EMBEDDING A TRANSNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL FAITH-BASED ORGANISATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES IN SINGAPORE

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SUMMARY

There has been a long-acknowledged potential for religion to play a significant role in shaping religious adherents' environmental action as well as a recent emergence of interest in how religions can be engaged to solve environmental problems. Given that environmental problems are global in nature, for example climate change, transnational action is required. Transnational religious networks that are both extensive in scope and grounded in the everyday lives of religious adherents have the potential to effect change. Transnational environmental faith-based organisations (FBOs) are thus gaining increasing importance. In this thesis, I examine the case of one particular transnational environmental FBO ('Creation-Carers') as it seeks to establish a national movement in a new country – Singapore. Through an examination of network, societal and territorial embeddedness, this thesis broadly seeks to understand the opportunities and obstacles that this transnational environmental FBO faces.

My research is focused around three main objectives: first, how partnerships are created and the power relations involved as a transnational environmental FBO seeks out local partners when establishing operations in a new locale. Specifically, I examine the hitherto largely neglected role of FBO staff and the strategies they employ to enact local forms of the transnational organisation. I argue that transnational actors require social capital as this reduces the need for spatial proximity to build trust, an important consideration for transnational organisations where actors may have little face-to-face contact. Moreover, such actors require effective social capital – that which can be converted into other forms of capital – so as to ensure the

long-term viability of projects. My second objective is to understand how the (religious) identities of transnational actors are accepted, negotiated and resisted by local actors and the implications of such transnational-local interactions for the embedding process. I argue that the transnational environmental FBO is construed as an 'outsider' – a 'Western' organisation that has a 'foreign' theology – due to the identities of its main actors. My final objective is to study how processes in the locality (such as the clustering of religious organisations and the role of secular state policies) influence the development of a transnational organisation's activities. I argue that although locating within a cluster of Christian organisations may present opportunities for cooperation, it may not be always beneficial for the transnational environmental FBO as there is competition for scarce resources. Additionally, in Singapore, the ambit that religious organisations are allowed to operate within poses a significant challenge for the organisation as the hybrid nature of its activities – religious environmentalism – is deemed to transgress the state-imposed boundary.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Research Questions

Founded in 1983 and headquartered in England, Creation-Carers[1] is a Christian organisation that focuses on environmental action. From 1983 to 1994, work centred on a field site in Portugal and gradually the management changed from being led by the team from England to being run by Portuguese staff. Subsequently, projects were established in six other countries: Lebanon (1997), France (1997), Kenya (1998), United Kingdom (1999), Canada (1999) and Czech Republic (2000). As projects proceeded at different rates of growth, there arose a need for an overarching structure that allowed national movements to develop their own programmes whilst ensuring that national movements shared their knowledge and remained accountable to one another. This led to the establishment of Creation-Carers International, a network of Creation-Carers national movements, in 2001. As of 2010, there are 18 Creation-Carers national movements. Since late 2008, Creation-Carers projects were introduced in Singapore, with the hope of establishing a Creation-Carers national movement here.

Creation-Carers is part of a broader trend of faith-based organisations (FBOs) engaged in environmental action and whose organisational structures take on a

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[1] All the names of organisations and interviewees have been replaced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The ethical reasons for this anonymity are explained in Chapter Four.

transnational form. Whilst the number of environmental FBOs has been increasing since the 1980s (Kearns, 1997; Gardner, 2002), these organisations are starting to undertake a transnational form with a *modus operandi* distinct from organisations whose operations remain within national boundaries. For example, Ignatow (2007) highlights the case of *Hazon*, a Jewish transnational environmental FBO headquartered in the United States. Even though each *Hazon* chapter is located in a different country, they are linked by a common interpretation of Jewish scriptures regarding environmentalism, a commitment to conservation work, and similar activities such as bicycle tours.

In light of the increasing awareness of transnational environmental problems and the impact religious ideas and practices may have in positively influencing environmental behaviour, transnational environmental FBOs are becoming increasingly important. For example, in 2009, alongside inter-government climate change negotiations, the United Nations' Development Programme launched the 'Many heavens, one Earth' campaign with the aim of engaging faith leaders from different world religions in mitigating climate change. The United Nations' Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's address to religious and secular leaders highlights the importance of transnational religious communities in mitigating environmental problems. He said:

> I have long believed that when governments and civil society work toward a common goal, transformational change is possible…the world's faith communities occupy a unique position in discussions on the fate of our planet and the accelerating impacts of climate change (Ban Ki-Moon, 2009).

Crucially, Ban proceeded to describe the extensive global reach of faith communities and identified faith groups as key stakeholders in the mitigation of environmental problems. Thus, in the current context, transnational environmental FBOs are uniquely positioned to address global environmental problems such as those associated with climate change due to the hybrid nature of the organisations' aims (both environmental and religious) as well as its transnational organisational structure.

The potential for religion to influence religious adherents' environmental thought and action has been well-documented (see, for example in the case of Christianity, Glacken, 1967; Kay, 1989; McFague, 2008). The role governments and civil society, including FBOs, can play in environmental action has also been explored (Princen and Fingers, 1994; Jänicke, 2006). The crucial link that Ban draws is the connection between the global reach of 'the world's faith communities' and solving global environmental problems. Transnational religious networks that are extensive in scope and grounded in the everyday lives of religious adherents can effect much change. As Gardner (2002: 5) argues, religions 'have the ear of multitudes of adherents, often possess strong financial and institutional assets, and are strong generators of social capital'. Transnational environmental FBOs, such as Creation-Carers and *Hazon* thus play important roles. Not only do such organisations use religion as a motivating factor to engage in environmental action, their transnational structure also enables them to mobilise individuals in different contexts with the common aim of environmental protection (Kong, 2010).

The possibility that governments, civil society groups, and transnational religious communities can cooperate to protect the environment is indisputable;

however, normative statements such as Ban's comments elide the complexities of the interactions among the different actors involved. Transnational-local connections and FBO-state interactions are just two of several aspects where tensions may emerge. In particular, there has been no study of how new local chapters of transnational environmental FBOs are created; in other words, the processes involved when transnational environmental FBOs try to embed within new locales. The beginnings of local chapters are crucial as these highlight decision-making processes of key organisational actors who choose where to locate the new chapter and whom to partner with.

In this thesis, I seek to fill a gap in current research by exploring the relationship between transnational-local interactions that transnational environmental FBOs experience, the sacred-secular tensions they encounter (for instance when partnering with secular state agencies), and the intersection of both dynamics in the initial embedding process. My study objectives are to explore the following questions:

1. How does a transnational environmental FBO create partnerships with other actors in a new location, and how do they try to establish themselves as legitimate actors?
2. How do the transnational (religious) identities of the actors in a transnational environmental FBO influence the way local actors perceive the organisation, and with what effects?
3. To what extent do processes already occurring within the new target location – those both associated with FBOs and related to the state – influence the development of the transnational environmental FBO's activities?

Within the ambit of these broad issues, I focus on one specific case study – the attempts at creating a Creation-Carers national movement in the secular state of Singapore. Through this specific case study, I aim to make empirical and theoretical contributions. Empirically, I intend to highlight the opportunities and obstacles that

transnational FBOs encounter as they begin to embed in a new locale. Currently, studies of such organisations tend to focus on relationships between the organisation and other actors that have developed over time. Studying how relationships are created at the beginning, and the strategies involved in such creations, provides insight into the roles FBO actors play in enacting local forms of the transnational organisation. I also hope to add a new perspective concerning FBOs in Singapore. These FBOs tend to focus on social services, or what Mathews (2008) summarises as 'saving the city through good works'. How Singapore Christians interpret Creation-Carers' aim of environmental conservation within the ambit of 'good works' would raise noteworthy points about the assumptions surrounding FBOs and shed light on issues surrounding religion in Singapore.

Theoretically, I aim to contribute to current understandings of transnational FBOs. I will show that the behaviour of these organisations may draw parallels with transnational firms. Whilst the latter have profit-seeking motives which the former may not have, both display similar patterns whilst making locational decisions (such as locating within a cluster) and seeking out partners. Building on this observation, I utilise theoretical tools within Geography – namely Hess' (2004) theorisations of embeddedness and a spatially-sensitive understanding of social capital – to understand power relations involved in FBO activities as well as the negotiations transnational FBO actors engage in when encountering difficulties.

1.2 Context of Study

The Singapore Constitution (1966) declares that Singapore is a secular state. This means that there is no state religion in Singapore and there is equal treatment of

all major religions (Tham, 2008). These policies are largely meant to reduce the likelihood of inter-racial and inter-religious discord as Singapore society is multi-ethnic and multi-religious. By adopting a secular stance, the Singapore state minimises the possibility of being construed as supporting any particular religion. Additionally, there is a clear separation between religion and politics. However, this does not mean that the Singapore state views religion as opposed to national interests. Instead, as Hill and Lian (1995) highlight, religion is considered an important part of the state's nation-building strategy as it provides citizens (who may be religious adherents) with moral guidance.

It is within such a national context that Creation-Carers is seeking to embed itself. The main organisational aim is to engage in environmental protection, using Biblical scriptures as guiding principles. It is the first transnational environmental Christian organisation that has tried to establish a national chapter in Singapore. The organisation comprises the following divisions: Creation-Carers International, Creation-Carers national movements, International Trustees and the International Council of Reference.

Creation-Carers International comprises a team of 18 members. It is led by Joseph Scott, the founder/director of Creation-Carers, who is from England. Whilst the Creation-Carers International office is located in England, members are located in different countries. They meet in sub-groups and maintain contact via email. The team comprises staff who manage Creation-Carers' finances, administration and the like. They are also part of their national movements and help ensure national movements

maintain Creation-Carers' distinctive values – the 'Five Commitments'. Creation-Carers International staff also help start new national movements.

The common thread in all Creation-Carers national movements is the 'Five Commitments' – that is Christian, Conservation, Community, Cross-cultural and Cooperation. With these guiding principles, Creation-Carers national movements develop projects that best suit the national context.

The Creation-Carers' International Trustees governs Creation-Carers International, ensuring that the organisation maintains its commitment to its vision. Trustees have a breadth of local experience and are well-known in their respective professions (such as in marketing or fund-raising). The International Council of Reference comprises world-renowned theologians and scientists who promote Creation-Carers through their professional work. For example, several members of the Council are internationally-acclaimed faculty at theological seminaries or hold prominent positions in the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

1.3 Thesis Structure

In this chapter, I have laid out the rationale for my research, presented my key questions and aims, and established briefly the context of my study. In Chapter Two, I review several strands of literature on religion and the environment, transnational NGOs, transnational FBOs and environmental FBOs. I argue that as a result of assumptions in the literature, the state's role has been neglected. Additionally, I highlight how some scholars draw parallels between the organisational behaviour of

transnational NGOs and FBOs with that of transnational firms. With these insights, I construct a conceptual framework around which this study is structured.

The context of Singapore (the role of NGOs, the place of religion and the internal and external forces shaping Christianity) and the background of Creation-Carers are discussed in Chapter Three. Subsequently, in Chapter Four, I detail my choice of methods and the sampling process.

Chapters Five to Seven are the empirical chapters. Each examines a different dimension of embeddedness – network, societal and territorial respectively. Chapter Five is concerned with the partnership-building process. In this chapter, I examine the relational and structural networks that Creation-Carers actors are situated in and how agency/structure negotiations influence the network embedding process. In Chapter Six, I focus on Creation-Carers' organisational identity and how transnational (religious) identities are interpreted by local actors with the effect of positioning Creation-Carers as either an 'insider' or 'outsider' to Singapore's Christian community. Just as the 'host' organisation affects the societal embedding process, in Chapter Seven I study how processes at the 'destination' influence the embedding process. In particular, the presence of other FBOs and the role of the state greatly influence the territorial embedding process.

In Chapter Eight, I reflect on the empirical and theoretical contributions of my study and review how I have addressed each of the research questions. Finally, I conclude by offering directions for future research.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL

FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the literature concerning religion and the environment, transnational NGOs, transnational FBOs and environmental FBOs. I show how some scholars tend to compare the organisational behaviours of these transnational organisations with transnational firms. Additionally, most research examines the outcomes of transnational NGOs' or FBOs' activities, rather than the negotiations these organisations are involved in whilst beginning to embed within a local context and forming and sustaining local partnerships.

A key argument by Bebbington (2004) highlights the need to unpack the transnational NGO as a self-contained unit of analysis, a "black box" that is able to effect changes in space. I take up Bebbington's call and use Hess' (2004) notions of network, societal and territorial embeddedness as a framework to understand the opportunities and obstacles Creation-Carers faces as it begins to embed within Singapore. A study on the creation and maintenance of partnerships requires a focus on the (currently neglected) role of FBO actors and a consideration of the context the transnational FBO is trying to establish its operations in.

2.2 Religion and the Environment

The literature that examines the relationship between religion and the environment is voluminous (see Cooper and Palmer, 1998; Jamieson, 2001). Depending on the teachings in each religion, the links it draws with the environment would differ. As Creation-Carers is a Protestant Christian environmental FBO, I will focus my review on a particular group of religions – monotheistic religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam. In this section, I aim to succinctly present key studies and views of the relationship. Kong (2010) highlights two broad ways the religion-environment link has been studied: some research takes a discursive approach by examining the link between religious teachings and environmental beliefs and action; others focus on praxis – examining how 'religion' (both as institution and belief) impacts the environment.

One of the earliest thinkers who posited a link between religious teachings and environmental action is Aldo Leopold (1966). In his essay "The Land Ethic", Leopold (1966: 238) suggests that in addition to the Ten Commandments in Judeo-Christian teachings, there is a need to have an ethic that deals 'with man's (sic) relation to the land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it'. Leopold premises his argument on the idea that humans are members, not owners, of the land community and there is interconnectedness between different members of the community. He further argues that one way ethics can be changed is through religion's power to modify personal convictions. This introduces the notion of praxis informed by religious discourse into the discussion. An example can be seen in the case of Islam. Haq (2001: 112) explains how Islamic theology teaches that 'human beings were created by God as His vicegerents…custodians of the entire natural world', thus

human beings are to care for the environment. These teachings motivate religious adherents to engage in environmental action – the other aspect of the discourse-praxis relationship. Another example of the link between religious teachings and environmental praxis is seen in Jainism. Jains operate many animal hospices as Jainism encourages believers to alleviate the sufferings of lesser beings (like animals) whilst progressing toward their ideal religious stage (Chapple, 2001).

However, certain scholars dispute the view that religious ideas positively impact the environment. In his highly influential article, White (1967: 1205) blames Western Christianity for promulgating 'an implicit faith in perpetual progress' which leads human beings, in their quest for progress, to destroy the environment. He further argues that this quest arises from the Christian creation story that condones human domination of nature. As religion is deemed the primary motivator of human action, White proposes two solutions: first, modify Christian teachings by adopting the views of St Francis of Assisi; second, replace Western Christianity with a non-Western religion such as Zen Buddhism, in order to formulate a new environmental ethic. White's essentialisation of East/West solutions to the environmental crisis undoubtedly guided further debate to focus on the merits and demerits of 'Eastern' and 'Western' religion. Hargrove (1986) concludes that such debates either attribute blame to Christianity or guide the exploration of the possibilities of replacing Christianity with Eastern religious ideas. These studies, in Hargrove's opinion, are largely fruitless because they do not lead to practical responses to the environmental crisis. Instead, what is needed is 'finding ways for major religions to respond to the environmental crisis' (Hargrove, 1986: xvii).

