
6.1 Notes from Discussions with Church Elders  
Pyapon, Myanmar

- Convention: MBCU
- Ward 12
- 188 Households (most are located in a compound)
- Organizations:
  - MBC
  - Tearfund
  - MBCU-GNI (Good Neighbor International approached MBCU for permission to enter village through MBCU…official partnership with signed agreements)
  - AAR
  - MBCU
  - NPA
  - Birmingham Church (MBCU)
  - BWA
- 2 Churches across the street from one another – both damaged in Nargis
- Orgs/Groups active in community:
  - Funeral assistance
  - World Vision
  - UNICEF
  - FAO
  - TLMI
  - UNHABITAT
  - Save the Children
  - Care
  - Medecins sans Frontieres
  - Interfaith
  - USDP (ruling party)
  - NLD (Aung San Suu Kyi’s party)
  - Karen People’s Party (KPP)
  - National Solidarity Party
  - All Government Offices (incl. fire brigade)
  - Sunday School (church)
  - Private day-care center (started by community)
  - Government day-care centers
  - Ayeyarwaddy Hospital (5 wealthy business owners pooled money)

Who do you TRUST or RELY ON most?
- Government Administrator of the Ward
  - Because they have asked and received things from him in the past.
    - At Christmas, church asked for security to hold a celebration. He granted it and also attended.
    - Administrator provided food during the work of digging out the pond and improved the road with mud.
    - Provided generator fuel for reading club and salary for teachers
- TRUST: World Vision
- TRUST: Banks – because state banks are guaranteed by the government.
- Why don’t you trust the Buddhist community?
  - “We just don’t know them.”
• What breaks that bridge between you and the Buddhists?
  o “We don’t have that tradition.”
  o “We haven’t done that in the past. So we don’t do it now.”

One example of interaction cited:
• One Buddhist, the only Buddhist from his Christian family, runs a nursing home in Pyapon. He asked the church to do a ceremony for his parents when they died. Their relationship with him is now better.

Interfaith Group: The government initiated and formed a group of religious leaders in response to the violence. Pastor of this church was invited and is currently the chairman of the group. Only meet when government convenes the group to deal with a specific issue/conflict.

Any other BRIDGES:
• There’s another church in Ward 19 that they interact with from regularly.
• One man has a vision to form partnership with local wax factory in Pyapon to make more employment opportunities available for CHURCH MEMBERS

Communication Channels:
• Word of Mouth – of things currently happening, talking to people “on scene”, and of things coming in the future
• Community leaders send out flyers or make announcements by loudspeaker
• Important announcements/warnings (Nargis) come by radio – “We didn’t think Nargis would be that bad, so we didn’t heed the warnings.”
• Internet and Cell Phones – about 20% use internet or facebook on phones.

General Comments:
• “Pressure is building and is ready to explode again.” (S’Lont regarding conflict)
  o I’ve underestimated the role of conflict in the relationships between religious and ethnics groups.
  o This has a huge left-over effect from past conflicts on relationships today. Fear still remains from the past and communities are content to remain within their own “walls” (in this case, literally within a compound). They don’t acknowledge the need to reach outside themselves to make themselves more resilient and to make others more resilient by joining with them.
Appendix 7
War Taloke Field Notes
Notes from Discussions with Church Elders, Village-Wide Meeting, and Transect Walk
War Taloke, Myanmar

Visited May 16, 2014

*WT was NOT affected by Nargis in the following ways (as previously thought):
• Salt water intrusion to drinking sources

Ein Me administration
On the River Htay
Kayin Baptist Convention
Activities:
• Health awareness
• Bible study and reflection
• Construction pre-school – project funding has stopped
• 2 churches because of 2 associations!
  o Myaungmya Assoc.
  o Pathein Myaungmya Assoc.

Self-initiatives:
• Bridges
• Schools and daycare
• Rainwater catchment pond

I was the first foreigner to ever visit the village!

Social stratification (economically) was immediately visible: differences in housing, TVs,

Pastor married a Kayah woman from the hills.

More commerce was visible (see pics):
• Offloading food, rice
• Building materials everywhere
• Stores
• Fishing

BIG CHURCH MEETING (~60 attendees)
• Nargis Experience:
  o Trees blown over
  o ~10 houses damaged
  o Rices storage lost
  o Hosted people from other villages to the South (10 hours away!)
    ▪ Went to pick them up and hosted them for ~3 months
      • Fed, clothed, housed with help of NGOs, govt
  o No one migrated away after Nargis
  o No population change positive or negative
  o Received no cyclone assistance or resources
• But, help was administered through this village for the refugees they were caring for.
  o Affected rice, beans, peanuts
    ▪ Came in the summer = too much water
  o “Wind was the worst part.”