Similarly, Proctor (2006) argues that there is a need to further examine the relationship between religious teachings and environmental praxis. He asserts that geographical scholarship, with its focus on grounded research, is well-positioned to do so. Kong (2010) outlines two ways researchers can study 'religion' – as institution and as belief – and its relationship with the environment. Moreover, she highlights how religious groups (such as FBOs) can couple their organisation's structure with religious teachings on the environment to motivate religious adherents to engage in environmental action. Creation-Carers is one such group. In order to better understand how the religion-environment connection features in such organisations, one needs to examine the broader processes that impact the way these organisations operate, and I turn to these processes in the following section.

2.3 Definition of Terms

Before considering debates surrounding transnational NGOs and transnational FBOs in detail, it is crucial to examine two key terms: transnationalism and nongovernmental organisations.

2.3.1 Transnationalism – Definition and Debates

Khagram and Levitt (2008) posit that transnational studies build on the strengths of World Systems and globalisation studies, whilst providing a more nuanced study of the (re)making of borders. World Systems and globalisation studies shed light on the process of globalisation which is 'a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions…generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power' (Held *et al*., 1999: 16). Yet such visions of an increasingly integrated world are

problematic on at least two counts. First, it assumes an inevitable scenario – that as a result of increasing interconnectedness, all places become homogenised. However, not all spatial units are equally connected and sensitivity to the variability of scale and connection of different spatial units is lost in many studies. Second, because such studies are concerned with the interactions between spatial units of organisation, 'much globalist scholarship takes for granted the very existence of bounded or bordered social units – particularly the "world" or the "nation-state" – and the structures and processes associated with them' (Khagram and Levitt, 2008: 4).

The premise of transnational studies, then, is that the spatial units many globalisation scholars take for granted should be problematised. As Khagram and Levitt (2008: 5) assert, what was once 'assumed to be bounded and bordered social units are understood as transnationally constituted, embedded and influenced social arenas that interact with one another' (see also Sassen, 2005 and Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2008). Thus transnational studies do not consider any spatial unit as a given, but instead challenge how categories such as 'local' and 'nation-state' are constructed when these are not immediately associated with fixed notions of territory or space (Khagram and Levitt, 2008).

Apart from being a label for phenomena concerned with the construction of borders and spatial units, and variations in scale and distribution of phenomena between these spaces (Hannerz, 1996), implicit within the concept of transnationalism is a need to focus on actors within these borders who construct relations between spaces. As Hannerz (2008: 239) notes, the term 'transnational'

makes the point that many of the linkages in question are not "international," in the strict sense of (only) involving nations – actually, states – as corporate actors. In the transnational arena, the actors may now be individuals, groups, movements, business enterprises, and in no small part it is this diversity of organisation we need to consider.

Transnational studies thus include a wide range of actors within its ambit, whilst not subtracting from the continued, albeit changing, influence of the state. Nye and Keohane (2008) argue that state-centric models are increasingly inadequate as non-state actors are shaping world politics in complex ways. Nye and Keohane (2008: 25) have a useful actor-centred definition of transnational interaction as one that 'describes the movement of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government or an intergovernmental organisation'. This perspective is particularly appropriate for my study which, in part, focuses on the relationship between state and non-state actors.

2.3.2 Nongovernmental Organisations – Definition and Key Concerns

Just as the above discussion on transnationalism focused on the role of non-state actors in the changing arena of world politics, the term 'nongovernmental organisation' emerged at a period when a vocabulary to describe alternatives to the state-centric model of international negotiations was needed. The term 'NGO' was used to designate international non-state organisations that had consultative status in United Nations activities (Lewis, 2001: 34). In its most basic sense, NGOs are neither part of the government nor for-profit business (Perlas, 1999; Ronit and Schneider, 2000). The lack of precision and meaning of the term arises because it is a non-definition – describing organisations by what they are not, rather than by what they are. This leads to what Bebbington (2004: 729) terms as the 'ultimately unanswerable question of "what is an NGO?"…(hence researchers are) haunted by endless

typologies' (see Najam, 1996 and Vakil, 1997 for a nonexhaustive list of NGO types). Bebbington (2004) suggests reframing the definitional question of 'what is an NGO' to asking 'what are NGOs a case of'?'. He asserts that NGOs are 'networks of people (and ideas, institutions and things) who are already pursuing strategic goals and create NGOs in order to further these strategies and do things that cannot be done through existing institutions' (Bebbington, 2004: 729). Thus when analysing NGOs, one should examine reasons why NGOs emerge, what ideas underlie their actions, and the institutions and social structures NGOs are embedded in, rather than just examining the organisation – its actions and impact – as a decontextualised unit.

Another term frequently used interchangeably with 'NGO' is 'civil society organisation'. This refers to a type of organisation that belongs to neither the household, state nor market sector, and has the aspiration of influencing public policy and creating a sphere for public discourse (Batliwala and Brown, 2006). Thus Blair (1997) argues that civil society organisations are a subset of NGOs whose primary purpose is to influence public policy, and hence are a deliberate attempt by non-state actors to engage the state (see, however, Hudson, 2007 for his critique of the label 'civil society' as lacking analytical rigour). Again, Nye and Keohane's (2008) actor-centred definition of transnational interaction is valuable in revealing relations amongst different actors.

In the same way that both NGOs and civil society organisations define themselves as distinct (but not necessarily entirely separate) from the state, another organisation distinct from the state is the faith-based organisation (FBO). The term 'faith-based organisation' refers to 'any organisation that derives inspiration and

guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith' (Clarke and Jennings, 2008: 6). Clarke and Jennings (2008: 15) suggest that FBOs reflect the broader nongovernmental response to issues such as poverty as they share many of the values as NGOs, but from a religiously-informed perspective. Thus FBOs can be considered a type of NGO whose activities emerge from the teachings and principles of a particular faith. Although the influence of the Enlightenment has caused scholars to treat religion as separate from the state (Casanova, 2007), research on FBOs brings the focus back on church-state relations, albeit within the context of the nation-state (Clarke and Jennings, 2008), whilst excluding other important scales such as the transnational.

With these definitions in mind, in the next two sections, I examine transnational NGOs and transnational FBOs respectively. Following that, I examine the interaction between environmental FBOs and their partners. Subsequently, using Hess' (2004) spatial reconceptualisation of embeddedness as an entry point, coupled with attention to social capital, I present my conceptual framework that would help unpack the "black box" of transnational environmental FBOs.

2.4 Transnational Nongovernmental Organisations

In this thesis, a transnational NGO is an NGO that has operations in two or more countries. Whilst each national chapter of the transnational NGO may conduct a unique set of activities that is suitable to its national context, all the national chapters share a common organisational ethos that links the various national chapters together to form a transnational NGO. In this section, I examine three types of partners

transnational NGOs have – donors, other NGOs and the state, a currently-neglected partner. Subsequently, I examine factors influencing the locational decisions of transnational NGOs.

Donors are neither recipient of the NGO's services nor have much capacity to monitor the NGO's activities. The ambiguity of the donors' role has led Power, Maury and Maury (2002) to label donors as the 'alien-hand', alluding to Adam Smith's theory of the 'invisible hand' that makes markets equilibrate. Donors are important as NGOs depend on them for funding. While donors have much potential to influence NGO activities, they are not directly involved in the activities (Lister, 2000). Regarding donor influence, Power, Maury and Maury (2002: 274) assert that '[f]unding agencies tend to prefer short term, measurable outputs, which demand a high level of control over decisions and conditions in which projects are implemented'. Thus long-term projects, whose benefits may not be immediately apparent, tend to be sidelined. The power of donors is apparent as NGOs modify their activities in an attempt to be accountable to donor partners. This unidirectional accountability system has the potential to leave local communities marginalised. Thus as Green and Curtis (2005) crucially point out, although theoretically the term 'partnership' may suggest that both NGOs and donors have equal influence, this can mask relationships that in practice are driven by donor agendas.

Another partner that transnational NGOs have is local NGOs. For example, a transnational campaign was launched in the 1980s to stop a development project in Brazil's rainforest that was funded by the World Bank. The campaign's success was attributed to the partnership between Brazilian environmental and developmental

NGOs and transnational environmental NGOs. As Rich (1994: 132) highlights, in this example, transnational coalitions 'close[d] the circle between the highest levels of public international finance, the Brazilian national government, and local concerns…linking formerly isolated constituencies'. The World Bank learnt from this case and its subsequent projects factored in environmental and social concerns. This example illustrates the potentially large impact of partnerships between transnational and local NGOs.

A potential partner that researchers have not fully examined is the state. The literature on transnational NGOs tend to focus on local and global scales, ignoring that in reality, local NGO activities occur within national boundaries. There are two possible reasons that could account for this analytical gap. First, it could stem from a bias within the literature. Clark (1992: 59) highlights that within current discourses about NGOs and development, the state is presented as dysfunctional and monolithic. Similarly, Stewart (1997: 12) argues that because the state is considered completely bad, alternative action is unnecessarily limited to only NGOs and the market. That NGOs and private companies may have ties with the state has largely been ignored. Moreover, Stewart (1997: 13) argues, the 'pro-NGO camp relies almost exclusively on broad theoretical overviews of NGOs and/or civil society' hence NGOs may have been too valorised as saviours and the state too demonised, resulting in the lack of consideration of the state (see also Mohan, 2002). Stewart's (1997) argument echoes the earlier discussion regarding the non-definition of the term 'nongovernmental organisation' which suggests a clear separation between governmental and nongovernmental organisations as the latter is seen to remedy failures of the former.

Second, the lack of consideration of the state could arise from the lack of grounded research that examines how theories of transnational NGOs actually feature in specific contextual situations. Somerville (2004) makes a case for the need to reconsider state-NGO relations as NGOs may not be as autonomous from the state as commonly perceived. Using examples of urban social movements in the United Kingdom, Somerville (2004) argues that changes in the form of governance (such as the increasing emphasis on local participation) do not necessarily alter core power relations between state and NGOs. Instead, the emergence of local actors could have resulted from a fragmentation in the scale of state governance. This shows that states are not monolithic and are capable of attaining a degree of flexibility and complexity in their forms of governance (see Jänicke, 2006 regarding how environmental flows have created a need to reinvent the nation-state). Thus, there is a need for theoretically-informed empirical studies. This would help when evaluating the effectiveness of NGOs at producing change and suggesting plausible alternative partnerships between states, NGOs and other actors by focusing on the commonalities of their interests whilst considering their differences (see Chapter Eight).

The role of the state points to the importance of processes occurring within the territory, which in turn influences where NGOs are located. For example, Pellow (2006: 228) highlights how most transnational NGOs 'are largely based in the Northern Hemisphere for reasons of access to global decision-makers in world cities such as London…(and) also because the telecommunication and transportation infrastructure in these nations are often more supportive of rapid and intense utilisation'. The transnational NGO, then, behaves like the transnational 'firm', particularly in terms of the reasons for where the organisation's headquarters tend to

be located and its relation to the development of the transnational NGO (see Chapter Seven).

2.5 Transnational Faith-Based Organisations

In this section, I focus on a particular type of transnational NGO – the transnational faith-based organisations (FBO). I begin by outlining the relationship between transnational religion and transnational FBOs before proceeding to examine several factors that influence the success of these organisations.

2.5.1 Transnational Religion –Teachings and Institutions

Religion, as Juergensmeyer (2007: 144) states, 'has always been global. Its ideas and adherents have never been easily contained within the boundaries of polities' (see also Beyer, 1994). Yet, what is distinctive about contemporary religious transnationalism, Rudolph (2008) argues, is first its demographic composition – with a focus on the (im)mobility of 'ordinary' people (as opposed to missionaries) and the quotidian role of religion; and second, augmented technological flows between localities – such as the Internet and increased print and electronic media (see Kong, 2006). This interaction between religious forces and wider societal developments leads Vásquez and Marquardt (2003: 55) to conclude that 'new spatio-temporal arrangements generated by globalisation dovetail with religious "morphologies of success," forms of religious organisations and practice strategically equipped to deal with the existential predicaments generated by globalisation at the level of everyday life'. Thus current societal conditions, coupled with the transnational nature of religion, seem to create ideal conditions for transnational religious organisations to flourish (see also Jennings and Clarke, 2008). Similarly, Clarke (2008) attributes the

success of the FBO-led Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt relief to the emergence of transnational civil society, highlighting the need to examine FBOs within the context of wider transnational processes.

Researchers studying transnational religions can trace how a similar set of teachings may be modified locally, and the actors that generate change. Many religions have a common set of religious texts, such as the Torah in Judaism or the Quran in Islam. Vásquez and Marquardt (2008: 320) argue that transnational religious networks are particularly strong because 'they build bridges between universal messages of salvation and particular existential needs and between the overarching logics of translocal organisations and the discourses and practices of specific congregations'. Thus scripture is a unifying and universal force that is applicable to particular contexts. The effects of religious teachings can be analysed at two levels – individually and organisationally. As individuals, religious adherents can interpret the same religious ideas that other believers of the same religion read and/or hear, and apply it to his/her own context, motivating him/herself to action. As organisations, adherence to scripture can be the common ground that unites the different segments of an organisation together. It can also validate the purpose of the transnational FBO's existence because the mission of FBOs tends to be derived (at least in part) from religious ideas.

Religious ideas can be a motivating force for religious adherents to reach others. These flows of people and ideas and the attendant connections between places are central to transnational studies. Examples of the outward movement of religious adherents include religious missionary orders (Rudolph, 2008). Apart from having a

centrifugal effect on religious adherents, religious ideas can create intra-group solidarity, as in the case of Pentecostalism in Latin America which 'offers believers resources to relocalise themselves…and build tight affective communities' (Vásquez and Marquardt, 2008: 319; see also James, 2007). Clearly, religious ideas can direct people flows – by dispersing or gathering them – in ways important for analyses. Thus studying transnational FBOs is not just a case of adding religious identities and values as another analytical category, but to examine religion as the primary driver of the network.

Yet when teachings are transmitted across cultures, messages are not wholly transmitted but are instead contextualised to local conditions of the receiving area. Vásquez and Marquardt (2003) refer to such modifications as the glocalisation of religion, where global messages meant for a transnational religious community are localised to fit the context of the receiving audience. One factor affecting the degree of modification of transmission of religious messages is the amount of clerical control within the religion. For example, in her comparison of the church structures of Catholicism and Protestanism, Levitt (2001) highlights how the Catholic Church comprises a network of local and national churches that are connected to and directed by a single authority – the Pope. Protestant churches, on the other hand, comprise less hierarchical structures and have more flexible organisational structures. The greater the levels of hierarchical control present in the religion, the lesser the variance from the original message. Thus, while religions are global in scope and have teachings that are universal, messages transmitted to the transnational community are modified according to local contexts and are influenced by the hierarchical structure of the religion.