DEMOGRAPHICS: **email sent to S’Lont for better/more detailed info.**

- ~151 Households
  - ~10 HH are Pwo Karen
    ▪ Surrounding villages are Pwo Karen
  - ~125 HH are Sagaw Karen
  - ~18 HH are Indian

LIVELIHOODS:

- Rice
  - ~100 houses grow rice on land they own
    ▪ 4-5 own ~20 acres
    ▪ ~40 own 2-3 acres
    ▪ ~30 own 4-5 acres
- Day labor
- Teachers
- Fishing
- Migrant workers to the cities (remittances)

Disagreements – settled by village elders along with chief and religious leaders

COMMUNICATION:

- 10-15 cell phones
- 1 radio phone
- short wave radio (they get BBC radio!)
- TVs
- Karen Newspaper – once per month from the association (bring it from Myaungmya)

Who do they call most?

- Relatives
- Association

Outside organizations

- In Ein Me administration
- Red Cross – refugee assistance
- Received nothing from government
- World Vision came but did nothing when they saw the lack of impact.

“We are still recovering. We need more resources to get there.” – QUESTIONABLE!

What helped most with your recovery?

- God
- More resources
- Remittances
War Taloke seemed to be less poor than the other villages. Upon entering the village, the village was bustling with commercial activity. The village was much more economically differentiated than other villages as well: there was a noticeable difference in economic standing between households in the village. Some homes were built of concrete and brick, finished with a layer of plaster, painted, with corrugated metal roofs, wood trimmed windows, doors, and the property was covered with infrastructure and livestock. Other homes were the typical bamboo and thatch walls and roofs with very few belongings and much less developed. Construction projects were abundant. Construction materials were piled up on jobsites, indicating a lot of capital available (necessary to buy large quantities of materials at once). Nearly every house had its own well with hand pump. It became clear over the course of the day that the leaders were adept at presenting a narrative of need to outsiders which may not have been entirely truthful. There were NOT affected by Nargis. In fact, they hosted IDPs in their village with the assistance of NGOs, but received nothing themselves in terms of assistance. However, they stated that they were “still recovering” and that they needed more resources. This is not at all consistent with what I observed in the village. Not only were they relatively unaffected by Nargis, but they were entirely more developed than other villages we visited. Because it was relatively unaffected by Nargis, I chose not to focus on it.
Appendix 8
Palaw Neh Moo Field Notes
8.1 Notes from Discussions with Church Elders, Village-Wide Meeting, and Transect Walk

Visited on May 17, 2014
Village est. by Karen families over 40 years ago.

Majority christian
700-800 people
117-130 households
Myaungmya Township

3 Churches in Village:
• 2 from Pwo Karen Baptist Convention (but different associations)
• 1 Kayin Baptist Convention

Activities:
• partial support for construction of primary school
• ECCD Center
• Building a brick-lined pond
• Health awareness

100% Sagaw Karen
There is no alcohol shop in the village. Alcohol = arguments

Sources of division:
• Teasing
• Alcohol

Nargis:
• ~40 houses damaged
• Bamboo bridge collapsed
• School collapsed
• People from other villages took refuge here.
• BIGGEST STRUGGLE:
  o Rebuilding houses:
    ▪ Took 1-8 weeks
    ▪ Mostly reusing materials from damaged house

Big social gatherings 5-6 times per year. Nearly everyone comes. Concerts are held in the village and people from surrounding villages come to them.

COMMUNICATION:
• 6 cell phones
• radio
• satellite TV
• messengers

“Everyone is a devout Christian.”
This shows a willingness to generalize, possibly for the sake of me hearing what they think they want me to hear. It also shows that being a Christian is a highly social/cultural thing and not really a truly religious distinction.

**Sources of Belonging?**
- Kinship
- Coworkers

**Source of social cohesion:** CHURCH

**Biggest hopes/dreams for village?**
- “love and unity”
- “educated village”
- “end of poverty”
- “holistic development for everyone in the village”
Appendix 9

Nant Hta Min Gone Field Notes
9.1 Notes from Discussions with Church Elders, Village-Wide Meeting, and Transect Walk

~81 Households
- 55 Buddhist households
- 26 Christian households (incl. some from surrounding areas)
Pwo Karen Baptist Convention
Church founded 1929
1958 – church built, also used as a school
1940s-1950s – Karen insurgency (violence) – village burned to ground
- this conflict was along ETHNIC lines, not religious!
- Because of this, the church has isolated itself.