The religion's organisational structure has an impact on who can be deemed a legitimate actor. In religions with clearly-defined and formal hierarchies, actors who are part of the formal structure are legitimate actors. For religions with more flexible structures, the legitimacy of an actor may be acquired through different means, such as one's reputation as a prolific religious author. This is an important consideration for transnational FBOs seeking to embed in a new locale (see Juergensmeyer, 2007 and Casanova, 2001 for comparisons of organisational structure between Catholic and Protestant FBOs). How the organisation gains legitimacy, for example through the support of recognised actors for the organisation, and the organisation's own positioning of itself as a legitimate actor, is related to the way legitimacy is accorded within the religion itself (see Chapters Five and Six).

2.5.2 Typology of Faith-Based Organisations

The difficulties of classifying the wide array of NGOs (Najam, 1996; Vakil, 1997) are reduced when it comes to FBOs as the 'faith' component identifies a particular group of NGOs, while encompassing a range of organisations with varying practices and levels at which religious ideas provide an impetus for action.

The following is a useful five-fold typology of FBOs that can help one better understand such organisations:

1) Faith-based representative organisations or apex bodies that rule on doctrinal matters and represent them through engagement with the state and other actors
2) Faith-based charitable or development organisations that mobilise the faithful in support of programmes such as poverty alleviation. Such organisations play a more direct role in the community they are trying to help

3) Faith-based socio-political organisations that deploy faith as a motivating factor to mobilise religious adherents into action but do not claim to rule on doctrinal matters
4) Faith-based missionary organisations that spread faith message beyond the faithful and engage with other faith communities on the basis of key faith principles
5) Faith-based radical, illegal or terrorist organisations that promote radical or militant forms of faith identity which may lead to violent acts justified on the grounds of faith

(Abridged from Clarke, 2008: 25-30)

The two variables in the typology are the role of religious teachings and the role of engagement with other actors. FBOs can thus be arranged in a spectrum according to the extent religious teachings influence the FBO's work, ranging from those where religious teachings provide little more than organisational identity (passive) to those that only work with communities from the same religion (exclusive). The ways in which religious teachings influence the FBO's engagement with other (non)religious actors is another way of categorising FBOs. This engagement could be broadly based either in partnership or in conflict, notwithstanding that conflicts do occur in partnerships.

2.5.3 *Factors Affecting Success of Transnational Faith-Based Organisations*

In this section, I examine three factors that influence the success of transnational FBOs: (i) religious teachings; (ii) religious values in partnership; and (iii) funding and organisational structure.

With regards to religious teachings, Olson's (2006) study of the interventions by Protestant and Catholic FBOs in developmental programmes for communities in the Peruvian Andes is instructive. As mentioned previously, with regards to church

hierarchy, Protestant churches tend to be more loosely organised than Catholic ones. It would be expected that as compared to Protestant teachings, Catholic teachings would be less modified when transmitted to the new locale. However, in Latin America there is liberation theology, a 'development of a theology by Latin American religious and laity that responded to the severe political and material inequalities and injustices that were common throughout the region' (Olson, 2006: 888), in other words, a glocalisation of Catholic teachings. Protestant teachings, on the other hand, were largely introduced from the North American context into the Peruvian context with little modification. Resulting from this glocal form of Catholic teachings, it would be expected that developmental and religious teachings are more easily transmitted in Catholic developmental projects when compared to Protestant ones. Yet this was not the case. The Protestant transnational FBO was more successful in mapping its 'transnational' religion onto the 'local' development process because the discourses directly addressed problems present in the locale. Protestant teachings, such as the prohibition against drinking alcohol, translated into a good work ethic congruent with developmental goals. Whilst liberation theology is a glocalisation of religious teachings, its potentially positive impact was limited as it did not address the more pressing issue within Catholic FBO developmental projects – the issue of gender inequality. Despite lacking a glocalised form of Protestantism, the transnational Protestant FBO was more successful as it addressed the local community's needs. Thus whilst religious teachings are important in transnational FBO activities, there is no straightforward relationship between the level of glocalisation of religious teachings and its impact on the success of the FBO's programmes.

Another factor influencing the success of a transnational FBO is the role of religious values in partnership-formation. When a transnational FBO begins operations in a new country, FBO staff tend to seek out local partners to connect with the local community and to establish some form of legitimacy for their activities. In her study of American evangelical mission organisations in Kenya, Hearn (2002) examines how transnational mission organisations use their status as Christian FBOs to indicate to donors that they have advantageous access to Kenyan Christian communities. Thus in the case where the FBO and local community supposedly share similar religious values, what Sajoo (2008) terms the 'faith imaginary' in civil society, religion becomes an important marker of the transnational organisation's 'insider' status and aids the formation of local partnerships.

Yet, not all transnational FBOs work with communities that have similar religious affiliations. Some, such as those involved in humanitarian crises, operate in settings where they may partner and/or help communities that are from different religious traditions. For example, in his study of FBOs engaging in relief work in post-tsunami Aceh, McGregor (2010) examines how transnational FBOs with distinctly Christian names, or whose organisation's emblem has religious symbols such as the cross, abbreviated the organisation name and removed the religious symbol in an attempt to 'downplay their religiosity'. McGregor's study makes an important point – transnational FBOs, especially those operating in contexts where the majority of the local community may not share the same faith as that of the FBO, may consciously deemphasise religious markers in their organisational identity in order to gain access to local partners or communities. This highlights the flexibility of religious identities as a strategy in transnational FBO partnership-formation processes.

A third factor influencing a transnational FBO's success is the way it obtains financial support for its activities. Attention needs to be paid to the donor's background and its agenda. In her study of World Vision, Bornstein (2001) examines the organisation's unique way of generating funds through child sponsorship. It is based on the idea of building personal relationships between the child receiving sponsorship and the donor through correspondence, which exists alongside the impersonal monetary transfer, with the intended outcome of trying to make visible 'transcendent love for a stranger' (Bornstein, 2001: 598), one of several Christian values.

Apart from approaching individual donors from particular religious communities, transnational FBOs can also depend on government agencies from their home country as potential sources of funding. For example, Hearn (2002) documents how the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) channels a significant portion of its aid programme to NGOs where American evangelical missions 'are a significant constituency, both as direct grantees and, more generally, in furthering the US government's broad policy goals' (Hearn, 2002: 34).

The two case studies by Bornstein (2001) and Hearn (2002) demonstrate how transnational FBOs' organisational structures enable the flow of funding. Levitt (2007) argues that as a result of wider processes such as increasing flows of people, money and ideas between places, transnational religious organisations are now increasingly behaving like transnational religious corporations. In the case of World Vision, its organisational structure comprises 'a transnational network of offices in

which donor offices communicate directly with national offices without the coordination of a central office' (Bornstein, 2001: 596); a pattern similar to the way transnational corporations operate. Donors in 'developed' nations such as the United States remit money through their donor offices to help children in 'developing' nations such as Zimbabwe (the national office). Moreover, in Hearn's (2002) USAID example, not only do government agencies consider FBOs as having direct access to local communities due to common religious affiliations, the relationship between governmental funding and transnational FBOs follows from a deeper assumption in the current neoliberal milieu. The assumption is that NGOs are able to 'deliver social welfare services to those who cannot be reached through markets at lower costs and higher standards of quality than government' (Hearn, 2002: 46). Transnational FBOs are seen as cost-effective and efficient service providers to areas where government agencies – characterised as large organisations with rigid structures – are unable to reach. In other words, the transnational FBO is portrayed as the flexible transnational 'firm'.

Despite the wide variety of world religions and the transnational nature of religion, scholars have mainly focused on developments within Christian FBOs, especially with regards to relations between Christian traditions arising from the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Latin America (see for example, Olson, 2006; Briscoe, 2007; Towle, 2007; Jennings, 2008; Moreno, 2008). Thus there is a need for a broadening of geographical scope, to investigate the role of transnational FBO activities within Asia which has a wide array of religious traditions and forms of governance.

2.6 Environmental Faith-Based Organisations

In Section 2.2, I highlighted the potential for religion to play a significant role in shaping environmental thought and action of religious adherents. This echoes Gardner's (2002) argument concerning 'the potential power of engaged religion' – that much progress can be achieved in the realm of sustainable action if both environmental and religious groups collaborate with one another. Apart from cooperation between environmental and religious groups, environmental FBOs – FBOs whose organisational focus centre primarily on environmental issues – have emerged since the 1980s (Ignatow, 2007). As Kearns (1997: 350) notes, '[i]n the decade or so since the Reagan years, the movement of religious ecology has grown into a multi-faceted and distinct branch of the resurging environmental movement'. Two factors that influence the development of environmental FBOs are the types of partners they have as well as wider transnational processes.

One type of partner environmental FBOs engage with is other FBOs. For example, Kearns (1997) highlights the case where a partnership between a Christian environmental FBO – the Evangelical Environment Network – and other FBOs, particularly parachurch organisations, were successful in the political lobbying process in Washington. A parachurch organisation is a Christian FBO whose primary identity is not based on denominational affiliations (that is, a church), but instead is a special-purpose group which 'include[s] many "Christian professional associations" and "support groups" as well as agencies devoted to particular kinds of advocacy, ministry and service' (Jeavons, 1994: 45). The success of the Evangelical Environment Network's achievements in political lobbying is largely attributed to its members being involved in a range of parachurch organisations. As Wuthnow (1988:

121), writing about American religion asserts, and Kearns' example supports, parachurch organisations 'may be the ones that increasingly define the public role of American religion'. As parachurch organisations are special-purpose organisations that do not belong to a particular denomination, the activities they organise tend to not be contained within the traditional domain of churches, thus lying at the overlap of church and wider (secular) society. Moreover, a majority of individuals who belong to parachurch organisations are members of their churches, making them important actors transferring ideas between special-interest groups and churches. This environmental FBO-parachurch organisation partnership further strengthens the environmental FBO's position as it aids in the spreading of the organisation's environmental message.

Apart from partnerships with similar organisations, the development of environmental FBOs is influenced by wider processes such as transnational flows of ideas and identities. In a seminal book, Ignatow (2007) traces how globalising forces such as increased communication networks have combined with identity categories such as religion to inflect the trajectory of the modern environment movement. The premise of Ignatow's argument is that globalising forces not only homogenise places, they also encourage hybridisation. Current explanations of environmental movements are unable to account for the emergence of identity-based environmentalism because such explanations are based on the wrong assumption – that globalisation only leads to homogeneity of places and social organisation, including environmental action.

Ignatow urges a re-examination of current theories concerning environmental politics, highlighting the diversity of environmental action in local contexts. For

example, he surfaces the prevalence of Alevi theology in Turkey, a 'mystical belief system indigenous to Anatolia "covered by a thin gauze of Islam"…[which] claims to be more holistic and dedicated to nature [compared to Islam]' (Ignatow, 2007: 84-85). An example of Turkish Alevi environmental activism was seen when the group protested against an industrial consortium's gold mining techniques which involved cyanide leaching. The protest led to a court case which resulted in the consortium ceasing operations due to its violation of an article in the Turkish Constitution that declared 'everyone has the right to develop his/her material and spiritual entity' and 'everyone has the right to live in a healthy, decent environment' (Ignatow, 2007: 91). Resulting from increased migration and other globalising processes such as the construction of more telecommunication networks, Turkish Alevi organisations are now established in Germany, Australia and other countries and these communities are linked through websites, cultural programmes and research institutes, forming a transnational environmental faith-based organisation.

2.7 Transnational Environmental Faith-Based Organisation – a Conceptual Framework

While there is research done on the intersection between religion and the environment, on transnational FBOs as well as environmental FBOs, few studies have examined the relatively new phenomenon of transnational environmental FBOs (such as Creation-Carers, *Hazon*, Turkish Alevis and Lithuanian Romuvas). Additionally, there has been little examination of the spatial implications of the processes through which a transnational FBO begins to embed itself within a locale and seeks out partners. Even though, as mentioned earlier, Vásquez and Marquardt (2003) assert that globalisation's spatio-temporal structure matches religious 'morphologies of

success', this does not mean transnational FBOs flourish everywhere. Grounded research is necessary to examine the intricacies of the embedding process. Additionally, the roles transnational FBO staff play in enacting local forms of the organisation have been neglected. Drawing upon a largely geographical literature on (transnational) religion, embeddedness, and a critique by human geographers of the notion of social capital, I present a conceptual framework that forms the scaffolding on which the empirical material for this thesis will hang (Figure 2.1).

Sacred

Societal
Embeddedness

Social
Capital

Transnational
Environmental
Faith-Based Organisation

Institution   Individual

Local Environmental
Faith-Based Organisation

Network
Embeddedness

Territorial
Embeddedness
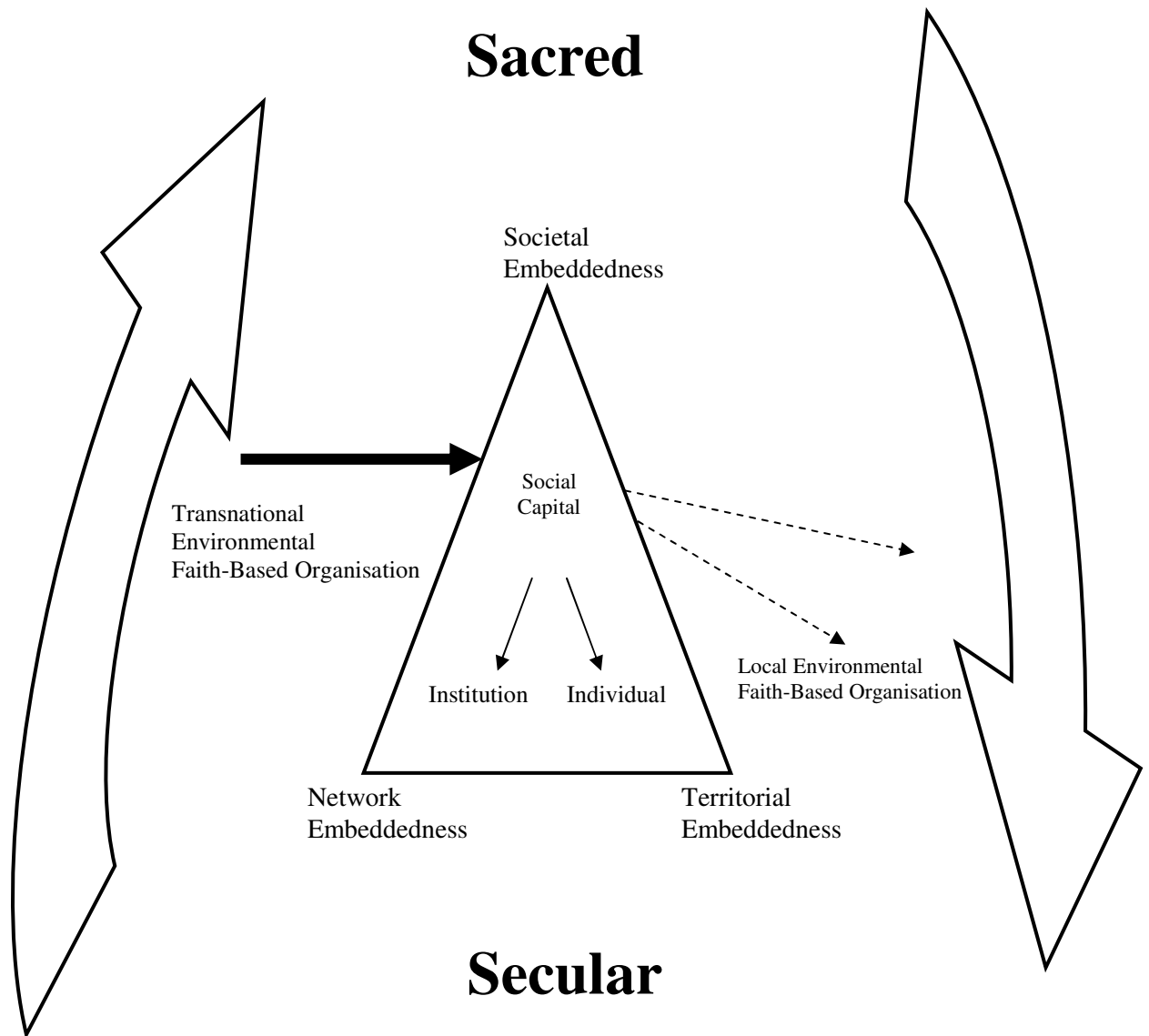
Secular

Figure 2.1 – Conceptual Framework of Thesis

2.7.1 Sacred-Secular Dynamics

One of the main concerns in the literature on FBOs is how the sacred-secular tension features in the FBO's activities. This tension can emerge, for example, when FBOs try to partner government agencies which are secular. The terms 'sacred' and 'secular' tend to be conceptualised as a binary pair, where 'secular' is defined as 'not sacred' or non-religious. Yet, it should be emphasised that these terms are not diametrically opposed. Casanova (2007) highlights that the term 'secular' has many meanings, including the decline of religious beliefs, the privatisation of religion, and the separation of spheres (for example, the state from religious institutions). Similarly, the 'sacred' has multiple meanings and exists in a variety of circumstances – the church is an 'officially' sacred site (MacDonald, 2002), just as cemeteries (Kong, 1999), museums (Kong, 2005a), schools (Kong, 2005b), the body (Gökariksel and Mitchell, 2005; Knott, 2005) and a séance (Holloway, 2006) can all be sites of religious praxis. Thus, it is important to examine the struggle over the production of meanings of 'sacred' and 'secular' (Kong, 2001).

Despite the indeterminacy of meanings, the sacred/secular binary still has much influence over the FBO's access to partners, funding, and sites. As discussed earlier, FBOs can be conceptualised along a spectrum according to the influence religious values have on the organisational activity (see Section 2.5.2). In his study on FBOs engaged in post-tsunami rebuilding efforts in Aceh, Indonesia, McGregor (2010) highlights how FBOs from different religious traditions strategically employed different aspects of their sacred/secular identities to ensure their projects were successful. As these FBOs were engaged in developmental work in a predominantly Muslim community, the Christian FBOs' downplaying of their religious identities to

gain access to the local community was understandable. Interestingly, the Muslim FBOs also deliberately distanced themselves from Acehnese religious institutions. The Muslim FBOs de-emphasised their religious identity so as to avoid accusations that they may be strengthening Islam and hence risk losing donor funding from Western governments. Thus the 'sacred' element of the dynamic can be modified by the FBO in accordance to how it wishes to position itself in relation to other actors.

Binaries are political and spatial tools that can be used to oppress certain groups, such as a religious minority. For example, Flanigan's study on FBOs in conflict zones concluded that in such contexts, FBOs 'often reinforced, rather than transcended, schisms found in the larger society where they work' (Flanigan, 2010: 146). These FBOs tended to provide services primarily to those from their own religious traditions whilst excluding other actors, such as religious minorities. The sacred/secular binary can thus have lasting implications on which communities receive FBO developmental aid and which do not.

Attempts have been made to denaturalise conceptual categories of binaries for a more emancipatory spatial politics (Cloke and Johnston, 2005). Importantly, Cloke and Johnston (2005) highlight that not all binaries are opposites. For example, agency is not antithetical to structure and the interaction between both is important. However, as both are commonly presented in the binary 'Agency/Structure', analyses tend to focus on either agency or structure, limiting alternative explanations. Deconstructing binaries then, is a political struggle that 'unpicks this overarching structure of signification…(in order to) reconsider the notion of difference beyond the fixity of binary and hierarchical restrictions, and engage in the process of developing radically

heterogeneous spaces' (Cloke and Johnston, 2005: 16). Thus rather than continuing with binary thinking that is structured around difference, serving only to reinforce the power of the dominant group, thinking relationally about the relationship between the 'sacred' and the 'secular' begins the process of deconstructing binaries, leading to the creation of new spaces for transnational (environmental) FBOs.

2.7.2 Transnational and Local Environmental Faith-Based Organisation

A key perspective in studying transnational environmental FBOs, and the local forms of the environmental FBO which emerge as a result of the embedding process, is one which recognises that the transnational and local are connected and co-implicated. As Jackson *et al.* (2004: 13) highlight, there is a need to conceptualise 'transnationalism as a social field involving webs of connection between distant places'. An example of the web of connections within transnational religious networks can be found in Guest's (2002) study of Chinese churches in New York's Chinatown which originate from Fuzhou province in China. He highlights how poor and undocumented Fuzhou Protestant immigrants in New York's Chinatown regularly ask clergy in Fuzhou immigrant churches to bring goods and news from Fuzhou into New York. Similarly, in Fuzhou, local clergy prepared their members for the migration process by introducing the migrants to clergy in immigrant Fuzhou churches in New York who can assist the migrants upon arrival. These immigrants remit money to their home churches in Fuzhou. The flows of material and monetary resources as well as movement of people connect communities in New York and Fuzhou in ways that transform the economic, political, social and religious conditions of both places.

The influence of transnational and local connections and co-implications can be significant and thus needs to be further studied. Massey (2005: 180) asserts that if 'entities/identities are relational then it is in the relations of their construction that the politics needs to be engaged'. The opportunities and obstacles encountered when connections are made between transnational and local actors and spaces are important for analyses. Similarly, Glick Schiller (1997) argues for a greater emphasis on the role of actors, their agency, and the interaction between global, transnational, national and local social fields. As such, in Figure 2.1, dashed arrows are used to symbolise how local forms of the transnational environmental FBO still maintain the general appearance of the organisation, but local forms are multiple and varied. The local outcome is largely dependent on factors influencing each dimension of embeddedness such as the agency of the actors involved and their attendant social capital. What this schematic suggests is that the transnational and local spaces that the transnational environmental FBO inhabits are not discrete entities, where researchers can separately analyse 'transnational space' on the one hand, and 'local space' on the other. The 'transnational' is also not constituted by disembodied forces 'from above' (Falk, 1993), such as global capital flows, that enact on a passive local (see Smith and Guarnizo, 1998 on the varieties of resistances in transnationalism 'from below').

2.7.3 Embeddedness – Network, Societal, Territorial

I employ the concept of embeddedness to understand the prospects Creation-Carers face when establishing a new national movement. Embeddedness is a useful lens to examine, for actors, the agency-structure relationship, and for organisations, the role of policy in creating a milieu that attracts similar organisations to the same locality. The concept is found mainly in economic geography and economic

sociology. As a result of the relational turn within economic geography, researchers engaging with the concept of embeddedness are concerned with, for example, where entrepreneurs are located within network relations and how these relations are influenced by historical factors that continue to shape entrepreneurial activity (Sunley, 2008). Another interest centres on how government policies can be tools to attract certain segments of the network to particular cities in order to create new network hubs (Henderson *et al.*, 2002). Despite existing as a concept pertaining mainly to firm behaviour, the theory of embeddedness is conceptually helpful for current purposes.

Hess surfaces three important dimensions of embeddedness that researchers should consider. First, there is network embeddedness which comprises relational and structural aspects. The relational aspect focuses on an individual actor's relations with other actors, whilst the structural aspect is concerned with broader structures that networks are situated in – such as, government policies. The agency-structure relationship becomes the focus. Studies of network embeddedness are concerned with (1) how these relations are constructed, (2) whether these relations are resilient and firm and (3) the role of trust-formation in these relations.

The second aspect of embeddedness is societal embeddedness. Studies on societal embeddedness are concerned with how the actor's societal background enables or constrains the embedding process. The actor's background is important because it is a constant factor shaping the actor's development along certain routes, despite changes in, for example, the local context.

Not only do conditions of the 'host' organisation influence the embedding process (societal embeddedness), processes operating in the space that the transnational organisation seeks to embed are also influential. An investigation of territorial embeddedness is concerned with these processes and their impact on the degree of anchoring of the transnational organisation to a space.

The premise of Hess' (2004) argument is that 'embeddedness' has lost its analytical purchase due to ambiguity in the term's usage. By examining the questions ''who' is embedded in 'what', and what is so 'spatial' about it?' (Hess, 2004: 166), Hess focuses on the interaction between actors ('who') and social and cultural structures ('what'). He notes that in the literature, the link between embeddedness and the local or regional scale 'stresses the central role of concrete personal relations and networks of relations to generate trust' (Hess, 2004: 174) between firms. Thus spatial proximity (with its impact on trust-building) is considered key to explaining why firms locate in certain areas. Yet, Hess argues that the relationship between distance and trust may be a truism as 'it seems somewhat problematic to attribute trust to one particular geographical scale' (Hess, 2004: 175).

The problematic aside, the central component of embeddedness is trust. Mark Granovetter, an economic sociologist who wrote the 1985 seminal paper on embeddedness, argues for the need to 'recognise the importance of concrete personal relations and networks of relations – what he calls "embeddedness" – in generating trust, in establishing expectations, and in creating and enforcing norms' (Coleman, 2000: 15). Granovetter's notion of embeddedness refers to 'a structure with history and continuity that gives it an independent effect on the functioning of economic

systems' (Coleman, 2000: 15), underscoring the need to examine social contexts and institutions. As social capital and its related concept of trust are central to notions of embeddedness, I explore the notion of social capital next.

2.7.4 Social Capital – Institutions and Individuals

Social capital can be understood as 'an aspect of institutional pattern and collective organisation and a resource to which individuals have differential access and which they can use' (Jenkins, 2009: 148). It is a major factor influencing an actor's embedding process. Social capital became a catchphrase in academia and policy debates due to the popularisation of the concept by Robert Putnam (1993) in his influential book *Making Democracy Work*. Putnam defines social capital as 'features of social organisation such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions' (1993: 167). This is the dominant definition of social capital within policy perspectives (Arrow, 2000). Yet, social capital is a highly contested concept (Holt, 2008) and is criticised for having 'wish-fulfilment' tendencies (Mohan and Mohan, 2002). It is important to note that Putnam is only one of three main theorists of social capital, the other two being Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman, whom I will turn attention to later.

The critiques of Putnam's theorisations are multifarious. Some criticised his concept for its neoliberal underpinnings (Fine, 2001), others for the undertheorisation of state-society relations (Das, 2004). Putnam's neglect of the state is particularly detrimental for transnational NGO studies as the state is still a key power broker influencing activities within its borders (see Radcliffe, 2001). Additionally, Holt (2008: 230) asserts that Putnam's conceptualisation of social capital as a panacea to

many problems is problematic for human geographers because it does not 'fully consider places as 'becoming'; as dynamic material expressions of broader sociospatial processes and power enactments, which then constrain and enable social change'. This static view of space is at odds with theorisations of the multiplicities of space by geographers such as Massey (2005). Additionally, Sewell (2001: 51-52) notes that within the social movement literature, most researchers have 'treated space as an assumed and unproblematic background, not as a constituent aspect of contentious politics that must be conceptualised explicitly and probed systematically'. If we are to take the arguments about the politics of space by Sewell and others (see Leitner *et al.*, 2008) seriously, there needs to be more contextual understandings about social capital than what Putnam offers.

Despite its shortcomings, certain parts of Putnam's conceptualisations of social capital are still useful. One aspect is the role of the individual and his/her community – that is, social networks. In this case, it is the 'friends of friends' that become important (Jenkins, 2009). This emphasis on the actor's community and the (un)importance of spatial proximity is one aspect of embeddedness that will be discussed later. Another aspect is Putnam's focus on trust, which according to him, is not an entity on its own. Instead, for Putnam, trust 'denotes a wider facility for co-operative behaviour' (Hems and Tonkiss, 2000: 6) particularly for civil societal groups. As Portes argues, social capital is a matter of '*enforceable* trust' (1998: 8, emphasis his). Trust then, is not a feel-good effect of social capital, but is instead a modality of power with the ability to enact changes.

Recent critiques of the significance of social capital by human geographers assert that Putnam neglects social context (Holt, 2008; Mohan and Mohan, 2002). Two other theorists of social capital – Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman – arguably focus more on the importance of context on social capital. Bebbington (2009) highlights that for Bourdieu (1986), social capital is one of several 'capitals' – others include economic, cultural and symbolic capital – and these capitals must be understood in relation to one another. Moreover, Bourdieu focuses on how power relations are (re)produced and how patterns of resource access 'tend to reproduce existing distributions of power and capitals' (Bebbington, 2009: 165). Holt (2008: 231) argues that Bourdieu's theorisations deal with the critiques of Putnam's thesis, including Putnam's 'lack of sensitivity to socio-economic inequalities and wider historical-political and material processes'. Similarly, Coleman (1988) conceptualises social capital as a resource that emerges out of a relationship and one which influences resource access. Both theorists highlight the 'individually appropriable and contextual nature of social capital – its embeddedness in particular social structures is what gives it its value' (Bebbington, 2009: 166). However, Bourdieu focuses more on institutional behaviour and the influence structures have on social capital, whilst Coleman concentrates more on the individual's way of operationalising social capital.

The choice of a particular definition of social capital influences the research process (Smidt, 2003). As the earlier review of the literature has shown, there is a need to consider the role of the state, and for a nuanced examination of how space matters in NGO activities. The criticisms levelled at Putnam's conceptualisations are therefore significant. Moreover, as Gardner (2002: 19-20) emphasises, the role of religion in generating social capital tends to lend itself to analysis of how belief

systems are spread across religious communities, pointing to a study of religious structures and institutions. Thus, I employ Bourdieu's conceptualisation of social capital as it focuses on organisational behaviour and the role of structures such as religion, whilst enabling researchers to examine an individual's ability to utilise his/her social capital.