EDEN Project – afterwards, pastor decided to reach out to village leaders (most of whom are Buddhist)
- built a school (with help from fertilizer company)
  - source of tension – funding from fertilizer co. and Japan
- built a road

No financial input, only training
Activities:
- Rice bank (3-yr plan)
- Biblical reflection (2 months)
- Micro-loans (women’s group)
- Pig-raising for children
- Education support
- Practice/Sharing of Local Technical Knowledge
  - Agriculture
  - Livestock

Attended church service – see seating diagram of men, women, youth segregation.
- Pastor wanted us to preach.
- Traditional order of service
- Sang from old Baptist hymnal
- Pass plate (bag) at offering
- Prayer for: pastor, elders, community, children
- Sermon from John 15:16 – “bearing fruit”
- Only saw about 25-30 households represented in church
  - 81 households total
  - Church was about 95% full.
- Farmwork going on during service (tractor)

“Mahn” is a prefix used by Karen. Buddhists are unwilling to use it in fear of losing their Buddhist identity

Buddhist/Christian division was BAD until 2-3 years ago.
- Changes due to:
  - Political changes in Parliament (2010) – received a new administrator
  - CCM project (EDEN)
INTERVIEW WITH:
- Pastor Sra Thet
- Sra Hla Min
- Saw Gilbert
- 6 other Christians

Before government change in 2010
Christians were isolated.

After changes:
People began following the leadership of 1 Buddhist man and 1 Christian man (pastor)
- this happened after CCM
- 1st project showing cooperation was the school
  - Fertilizer company’s idea. Issued a RFP to village.
  - Village submitted proposal, co-funded it, and built it.

FERTILIZER COMPANY:
- Good relationship with village:
  - Village bought 10,000,000 Kyats worth of fertilizer and pesticides from co.
    (abnormal)
    - Fertilizer co. offered credit with no interest, but charged higher prices.

Sounds like building the school was a marketing ploy. Fertilizer co. spent ~13,000,000 kyats. Village no longer buys from the company. Company recently offered to pave the road for them anyway (perhaps to gain more steady business). Proposal is in process.

“We trust one another within our group [Christian]. We don’t trust them [Buddhist] very much because of past leadership examples. If we [Christians] are leading, we see more results.”

OPINION: “Others from the Buddhist community don’t trust Buddhist leaders because of past leaders.”

Physical Segregation:
- Maj. Christians live in southern part of village
- Maj. Buddhists live in northern part of village

Not much intermarriage between Buddhist and Christian.
Appendix 10

Ethics Form

Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment

Ethics Review Form E1

This form should be completed by the Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Student undertaking a research project which involves human participants. The form will identify whether a more detailed E2 form needs to be submitted to the Faculty Research Ethics Officer.

Before completing this form, please refer to the University Code of Practice for the Ethical Standards for Research involving Human Participants, available at http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Research/Research-ethics/ and to any guidelines provided by relevant academic or professional associations.

It is the Principal Investigator / Supervisor who is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review. Note that all necessary forms should be fully completed and signed before fieldwork commences.

Project Title: The Role of Social Capital in Disaster Resistance

Principal Investigator / Supervisor:

Student Investigator: Joshua C. Ayers, #13077181

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<td>12.</td>
<td>Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Will deception of participants be necessary during the study?</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients, staff, carers or premises?</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have answered 'no' to all the above questions, send the completed form to your Module Leader and keep the original in case you need to submit it with your work.

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, you should complete the Form E2 available at [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Research/Research-ethics/Ethics-review-forms/](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Research/Research-ethics/Ethics-review-forms/) and, together with this E1 Form, email it to the Faculty Research Ethics Officer, whose name can be found at [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Research/Research-ethics/Research-ethics-officer/](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Research/Research-ethics/Research-ethics-officer/).

If you answered 'yes' to any of questions 1-13 and 'yes' to question 14, an application must be submitted to the appropriate NHS research ethics committee.

Signed: [Signature]

Signed: [Signature]

Date: [April 4, 2014]

Principal Investigator

Supervisor

Student Investigator
Bibliography