2.8 Summary

I have reviewed literature on transnational NGOs and transnational FBOs. Additionally, the limited literature on environmental FBOs was examined. I then used the concept of embeddedness, originally from economic geography and economic sociology (but well used beyond them by now), as an entry point into understanding how a transnational environmental FBO begins to embed in a local context. The notions of network, societal and territorial embeddedness enables researchers to explore multiple spatialities (Letiner *et al.*, 2008) and multiple actors as advocated by Nye and Keohane (2008), allowing for the inclusion of oft-neglected actors such as the state. I also showed that there was much conceptual coherence between notions of embeddedness and social capital. Finally, the need for a contextualised understanding of the empirical situation was emphasised and in the next chapter, I present the context of my study.

Chapter 3

The Singapore Setting

3.1 Introduction

To better understand the complexities surrounding Creation-Carers' embedding process in Singapore, one needs to consider (i) the role of NGOs in Singapore, (ii) the relationship between religion and the state here, and (iii) the characteristics of religions, particularly Christianity, in the country. These form the next three sections of this chapter, followed by a final section that provides an overview of Creation-Carers and several projects that Creation-Carers actors have recently completed in Singapore.

3.2 Nongovernmental Organisations and the Singapore State

> The level of constraints that civil society organisations face differs from one sphere of activity to another….the more conventional ones such as women's, environmental, and consumer groups, are given substantial space…[and are] in direct involvement with government practices and plans…[a group of organisations] that pose problems for state control is those organised around officially recognised group-identity markers, such as race and religion.
> (Chua, 2005: 187)

Chua's (2005) analysis of the varying levels of state management of different types of civil society groups in Singapore is pertinent for an understanding of groups with distinct causes (for example, women's rights, the environment) and groups with distinct identity markers (for example, religion). However, what is unclear is how the state's management of such groups is modified when the civil society organisation is of a cross-cutting nature (such as, an environmental FBO). Part of my study will shed

light on exactly this issue. Before that, I outline in this section the relationship between the state and environmental NGOs and in the next section, the relationship between religion and the state in Singapore.

As with all other NGOs, the activities of environmental NGOs in Singapore are governed by the policies of the Registry of Societies. However, environmental NGOs have a relatively greater degree of freedom compared to other NGOs. Chua (2005) offers two reasons for this: first, such organisations operate within the framework of registered societies; second, '[b]eing environmentally friendly is important to Singapore's national image as a "garden city"' (Chua, 2005: 180-181).

Writing in 1994, Kong argued that the role environmental NGOs play in Singapore has broadly tended to follow an 'insider/outsider' typology. 'Insider' organisations are those that try to influence governmental policy decisions through cooperation with government committees. In Singapore, most environmental NGOs tend to operate as 'insiders' (Kong, 1994: 8). 'Outsider' organisations are those that attempt to enact changes by, for example, generating public outcry over issues in order to induce governmental action. About a decade later, Hobson's (2005) research demonstrated how this 'insider/outsider' distinction has become less clearly-defined. In her study on the Green Volunteer Network, an environmental NGO in Singapore, Hobson (2005) showed how volunteers actively constructed themselves as 'outsiders'. Despite being involved in volunteering – a state-endorsed and hence arguably 'insider' practice – the volunteers emphasised that their reasons for volunteering differed from (but were not in opposition to) the state's. The above example shows how the boundary separating 'insider' and 'outsider' environmental NGOs may be

more permeable than previously thought. Thus, for environmental NGOs in Singapore, there is a need to further examine 'how practices, that at first glance appear in keeping with state discourses, are rather embodied attempts to forge a different Singapore' (Hobson, 2005: 167).

Chua's (2005) spectrum of civil society organisations in Singapore is guided by the amount of state control exercised over these organisations. Whilst environmental NGOs occupy one end of the spectrum (those under less control), groups that are organised around identity categories, such as religion, face different restrictions. The constraints religious organisations such as FBOs face needs to be understood in the context of the relationship between religion and the state in Singapore, to which I now turn.

3.3 Religion and the Singapore State

The 'secular' nature of state policies toward religion is a crucial place to begin. Kong (1993) provides an overview of the four tenets of Singapore's secular policy. First, there is no state religion (unlike, for example, Malaysia where the state religion is Islam). Second, the state permits freedom of worship as 'every person has the right to profess and practise his or her religion and to propagate it' (Kong, 1993: 26). Third, the secular nature of the state is reflected in its commitment to an equal treatment of all major religions (see Kong, 1993; Tham, 2008). Finally, there is a clear separation of religion and politics.

The relationship between religion and the secular state in Singapore can be characterised by the construction of boundaries between state and religion, and

between different religions in Singapore. The state erected these boundaries to ensure two things: first, to reduce the likelihood of inter-religious conflict and to maintain religious harmony in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society; second, to remove the influence of religious institutions on the state.

The origins of the state-religion boundary can be traced to events that occurred during the period Singapore became an independent nation. Three riots caused by racial and religious tensions are to be noted particularly. First, the 1950 Maria Hertogh riots – Maria Hertogh had Dutch Catholic parents but was raised by a Muslim woman. The court's decision to transfer Maria's custody from her Muslim caregiver to her biological parents angered the Muslim community which then incited a riot (Aljunied, 2009). Second, the 1964 race riots where clashes between Chinese and Malay communities occurred during a Muslim procession meant to celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (Lai, 2004). Finally, the 1969 riots between Chinese and Malay communities resulted from Sino-Malay tensions in Kuala Lumpur overflowing into Singapore. The effect these three events have on Singapore's state policy can be seen in the state's attempts at managing religious diversity so as to maintain national stability. This is done through the reduction of inter-religious tensions and a heavy emphasis on religious harmony.

Regarding reducing inter-religious tensions, Hill (1999) observes that the Singapore state is willing to take preventive measures against actors who instigate disorder. Legislation, in the form of the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act, ensures actors who disrupt the status quo are disciplined by the state. The Act has its origins in 1986 when the 'Internal Security Department reported on over-zealous

evangelical Christian proselytisation and the impact it had on religious communities competing for membership' (Tan, 2008: 65). The Act's objective is to maintain inter-religious harmony by defining what behaviour is regarded as damaging to religious harmony and outlining restraining orders the government can administer against any actor that contributes to inter-religious tensions (Tan, 2008).

The other component of the state's attempts at maintaining religious diversity is through emphasising inter-religious harmony. This is best exemplified in the Inter-Religious Organisation of Singapore (IRO). It was established in 1949 with the aim of creating friendships and mutual respect between religious leaders and adherents of different faiths. Despite not being a state institution, the IRO is crucial in serving state interests. As Lai (2008: 629) remarks, the 'secular state is also well aware of its own limitations beyond setting the broad parameters and specific state structures for regulating matters pertaining to religion, and taps the IRO for its multireligious symbolic power'. The IRO, then, becomes a conduit for the secular state to engage religious organisations so as to maintain religious harmony.

The second aim of the boundary between religion and the Singapore state concerns the limits to social involvement of religious actors. A significant incident was the alleged 'Marxist conspiracy' in 1987. Sixteen people were arrested under Singapore's Internal Security Act on allegations that they were using the Catholic Church for political ends. The group was accused of being connected to a covert communist network and the 'issue was amplified into a critique of Liberation Theology, which was explicitly linked with the role of radical Catholicism in the Philippines in the 1986 ousting of President Marcos' (Hill, 2003: 122). The separation

between politics and religion was reiterated by the then Prime Minster Lee Kuan Yew (1988, cited in Kong, 1991: 297):

> What we want our religious and para-religious groups to do is to give relief to the destitute, the disadvantaged, the disabled, to take part in activities which will foster communal fellowship. Emphasis on charity, alms-giving and social and community work…And priests (had) better stay out of espousing a form of economic system, or challenge the way we do things, social policy or theory.

The boundaries in which religious groups are allowed to actively engage in – social services, education and health provision – are clear. Whilst not explicitly stated, the consequences of (being judged as) transgressing the boundaries are also obvious, as evidenced by the arrests.

The state-stipulated role of religious organisations (including FBOs) has ambivalent effects on these organisations' development. Regarding Christian social involvement in Singapore, Mathews (2008) highlights that Christian groups have engaged in social service provision since colonial times. Christian groups still play this role, although some have been accused of using social service provision as a cover for proselytisation (which may lead to inter-religious tensions). With this historical perspective, the effects of state-stipulated limits to the social involvement of religious organisations may not be large due to the latter's longstanding involvement in this area. However, even within the ambit of social service provision, religious organisations that partner state agencies may find their activities circumscribed by the state. In a study of Buddhist FBOs, Kuah-Pearce (2008) argues that while Buddhist organisations can apply for financial assistance from state organisations, these FBOs

are compelled to follow strict state-stipulated guidelines, such as declining medical treatment to patients over a certain age-limit.

3.4 Christianity in Singapore – Internal Characteristics, External Linkages

An analysis of the results of the Singapore census taken in 2000 highlights that generally, 'Christianity is most successful among the emerging younger, better-educated and more affluent Singaporeans, [and this] means their dominance may be greater than their numbers suggest' (Tong, 2008: 50). Christians, their actions and the organisations they belong to have the potential to effect much change and hence are important to analyse.

It is important to examine areas where Singapore Christians exert their influence. As Goh (2005: 43) highlights:

> In Singapore's tightly-governed socio-political climate, there are fewer opportunities for the churches to play a socially active role, in contrast to places like Hong Kong and the Philippines where the churches often play a significant role in social activism, civil rights demonstrations, and support for political candidates.

Churches in Singapore are not involved in activities that directly challenge the state and its policies. This is unlike other contexts such as Hong Kong, which, despite having much socio-economic commonality with Singapore, has a different history of grassroots activism. The extra-church sphere where Christian involvement is prominent in Singapore is in social services. One motivating factor for Singapore Christians to be involved in social service stems from understandings of what 'evangelism' is and what Christian duties are. Mathews (2008: 541) notes that whilst

Christian social service providers ensure their activities are not obviously evangelistic, their motivations are.

Another dimension of the influence of Singapore's Christian community can be seen from its status as a hub of Christian activities – attributable to both religious and extra-religious reasons. Singapore has been dubbed by renowned Christian leaders Reverend Billy Graham and Reverend Yong Gi Cho as the 'Antioch of Asia', 'alluding to a multi-ethnic city…that was the cradle of Christianity in the first century A.D.' (DeBernardi, 2008: 120-121). Renowned Christian organisations such as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship have established their headquarters or regional offices in Singapore. Goh (2005: 44) argues that one reason for the high concentration of transnational Christian organisations is that they 'follow their secular counterparts in choosing Singapore for its stability, strategic location and religious tolerance'. These organisations depend on transnational networks, developed largely as a result of the Singapore government's attempts at making Singapore a 'hub' for telecommunications, businesses and tourism to remain connected with their operations in other countries (Goh, 2009). Such linkages attract other transnational Christian organisations seeking to locate in Singapore, including Creation-Carers.

3.5 Creation-Carers in Singapore

In Creation-Carers national movements, activities are organised by staff and sustained by two other groups of actors – volunteers and supporters. Volunteers are actors who applied to Creation-Carers International to assist in Creation-Carers activities for extended periods of time. Supporters participate in Creation-Carers

activities and/or provide financial assistance but do not spend dedicated periods of time on Creation-Carers activities.

Creation-Carers activities in the national movements include community garden farming where visitors learn about sustainable agriculture and study Biblical scriptures pertaining to environmental action. Other projects include restoring environmentally-damaged wetlands as a symbolic way of enacting the renewal of the earth that Creation-Carers actors believe God will do in the future.

Creation-Carers has been trying to establish a presence in Singapore and the organisation has had both successes and failures. The activities are organised primarily by a Creation-Carers International staff, Hannah Koo, and a Creation-Carers volunteer, Thomas Lu. They are Singaporeans and had been interested in working for Creation-Carers since 2003. In 2004, they organised the first Creation-Carers activity in Singapore – a conference concerning Christian environmentalism that was organised together with Singapore Theological Seminary – and about 15 people attended. From 2005 to 2008, Koo and Lu worked with Creation-Carers Canada and produced films for Creation-Carers International.

Koo and Lu have successfully completed several activities in Singapore since late 2008. They delivered talks on Christian environmentalism to several Christian tertiary students groups and churches. They also organised a major two-day Creation-Carers Conference in July 2009. It was conducted in partnership with Christ College Singapore, one of 14 local theological schools. The first day saw about 150 people in attendance. Joseph Scott, the founder/director of Creation-Carers, delivered the

keynote lecture and there was a plenary session comprising panellists representing three theological schools in Singapore – Apostles Instruction School, Christ College Singapore and Singapore Theological Seminary. The second day of the conference was conducted at the premises of a government statutory board and about 40 people attended. It was a seminar for Christian healthcare practitioners. There was also a strategy session at the end of the second day. The objectives were two-fold: first, to brainstorm the future of Creation-Carers in Singapore and second, as a networking session for (potential) local partners.

Not all Creation-Carers activities were successfully completed. Some projects – such as a nature walk for a local church – were not realised because of changes in the church's schedule. Other planned projects, such as a community garden at a home for disadvantaged children (Joyland), suffered from a lack of funds. Other projects, such as plans for an environmental education business, were unsuccessful due to a lack of partners.

Whilst the establishment of a Creation-Carers national movement is more than the sum of its successes and failures, these projects suggest there are larger processes influencing the circumstances Creation-Carers face when embedding in Singapore. It is in the embedding process, and the factors influencing the success or failure of the process, that I will analyse in my three empirical chapters (Chapter 5-7). Before that, however, I will discuss the methodology adopted for my study.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that guided my research. I examine available methods that I could employ, justify my choice of methods and discuss the ethical issues that emerged.

4.2 Methods

As the methods employed determine the types of knowledge that can be known, a crucial place to begin would be to examine the types of information required to answer the research questions. For example, how the researcher conceptualises 'social capital' informs the research process. Smidt (2003: 7) argues that 'if social capital is something an individual possesses, then one might study social capital through survey research…[however,] if social capital is something that inheres in personal relationships…[researchers should be] more ethnographic in their approach'. As my study is informed by Bourdieu's theorisations regarding how social capital emerges out of relationships, methods like surveys are conceptually at odds with my research. Thus, I chose to employ qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews to obtain primary data.

While I had the option to adopt focus groups discussions which would allow 'researchers to observe very significant interactions between individuals in confined space and time' (Cloke et al., 2004:160), coordinating a suitable time for all

participants was an insurmountable challenge. This was largely due to the transnational identities of the Creation-Carers actors, as most of them were not based in Singapore. As I describe later in Chapter Six, these actors are 'parachuters'. Their transient stay in Singapore prevented me from using focus group discussions as a method. Hence I adopted semi-structured interviews as my main method.

4.2.1 Selecting Interviewees and Gaining Access

My process of selecting interviewees for the semi-structured interviews was guided by the methodological reflections of geographers who have researched nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). Bebbington and Kothari's (2006) work was useful as they were similarly interested in how networks, and actors that (re)create networks, influenced NGO activities. They highlight how NGO researchers tend to either follow the network or the money. Bebbington and Kothari argue that even though they categorised the methods in this diametrical way, proposing that the solution is a combination of both is 'too easy'. Moreover, this misses the essential argument – 'that choices have to be made regarding how to excavate networks, and regarding what it is that one wishes to uncover in the process' (Bebbington and Kothari, 2006: 864). The sampling process, then, needs to be informed by the empirical situation.

The sampling technique I used to recruit research participants is 'theoretical sampling'. It involves

> gaining selective access to appropriate groups of people who may be concerned with, and/or involved in living through the research problem…it is not about sheer number, 'typicality' or 'representativeness' of people

approached which matters, but the quality and positionality of the information that they can offer (Crang and Cook, 2007: 14).

This sampling approach was appropriate to my research problem because I was interested in the prospects and challenges actors from a particular organisation faced, rather than a general phenomenon that affected a large population.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 28 individuals to better understand the opinions that four different groups – Creation-Carers actors, their (potential) local partners, Creation-Carers supporters and government officials – held. The sampling process was modified slightly to fit each category of interviewees (see Table 4.1). The first category was the Creation-Carers actors directly involved in Creation-Carers activities in Singapore. Previously, I highlighted that Singapore is labelled the 'Antioch of Asia' and many transnational Christian actors visit Singapore regularly. Consequently, I managed to interview all six key Creation-Carers actors at various points during the fieldwork period. The second category was the (potential) local partners that Creation-Carers was seeking out in Singapore. The final event of the July 2009 Creation-Carers Conference was a networking session for partners – both those Creation-Carers had already begun to collaborate with and potential ones. Hannah Koo, the Creation-Carers International staff based in Singapore, kindly allowed me to join the session. I made contact with all who were present (nine, excluding Creation-Carers actors) and approached them for interviews subsequently. Additionally, I interviewed five others who partnered Creation-Carers but who were not invited to the session. I interviewed these actors to gain 'viewpoints from another, differently positioned group' (Crang and Cook, 2007: 15) which is useful in providing multiple perspectives. The third category of interviewees was Creation-Carers

supporters. Being on the email list of Creation-Carers supporters gave me access to this group. Interviewees were selected through snowball sampling techniques. In total, I interviewed six Creation-Carers supporters. Finally, I wanted to interview government officials who negotiated with Creation-Carers actors during the planning process of two activities – the community garden at Joyland and the Creation-Carers Conference. However, this proved extremely difficult and I only managed to interview two. In order to get a better idea of FBO-state relations, I supplemented my findings with secondary data.

Different groups of interviewees posed different levels of barriers to access. Accessing the Creation-Carers actors and those present at the networking session was quite easy as I had prior face-to-face contact with them and had broached the issue of an interview in our conversations. Gaining access to Creation-Carers supporters was less straightforward. I utilised the social networks in which I was situated to connect with the initial set of interviewees. Having volunteered with a Christian inter-denominational parachurch organisation, I have friends from a wide range of churches in Singapore. I used this network to gain access to Creation-Carers supporters and (potential) partners. Although this 'friends of friends' method was useful, I received a high level of rejection because even though we had mutual friends, the potential interviewees had never met me. Coupled with the general perception that in Singapore, religion is a sensitive topic, the number of individuals willing to be interviewed was fewer than expected, though sufficient to draw together a coherent understanding of their perspectives. The most difficult category of actors to access was the government officials. My email request for an interview was transferred from one government personnel to another. Finally, I used my social networks and secured

interviews, on condition of anonymity (of both their names and their organisational

affiliations) with two government officials.

Category	Name	Designation
Creation-Carers Actors	Joseph Scott	Founder/Director of Creation-Carers
	Hannah Koo	Creation-Carers International Staff
	Thomas Lu	Creation-Carers Volunteer
	Candice Aguas	Creation-Carers Philippines Convenor
	Luke Ferdinand	Creation-Carers International Council of Reference
	Josephine Chan	Singaporean who is a Creation-Carers United Kingdom Volunteer
(Potential) Local Partners	Andrew Tan	Principal, Christ College Singapore
	Jeremiah Monte	Principal, Apostles Instruction School
	David Berry	Lecturer, Singapore Theological Seminary
	Michael Sim	Founder/Director of Transformational Development
	Simon Kwang	Donor, Disciples of Christ Church
	Kevin Foo	Founder/Director, Eastern Doves
	Roger Chua	Lecturer, Singapore Theological Seminary
	Wilson Huang	Founder/Director, MedHelp
	Timothy Neo	Supervisor, Joyland
	Linda Tan	Programme Coordinator, Joyland
	Nicholas Lim	Founder/Director, Earth-Leaders
	Ashley Goh	Staff, Kairos Community Church
	Peter Eka	Associate General Secretary, Evangelical Youth Fellowship Singapore
	Felix Wong	Pastor, City-Blessing Church
Creation-Carers Supporters	Zachary Tang	Graduate student
	Jerome Chia	Civil servant
	Sue Chow	Psychologist
	Eugene Koh	Counsellor
	Jessica Ng	Counsellor
	Nathaniel Chan	Civil servant
Government officials	Clare Wong	Officer, Government Department A
	Lionel Lim	Manager, Government Department B

Table 4.1 – List of Interviewees

4.2.2 Interviews

Each interview lasted between 45 to 90 minutes. I adopted a semi-structured interview approach, using an aide memoire as a guide (see Appendix A). This allowed the interview to flow in a conversational mode whilst being guided by research themes. The method was informed by Massey's (2003: 86) argument that fieldwork is 'a relation between two active agents'. As opposed to a structured interview where the researcher constructs questions in a way that limits the scope for discussion and renders the research participant a passive respondent, semi-structured interviews allow participants some liberty to share their thoughts concerning the subject but which may not directly answer the question. This somewhat meandering process was useful in uncovering the various relationships that interviewees had, allowing me to trace the different networks these actors are embedded in.

An important factor in the interview process was my positionality – a researcher who is a Christian. A common question interviewees asked prior to the start of the interview was my religious affiliation. Identifying myself as a Christian enabled me to establish some common ground with the interviewee. This 'insider' status, however, was problematic when interviewees used Christian terms, such as 'missions', in their responses. As I did not want my assumptions about Christianity to influence my analysis of their opinions, I had to ask clarification questions so that interviewees explained the terminology used.

4.2.3 Difficulties Encountered

Religion is so sensitive in Singapore. Am I allowed to say things about the government and religion? (*nervous laughter*) – Anonymous Interviewee

The above quotation is an example of the pre-interview musings by several research participants. Context, as Patton (2002 [1980]) reminds us, is crucial to qualitative research and researchers need to be sensitive to fieldwork contexts so as to appreciate the research dynamics. In Chapter 3, I examined the relationship between religion and the state in Singapore, arguing that while religion is not regarded as oppositional to the secular state's interest, there are clearly-defined and state-inscribed bounds stipulating the ambit of religious groups. Not only does the strong influence of the state on the permitted sphere of religious activity exist, this state-inscribed boundary is also absorbed by research participants and influences their responses. In Ho's (2008) reflections on her interviews with Singapore transmigrants concerning their view of citizenry, she observed some reticence in her interviewees. Ho argues that the 'uncertain boundaries of freedom of speech and the degree of legislation placing discretionary power in the ruling party's hands… have produced a mostly passive citizenry who opt to remain silent rather than challenge the status quo' (Ho, 2008: 495).

As my research method – interviewing – required participants to verbalise their thoughts, their silence proved challenging at times. Doing the following things helped me overcome this challenge. First, I provided an information sheet which, amongst other things, detailed the steps I planned to take towards ensuring confidentiality of data and anonymity of research participants. Participants could also choose whether they allowed the interviews to be recorded or not; in cases where they

declined, I took notes instead. This information sheet was emailed to the participant prior to the interview. At the actual interview, the participant had time to read the information sheet before giving consent to participating in the research. Second, at times when the participant seemed uncomfortable articulating his/her thoughts, I kept my recorder and notebook. This action was usually followed by visible signs of relief from participants and the interview subsequently flowed more smoothly.

4.2.4 Secondary Data

A variety of secondary sources was also used. Legislation such as the Singapore Constitution and the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act were easily accessible online. I also consulted a variety of books and dissertations written by Singapore Christian leaders that traced the history of Christianity in Singapore and focused on specific topics such as parachurch organisations (Sng, 2003[1980]; Wong, 1972). Finally, I examined documents such as the contract for venue-rental (with its terms and conditions) signed between Creation-Carers and Government Department A and the community garden proposal for Joyland.

4.3 Ethics and 'the field'

As previously discussed, religion is deemed a sensitive topic in Singapore. Some interviewees were willing to comment but, fearing reprisal, were unwilling to be quoted. Others were willing to be quoted on the condition that I protected their identities. The participant information sheet and consent form that the Institutional Review Board (Research Ethics Committee) required all participants to read and sign were useful during my fieldwork. The form I created allowed participants to choose varying levels of anonymity they were comfortable with, ranging from none (where

they allowed me to use their real names, institutional affiliations and the like) to complete anonymity. Participants were also given the option of choosing whether quotes (with the attendant identity they chose) can be published and to which audience (such as in academic journals). Different participants were comfortable with varying levels of anonymity. After taking everything into consideration, I decided on complete anonymity of all individuals and institutions and have used pseudonyms in this entire thesis.

The Research Ethics Committee, and practices related to it such as obtaining formal consent, has come under much criticism. For example, Neyland (2008: 139) highlights how documents such as the consent form act 'as a set of rules which attempt to reduce ethics down to straightforward YES/NO answers'. The erasure of the complexity of human encounters in the research process is problematic. Yet, in my research context, providing the information sheet and completing the consent form was more than procedural. For most interviewees, even though we were usually 'friends of friends', it was the first time they were meeting me; moreover it was to discuss what some might consider a sensitive topic. As Thrift (2003: 119), writing about the Research Ethics Committee, asserts, '[p]art of the value of the exercise (as stipulated by the Research Ethics Committee) comes from the risky relationship with 'data'…with not knowing what exactly will turn up and therefore not knowing exactly what ethical stance to take'. As both researcher and participant sign the form, and both keep a copy of it, the form becomes a codified symbol of trust between both. Allowing participants to choose varying levels of anonymity, and the places where their quotes may be published, reduces the potentially exploitative effect of research on the participant. Critiques about the universalised form of ethics that Research

Ethics Committees enforce are important and researchers need to be aware of them and ensure that engaging in ethical research is not a blind following of rules. Yet, as I have shown, there is merit to the practices enforced by Research Ethics Committees and it may even aid the fieldwork process.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, I showed how my choice of methods was informed by the types of information required to address my research problem and by previous research done on NGOs. I also discussed the fieldwork process and problems encountered. Finally, I examined the ethical considerations in my research and showed how practices stipulated by the Research Ethics Committee, whilst problematic, can aid the fieldwork process. With this discussion of the research methodology, I present my empirical analysis in the next three chapters.

Chapter 5

Network Embeddedness

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will begin to analyse the empirical data according to the conceptual framework (Figure 2.1). I focus on two major partnerships Creation-Carers actors sought to forge during their first year in Singapore – a partnership with major seminary leaders and an informal partnership with a home for disadvantaged children run by a Christian FBO. I utilise the notion of network embeddedness as a lens to understand factors affecting the success of Creation-Carers partnerships in Singapore. Network embeddedness comprises relational and structural aspects. Studies of network embeddedness are primarily concerned with the mutually constitutive effects of both aspects on the embedding process. I argue that when both aspects of network embeddedness are mutually reinforcing, Creation-Carers' embedding process into Singapore is greatly enhanced. The success of the partnership, however, depends on the actor's ability to utilise his/her social capital.

This chapter consists of five sections. In Section 5.2, I remind readers of Hess' concept of network embeddedness, elaborating on my discussion in Chapter Two. In particular, I focus on Hess' assertion that trust-formation is key to understanding relations amongst network actors. I extend his argument by considering the relationship between social capital and trust as it allows researchers to better understand power relations involved during trust-formation. Subsequently, in Section 5.3, I examine the case of a successful partnership between Creation-Carers and

several seminary leaders in Singapore, one that led to the first Creation-Carers Conference in Singapore. I argue that the event's success is largely attributed to the formation of a 'constellation of practice' concerning Christian environmentalism. In Section 5.4, I study the case of a failed partnership between Creation-Carers and a Christian FBO. Despite the Creation-Carers actors' ability to effectively forge ties with other actors in Singapore using linkages from relational networks they were situated in, and their success at adopting flexible identities whilst renegotiating existing structures, the partnership still failed. I show that the failure resulted from Creation-Carers actors' inability to convert their social capital into economic capital that was necessary for the partnership. Finally, in Section 5.5, I summarise the main arguments of this chapter.

5.2 Network Embeddedness – Relational and Structural Aspects

Network embeddedness comprises relational and structural aspects, and the relationship between them. The relational aspect focuses on an individual actor's relations with other actors, whilst the structural aspect is concerned with the broader structures that networks are set in – for example, government policies. In other words, studies on network embeddedness are concerned with the relationship between agency and structure and with how relations are constructed and whether they are resilient. Additionally, Hess (2004: 177) highlights that network embeddedness 'can be regarded as the product of a process of trust building among network agents, which is important for successful and stable relationships'. Understanding the process of trust-formation and maintenance, then, is central to understanding how actors embed themselves within a network.

The connection Hess draws between trust and an actor's attempts at constructing durable networks, however, is unclear. Whilst Hess (2009: 426) argues that the 'process of embedding and disembedding…can be seen as a result of building, retaining and losing trust among the different network agents', he neglects to explain what attributes of actors make them trustworthy (or not). In Chapter Two, I drew the link between an actor's ability to generate trust and his/her social capital, arguing that trust is not a 'feel-good' effect, but a modality of power. This helps us better understand factors affecting an actor's ability to generate trust, and its effects on the embedding process. I employ Bourdieu's (1986) theorisations of social capital as he focuses on the role of structures and its influence on social capital, a pertinent point as will be discussed later.

5.3 Successful Creation-Carers Partnership – Social Capital and Trust

In this section, I examine the formation of a network of partners on Christian environmentalism – specifically, a constellation of practice (Coe and Bunnell, 2003) – and its contribution to the success of the first major Creation-Carers event in Singapore – the Creation-Carers Conference in 2009. I begin by examining the network node – Sovereign College in Canada – and show how membership in this network generates a form of relational proximity for actors from specific Christian organisations. Subsequently, I study how the spread of an idea about Christian environmentalism, which originated from Sovereign College, is shaped by the wider structures of transnational Protestantism. Finally, I demonstrate how transnational actors' linkages with the node, coupled with their strategy of ensuring a good fit with the transnational religion's organisational structure, accords legitimacy for action in a new locale. Thus, I show how a mutually reinforcing relationship between relational

and structural aspects of network embeddedness, coupled with actors who possess large amounts of social capital, has led to the successful formation of partnerships and the Creation-Carers conference.

A significant contribution to studies of knowledge communities is Etienne Wenger's (1998) book *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Here, Wenger discusses two forms of social configurations – 'communities of practice' and 'constellations'. Regarding communities of practice, Wenger emphasises that the main way communities learn is 'by doing'. Communities of practice are characterised by, amongst other things, shared discourses reflecting a particular worldview, shared meanings and constant interaction among actors. This interaction amongst actors occurs mainly at the local scale. Wenger argues that whilst geographical proximity among actors aids the formation of a community of practice, what is crucial is the intensity of interaction among actors. A constellation, on the other hand, is a group whose members do not have constant interaction as the group is too large, diverse or discontinuous to be considered a single community. The uniting feature of the constellation is the overlapping and/or related interests shared by members. Constellations can stretch across diverse spatial scales from the micro-level of an office to the global economy. Characteristics of a constellation include belonging to the same institution and having common members; it may also be sustained by actors who constantly move between boundaries.

Building on Wenger's work, Coe and Bunnell (2003) present the notion of 'constellations of practice'. They argue that whilst 'communities will originally almost certainly be local configurations, over time sustained and repeated interaction

facilitated by 'boundary crossers' may create new spatially extensive constellations' (Coe and Bunnell, 2003: 446). Their synthesis of Wenger's ideas is sensitive to spatial dynamics in two ways. First, they highlight the role of local relationships in communities of practice. Second, by drawing attention to boundary-crossing actors, Coe and Bunnell's concept allows researchers to study how transnational actors may influence local relationships.

Creation-Carers is a member of a constellation of practice that has Sovereign College as its node. Sovereign College is an Evangelical Christian seminary located in Canada. Several seminary leaders who were involved in Creation-Carers activities in Singapore – Dr Jeremiah Monte, Dr Andrew Tan and Joseph Scott – are affiliated to Sovereign College. This common affiliation facilitates the relational aspect of the network embedding process. For example, when asked why he agreed to be part of the plenary session during the Creation-Carers conference, Dr Jeremiah Monte elaborated:

> It is really more personal. It is relational. I know Josiah Eliot [Monte's doctoral dissertation supervisor at Sovereign College], we are good friends. If he recommends someone, it should be good. Josiah mentioned that Joseph Scott teaches a course at Sovereign College. I know Sovereign [College] would not just invite anyone who has no experience in the area he is talking about. So for me, it is a matter of trust. This person I know knows him, so I know he knows (Jeremiah Monte, Principal, Apostles Instruction School).

Monte studied for his doctoral degree at Sovereign College and Scott was formerly a 'missionary-in-residence' at the college and occasionally delivers lectures there (though they were not there at the same time). Monte's trust in Scott has two dimensions. First, there is the relational aspect to trust formed among (and through) individuals. Even though the connection between Monte and Scott is a 'weak' tie as

they do not know each other personally, the need for face-to-face interaction in order to foster trust amongst (potential) partners is reduced as Monte trusts Eliot's judgement of Scott. Similarly, Jenkins (2009), writing about social capital in social networks, describes this as the 'friends of friends' phenomenon. Jenkins asserts that '[y]ou don't actually have to know someone personally to be in the same network, although you do know *about* them and, through mediators, *potentially* know them' (2009: 149, original emphasis). The pivotal actor involved in making this connection, in this case Monte's doctoral dissertation supervisor, is crucial in ensuring that 'weak' transnational connections among actors who have never met are strengthened. Second, there is trust in institutions – both Monte and Scott are part of the Sovereign College network and this fosters a form of trust between them, even though they had never met. As Uslaner (2008) asserts, trust in institutions is based on the actor's experience of the institution. A positive prior experience leads an actor to expect that future experiences will be positive too. The common organisational affiliation thus opens avenues for future collaboration amongst actors from the same institution.

Apart from personal relationships amongst actors who belong to the same institution, formal ties between institutions form another basis for trust. The formal relationship aided relational embeddedness in the case of Creation-Carers partnering with Christ College Singapore (CCS) for the Creation-Carers conference. When asked why he decided to partner with Creation-Carers, Dr Andrew Tan, Principal of CCS, shared:

> I have long been convinced of the need to adhere to earth-keeping principles. I became conscious of this when I was a guest lecturer at Sovereign College…[CCS partnered Creation-Carers because] Creation-Carers is the only Christian environmental agency we know. Joseph Scott has his link with

Sovereign [College], so my exposure to Creation-Carers came from there. Joseph Scott teaches there too (Andrew Tan, Principal, Christ College Singapore).

Similarly, Scott's reason for partnering with CCS pointed to the importance of Sovereign College as the network node. As he explained:

There was already a lot of relational overlap with another partner organisation – Sovereign College – who have partnered many years with Creation-Carers Canada. And there's been a lot of exchange between CCS and Sovereign College (Joseph Scott, Founder/Director, Creation-Carers).

There are strong partnerships between Sovereign College and Creation-Carers Canada, where students enrolled in the former tended to volunteer at the latter. There are formal ties between CCS and Sovereign College as well. Students enrolled at CSS can transfer their modular credits towards obtaining another degree from Sovereign College. There are thus multiple relational networks arising from these partnerships. Each network is maintained by a form of trust, linking Creation-Carers with CCS and Apostles Instruction School (in Monte's case) with Creation-Carers, all with Sovereign College as the node in this constellation of practice.

The concept of relational, rather than spatial proximity, is key to understanding the dynamics of Creation-Carers' network embeddedness in Singapore. Creation-Carers' embedding process is aided by Scott being a key actor within Sovereign College and his social capital affords him credibility and agency to create relationships with Monte and Tan. The relationships with the two seminary principals subsequently became partnerships when the actors collaborated at the conference. Even though they are members of a group with diffused relationships, this constellation still has the ability to effect change because of the nature of the actors.

The actors involved are 'boundary crossers', religious leaders who either graduated from or taught at Sovereign College and who returned to their home countries whilst maintaining ties with the node (for example, through contact with Sovereign College's faculty). As Scott is deemed a key actor from Sovereign College, he can tap into the convergence of transnational ties that seminary principals based in Singapore have with Sovereign College to help facilitate his organisation's embedding process in Singapore. Coenen *et al.*'s (2003: 19) concept of relational proximity – where 'actors 'close' to one another in some sense have the same (or similar) reference space and share the same knowledge' – is thus key to understanding the ease of the embedding process. Instead of the need for face-to-face contact (that is, spatially proximate ties), relational proximity can be fostered among members who are spatially far apart but who belong to the same institution's network. Resulting from this relational aspect of the network embedding process, and in particular because of Scott's agency, the various actors willingly played key roles in the Creation-Carers Conference in 2009.

The close relational proximity amongst the above actors is also aided by their familiarity with Sovereign College's theological framework. This common understanding is another reason why relationships in this constellation of practice, with Sovereign College as its node, are particularly strong. During the interviews, it was clear that the principals of the various seminaries and the founder/director of Creation-Carers share, or at least learnt about, a common theological framework concerning several issues, including environmental action during their time at Sovereign College. As mentioned earlier, communities of practice are characterised by factors such as shared discourses around a particular worldview. The theological

seminary is a community of practice and is one of the places where religious leaders are trained. To understand the impact of Creation-Carers' link with theological seminaries on the embedding process, one must situate the seminary within wider structures, in particular, a transnational religion's organisational structure.

In studies of transnational religion, the religion's organisational structure has a large impact on the way religious ideas are transmitted and how actors are accorded legitimacy. Creation-Carers is a Protestant FBO and as discussed in Chapter Two, I have highlighted how, unlike Catholic churches, Protestant churches[2] are not connected to and directed by a single authority – the Pope (Levitt, 2001). Due to the more flexible organisational structure of Protestantism, one way of identifying an actor as a religious leader is through his/her organisational affiliation, such as a faculty member of a seminary. As Dr David Berry, a lecturer at Singapore Theological Seminary and a member of the plenary session at the Creation-Carers Conference elaborated:

> I think in Asia and in Singapore especially, even though the churches don't do what the seminaries tell them, the relationship is quite close. And it is quite Confucian. There is a strong relationship between the alumni, the pastors and the college and so ideas can be [communicated] (David Berry, Lecturer, Singapore Theological Seminary).

The way Berry described how theological ideas are transmitted in Singapore is echoed by Woods, a theologian in a Singapore seminary. Woods (forthcoming) argues that in Singapore's Protestant Christian community, (new) ideas are best transmitted in a top-down fashion, from seminaries to church leaders to the church congregation. Even

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[2] This is not to say that there is no structure in Protestantism. There are different denominations in Protestantism and some are more structured than others. For example, Anglicanism is characterised by strong clerical control with lesser laity participation (Avis, 2004). The Brethren denomination, on the other hand, does not have clergy and is led by the laity (Brethren Networking Fellowship, 2001).

though Levitt (2007) argues that Protestant Christianity is characterised by horizontal connections among different churches, in the Singapore context, there is some hierarchy with the seminaries at the top, followed by churches and its members.

Consequently, Creation-Carers' strategy of partnering with local seminaries is strategic as it positions Creation-Carers as a legitimate actor in Singapore. The positive effect of this partnership is highlighted by a participant at the Creation-Carers Conference, Zachary Tang:

> Because Christians in Singapore won't move without being sanctioned by the church, parachurch organisations like Creation-Carers have to work with the church, the mainstream. Otherwise they can easily get sidelined and people say they just have funny thinking. I was very pleased that Creation-Carers was working with CCS [Christ College Singapore] because that is a theological seminary so if the theologians say it is ok to be green, that means it's all right. They are the thinkers (Zachary Tang, Participant, Creation-Carers Conference).

The above quotation highlights the success of the Creation-Carers Conference as participants such as Tang are willing to accept Creation-Carers' message due to the endorsement by local seminaries. Thus, Creation-Carers' strategy of partnering Singapore seminaries is appropriate for the local context as it fits the hierarchical structure of Protestant Christianity in Singapore.

The linkage Creation-Carers has with Sovereign College thus accorded the former the status of being a legitimate transnational religious actor and facilitated the embedding process in Singapore. The relational networks (both through Scott's personal ties and Creation-Carers' institutional affiliations with Sovereign College) enabled the organisation to gain access to a transnational seminary network.

Moreover, Creation-Carers' astute strategy of partnering with local seminaries for its first major conference in Singapore ensured the organisation fitted well within broader structures of Protestantism in Singapore. The mutually reinforcing relationship between relational and structural aspects of network embeddedness created the conditions for the success of the first Creation-Carers partnership and project, as evidenced by Tang's response.

Additionally, I have shown that actors within this constellation of practice gain legitimacy through their institutional affiliation. Coenen *et al.* (2003: 20) highlight how the type of social capital generated by institutional affiliation is a 'territorially detached social capital … (as) it involves 'insiders' in a collaborative network no matter where they are located as long as they collaborate'. As this social capital is not generated due to the actor's activities within a territory but is determined by whether the actor is situated within the network or not, the need for spatial proximity in generating trust is reduced. Thus, the constellation of practice which Creation-Carers is a member of enabled its network embedding process as relational proximity is more important than spatial proximity in constellations of practice. This is congruent with Gertler's (2001, 2003) observations about the accumulation of tacit knowledge among firms. He notes that for actors who are spatially far apart but who belong to the same network, mutual trust is generated as a result of shared knowledge and/or experiences, rather than that which emerges out of territorially-bound factors such as constant face-to-face interaction.

5.4 Unsuccessful Creation-Carers Partnership – Social Capital and Economic Capital

In this section, I examine how Creation-Carers' actors utilise their relationships with other local actors in Singapore to help start a Creation-Carers project – a community garden. The two Creation-Carers actors are the Creation-Carers International staff based in Singapore, Hannah Koo and a Creation-Carers volunteer, Thomas Lu. After examining the relational network Koo and Lu are situated in, I show how they adopt flexible identities so as to negotiate structural networks, in this case government policies, in order to ensure that the partnership is approved and the project can be executed. However, despite gaining the authorities' approval to start work on the community garden, Koo and Lu's inability to use their social capital to generate economic capital led to the project being postponed indefinitely. Thus, I argue that having a mutually reinforcing relationship between relational and structural aspects of network embeddedness is insufficient; without effective social capital on the part of Creation-Carers actors, the partnership failed.

The community garden is a project most Creation-Carers national movements undertake. A section of the land owned by the particular Creation-Carers movement tends to be used as a garden to promote sustainable agriculture. Similarly, Koo and Lu wanted to create a community garden in Singapore, as the first material representation of Creation-Carers' presence in Singapore. However, as the cost of buying a plot of land in Singapore was too high, they decided to partner with Joyland, a home for disadvantaged children, which is under a government Ministry's jurisdiction. It was planned that the garden be located within Joyland's premises. Joyland's daily

operations are managed by a Christian FBO, Joyclub. Koo and Lu were introduced to Joyclub by their close friend, Linda Tan, who is a programme coordinator at Joyland.

A significant point in the planning phase was the identities of Koo and Lu. While they are Creation-Carers actors, they also undertook the identity of Joyclub volunteers. This flexibility of identities, where certain aspects such as their agricultural expertise were highlighted whilst others such as their affiliation with Creation-Carers were backgrounded, was a means for them to become legitimate actors in Joyclub. As Linda Tan elaborated:

> Joyclub didn't know what Creation-Carers was. They only knew Hannah and Thomas as volunteers coming to help out at Joyland. So I registered Hannah and Thomas as volunteers [with Joyclub]…and Joyclub knew Hannah and Thomas are planning the garden. They were aware that Hannah and Thomas were members of Creation-Carers, but they don't see how Creation-Carers is involved [in the project]. They only see the individuals doing the planning (Linda Tan, Programme Coordinator, Joyland).

Koo and Lu's non-identification with Creation-Carers was successful as Timothy Neo, the supervisor at Joyland, was unaware of their full identities. As Timothy Neo remarked:

> The people involved in the project are considered a volunteer group. They are a local-based company doing farming projects in ASEAN [countries in Southeast Asia] and they know how to do things like choose the best type of seeds... My colleague, Linda, the project coordinator, came up with the proposal with them [Koo and Lu]. We had to write a proposal to the headquarters [Joyclub] because it is a long-term project of one to two years and requires the use of land and there are costs. We also have to inform the government Ministry which has strict guidelines for all volunteers. We have to send the list of individual volunteer names to the headquarters [Joyclub] and the [government] Ministry. This is for the safety of the children (Timothy Neo, Tan's supervisor, Joyland).

Tan's comments were in response to the question of whether the leaders at Joyclub were aware that Creation-Carers is not (yet) a registered organisation in Singapore. It was apparent that Joyland's supervisor, Neo, was unaware of the full identities of the volunteers, believing them to be agriculture experts from a company. Moreover, even though Creation-Carers actors have much expertise in sustainable agriculture, the main intention of starting the garden, for it to be the first material representation of Creation-Carers' presence in Singapore, was clearly unknown to Neo. Whilst plans for a community garden were consistent with other Creation-Carers projects, the organisational affiliation and religious identity of Creation-Carers actors were downplayed so that their volunteer status could be approved. This is not unlike other cases where FBO staff downplay or hide their religious identities to gain access to a particular local community (see Section 2.5.3).

Koo and Lu's flexible identities enabled them to situate themselves within the Joyclub network, whilst simultaneously maintaining their identities as Creation-Carers staff and volunteer respectively. Evidently, even though Koo and Lu are Creation-Carers actors, their agriculture expertise and status as Joyclub volunteers were the legitimate aspects of their identities which mattered. Their identities, then, were flexible and dependent on whom they were interacting with. In the same way that other studies have shown how de-emphasising certain aspects of a FBO's identity has led to new opportunities for partnership (McGregor, 2010), in this case, backgrounding Creation-Carers' organisational identity created opportunities for new partnerships to emerge, further facilitating the embedding process in Singapore. Whilst the government Ministry does not disallow FBOs such as Joyclub to partner with other FBOs such as Creation-Carers, the latter's lack of a formal status in

Singapore was problematic. Creation-Carers is not registered formally with the authorities in Singapore, either as a charity or as a society. Thus, Creation-Carers' actors are not recognised by state authorities such as the aforementioned Ministry that is in charge of Joyland. As seen in Neo's comments, Joyland's partners and volunteers are screened by the Ministry, and he subsequently elaborated that the Ministry had previously rejected applications by certain individuals who applied to be volunteers. An interview with a government official from Government Department A (related to the aforementioned government Ministry) elicited the same response – that when organisations governed by the Ministry seek out new partners and/or recruit volunteers, the Ministry examines the list and may not approve all partners or volunteers. Koo and Lu's strategy of adopting flexible identities shows how FBO actors can successfully enact their agency to negotiate the wider structures that their networks are situated in.

The proposal for the community garden, however, was ultimately not approved by Joyclub due to a lack of funds. The Joyclub management required that a project's funding be guaranteed before they would approve it. Koo and Lu were unable to raise enough monetary support to ensure the completion of the project. Whilst they were able to utilise their relational network and negotiate the structures involved so as to become legitimate actors in Joyclub, their lack of social capital impeded their ability to get financial resources. As Koo lamented about the failure to obtain funding, 'I am nobody. I think in Singapore, if you want to do things, you need to have relationships'. Bourdieu's (1986) notion of social capital clarifies the connection Koo draws between her inability to get funding and her identity. He defines social capital as emergent from 'a durable network of more of less

institutionalised relationship…(providing members) a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in every sense of the word' (Bourdieu, 1986: 249). Koo and Lu are neither prominent Christian leaders nor have they been in the Singapore context (in the capacity of Creation-Carers actors) for a sufficient period of time necessary to build a strong network of local relationships to financially support Creation-Carers activities. Social capital and trust are not 'feel good' factors, but instead point to an actor's ability to utilise existing resources as a means of enacting changes. In the Singapore context, these two key Creation-Carers actors are quite powerless. This led to the failure of the community garden – the intended first of Creation-Carers' material activities in Singapore (as opposed to the 'discursive' which took the form of the successful conference).

Following from the awareness of Koo and Lu's lack of social capital, a relational understanding of space helps further explain why the community garden failed to materialise. Building on Massey's (2005) theorisations that space is relational and created when entities interact and the resulting relations combine in different forms, Murdoch (2006) crucially argues that attention should also be paid to spaces that do not emerge. He asserts that the 'relational making of space is both a consensual and contested process' (Murdoch, 2006: 20). The consensual processes led to the creation of a space between Creation-Carers actors and Joyclub because the goals of the multiple actors were aligned and they pursued similar objectives. Contestation, on the other hand, or the exclusion of certain sets of relations in this case, ultimately led to the failure of the venture. Specifically, as Koo and Lu are relatively powerless due to their lack of social and economic capital, Joyclub's management excluded them as they failed to fulfil conditions that the management

established. The failure of the community garden shows how the 'configurations of relations between and among [actors]' (Yeung, 2005: 38) are important considerations in studies of relational and structural networks.

Moreover, the failure highlights how, as argued by researchers on NGOs, space, in this case relational space and the importance of networks and social capital, need to be considered as crucial components of these organisations' activities rather than as a taken-for-granted backdrop (Sewell, 2001; Holt, 2008). This is because how actors such as the Joyclub management position themselves – by aligning with or excluding – other actors, such as Creation-Carers actors, sheds light on processes leading to the emergence, or failure to emerge, of a space for a nascent localised form of a transnational environmental FBO.

5.5 Conclusion

A combined analysis of the interaction between relational and structural aspects of network embeddedness, together with an examination of the identities and social and economic capital of the actors, can help to explain the successes and failures of transnational environmental FBOs in embedding themselves in a new locale. I highlighted the importance of considering an actor's social capital as it reduces the need for spatial proximity among actors during the trust-formation stage, an important consideration for transnational organisations operating in contexts where actors may have little face-to-face contact. Subsequently, I showed how an actor's social capital is a crucial factor influencing a transnational organisation's network embedding process in a new locale. Bourdieu's theorisations of (social and economic) capital helped explain why despite Creation-Carers actors' success at negotiating

(state) structures in Singapore, they failed at starting the community garden. In the following chapters, I examine transnational-local connections by unpacking how a transnational organisation's background (Chapter Six) and the particularities of the local context (Chapter Seven) influence Creation-Carers' embedding process.

Chapter 6

Societal Embeddedness

6.1 Introduction

After considering how relational and structural networks influence Creation-Carers' network embedding process, in this chapter I focus on Creation-Carers' organisational identity and how it affects the societal embedding process. Using the metaphor of a 'genetic code', Hess (2004) argues that an actor's societal background can either enable or constrain the embedding process. As mentioned earlier, being a transnational organisation with movements in 19 countries, Creation-Carers International has a set of 'Five Commitments' – 'Christian, Conservation, Community, Cross-cultural and Cooperation' – that forms its genetic code. The Five Commitments ensure a consistent organisational identity amongst the national movements, whilst allowing for diversity within the general framework. This genetic code has a large influence on the approach Creation-Carers actors take in Singapore. One aspect of Creation-Carers' organisational background is that it has the support of key Evangelical Christian leaders and this makes the starting process of embedding relatively easy. However, I argue that examining the organisation's genetic code alone is insufficient and there is a need to examine how the local audience perceives this background. In this regard, when one considers the longer-term view of *sustaining* the Creation-Carers presence in Singapore, the organisation's genetic code constrains the embedding process. Creation-Carers' genetic code can be an obstacle as (potential) local partners are aware of the organisation's activities in other contexts and may choose not to partner with Creation-Carers or fund its future projects as a result.

To elaborate on the above argument, this chapter consists of six sections. In Section 6.2, I discuss Hess' concept of societal embeddedness – how the organisation's genetic code influences the embedding process – and I highlight the concept's deterministic undertones. I proceed to examine, in Section 6.3, how Creation-Carers' identity as an organisation that is part of a global Evangelical Protestant community and supported by key Evangelical leaders enables the organisation to gain 'insider' status in Singapore's Christian community and hence facilitates its embedding process. Yet, this 'insider' status is not always guaranteed and I show in Section 6.4, that despite it not being a part of Creation-Carers' official genetic code, being construed by the local audience as a 'Western' organisation with 'foreign' theology constrains Creation-Carers' embedding process. In Section 6.5, I examine another aspect of Creation-Carers' organisational identity that hampers its embedding process – its activities in other national movements. The major donor of Creation-Carers activities in Singapore disagrees with one aspect of Creation-Carers' 'Five Commitments', consequently rendering the future of Creation-Carers activities in Singapore uncertain as the main source of funding may be eliminated. Finally, in Section 6.6, I summarise the main argument of this chapter and situate it in relation to the next chapter on territorial embeddedness.

6.2 Societal Embeddedness

Actors can be individuals or collectives (for example, an organisation) and an actor's societal background can either enable or constrain the embedding process. Hess dubs the actor's background as its genetic code, or the factor 'influencing and shaping the action of individuals and collective actors within their respective societies

and outside it' (2004: 176). The background of a transnational actor is important as it is a consistent factor shaping the actor's development along certain routes, despite changes in, for example, the local context. As Hess (2004: 180) argues, 'actors, be they individuals or collectives, have a history that shapes their perception, strategies and actions, which therefore are path-dependent'. Thus, for a transnational organisation, despite adapting to local circumstances, certain traits (such as Creation-Carers' 'Five Commitments') remain which foster a distinctive organisational identity amongst local chapters. On an individual level, the actor's background is important as the actor is the representative that other actors associate the organisation with. Hence, there is a need to consider the hitherto largely neglected role of individuals within faith-based organisations (FBOs) in influencing its activities.

Despite the usefulness of his concept, Hess' notion of societal embeddedness has its limitations. It has deterministic undertones, as evidenced from the emphasis on the path-dependency of an actor's behaviour, regardless of local context. In situations where the genetic code may constrain the development of an organisation in a new locale, Hess' notion of a singular genetic code is unhelpful. It does not afford the possibility that while an actor's background may influence the way projects are initiated, negotiations between different actors in the local context also occur, with implications on how the embedding process is sustained. Thus, it is necessary to consider how other actors perceive the actor's genetic code, and the negotiations involved, rather than, as Hess seems to stress, solely examining the actor's singular genetic code.

6.3 Creation-Carers' Identity – Evangelical Protestant Faith-based Organisation

In this section, I will examine how Creation-Carers' background as an organisation that is part of a global Evangelical Protestant community and one that is supported by key Evangelical leaders has enabled Creation-Carers to gain 'insider' status in Singapore's Christian community. Specifically, I show how transnational actors, such as the founder/director of Creation-Carers and members of its International Council of Reference, play the role of 'imagineers' and hence are crucial in cementing the status of Creation-Carers as 'insiders' and legitimate actors in Singapore's Christian community.

Routledge and Cumbers (2009) use the term 'imagineers' to refer to transnational NGO actors who explain the concept of an NGO's network (the 'imaginary') to other (potential) network members. Building on Tarrow's (2005) work, Routledge and Cumbers (2009) argue that imagineers are a particular form of transnational activist who are successful because of certain traits they possess, such as exercising legitimate authority and possessing effective communication skills. Such traits enable imagineers to foster trust and the sharing of resources among members of the network (Bandy and Smith, 2005). Additionally, imagineers are educators who spread ideas in arenas such as conferences. As imagineers are key representatives of the transnational organisation, they comprise an important part of the organisation's genetic code, bringing the organisation's message wherever they go.

The first imagineer of Creation-Carers is its founder/director, Joseph Scott. He guides the development of the organisation worldwide. As Scott elaborated on his role:

> My role as director is to be responsible for the good functioning of the International team…I represent the organisation to the key audience and that means advocating within the Christian world for the importance of environmental conservation and advocating within the secular conservation world for a debate about values. And there's the third important audience, which is donor organisations and individuals (Joseph Scott, Founder/Director, Creation-Carers).

Scott is an imagineer of Creation-Carers. He spends about six months every year travelling to different locations to provide leadership for Creation-Carers. His internal role is to communicate the direction for the Creation-Carers International team, and to ensure that despite their varied adaptations to local contexts, Creation-Carers national movements maintain an organisational identity that identifies them as part of Creation-Carers. In his external role as his organisation's spokesperson, Scott provides recognised leadership as he networks with other organisations and individuals.

The imagineer's background is crucial to the process of trust-formation, especially in transnational settings where meetings between different actors may be brief. Many of the views reflected by interviewees who attended the Creation-Carers Conference in July 2009 echoed Jeremiah Monte's and Jessica Ng's sentiments that

> Scott touched us in a way other speakers did not because he spoke from his own heart and from their own experience with Creation-Carers. For me, it is a matter of trust and relationship. If you have a relationship, it is personal, and I trust him (Jeremiah Monte, Principal, Apostles Instruction School).

> It is very good to have the founder come…it is more personal and people sense that he is very sincere. And he is an Anglican minister. I was thinking, how nice if he meets some Anglican vicars because people tend to have the mindset, that if this is an Anglican minister, [as an Anglican] I am more likely to hear [him out] (Jessica Ng, Creation-Carers Supporter).

In Levitt's (2007: 131) discussion of different types of transnational religious leaders, Scott can be classified as a 'parachuter' akin to 'business professionals who organise a one-day seminar yet aren't involved with the participants on an ongoing basis'. Yet despite the lack of continued nurturing of ties between the leader and (potential) supporters which is supposedly requisite in relationship-formation, audience members such as Ng 'still feel as if they have a personal relationship with their leader…(as) the leader's short visits…reinforce those bonds' (Levitt, 2007: 131). Even though it was the first time many in the audience met Scott (some had attended his talk at Disciples of Christ Church in Singapore in February 2009), they had largely positive responses to him. This can be largely attributed to Scott's physical presence, coupled with his sharing of experiences, which provided a human dimension to the transnational organisation – one that (potential) partners, donors and supporters can identify with. Routledge *et al.* (2007: 2576) assert that for a nongovernmental organisation (NGO) to persuade its audience, there needs to be 'a single leader able to project the message of the party without contradictions or mixed messages occluding the minds of potential supporters or voters'. It is strategic, then, that Scott is portrayed as personally initiating the embedding process in Singapore as he delivered the speech that introduces Creation-Carers to a large local audience.

Scott's sincerity, clear leadership and coherent articulation of his organisation's vision presented him as a trustworthy and legitimate actor. Hess' (2004) attribution of the importance of the actor's background in societal embedding processes provides insight into why Scott, and by extension Creation-Carers, garnered largely positive responses for its first project – the Creation-Carers Conference in Singapore. Despite originating from England and having spent little time in

Singapore, other aspects of Scott's character – for example, being a former Anglican clergyman – makes conference participants, like Ng, immediately identify with Scott as fellow members of a wider transnational denominational network, and hence possibly become more receptive to him. Monte's and Ng's assessment of Scott supports Routledge *et al.*'s (2007: 2584) observation that these transnational imagineers 'do not (necessarily) constitute themselves out of a malicious will-to-power: rather, power defaults to them through the characteristics…(such as) personal qualities like energy, commitment and charisma'. Trust-formation, then, is not a top-down process where powerful actors force others to trust them. Whilst an actor may actively formulate ways to legitimise himself/herself as a trustworthy actor, trustworthiness is only attained when the audience of such legitimising acts trust the actor. Similarly, Lundvall (1993: 57), writing about trust-formation between firms, notes, 'trust cannot be bought, and if it can be bought, it would be of little value'. As trust-formation is a relational process, in the case of transnational imagineers, whilst they are powerful actors due to their societal background, they still require local audiences to react positively to them.

The next group of imagineers are members of Creation-Carers' International Council of Reference. Members include Reverend Dr Timothy Lewis and Dr Luke Ferdinand. Reverend Dr Timothy Lewis is a highly influential Evangelical leader (one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people). He introduces Creation-Carers in its promotional video which is screened and distributed at most Creation-Carers events. Lewis' endorsement of Creation-Carers is evident from his prefatory remarks in the video:

> The video's main purpose is to explain the biblical directive to care for God's creation…For over twenty years, I have been an enthusiastic supporter of

Creation-Carers. And I take this opportunity to commend to you their practical and educational work around the world. They are, in my judgement, a very fine organisation which is worthy of our support (Timothy Lewis, Creation-Carers International Council of Reference).

Similarly, Dr Luke Ferdinand also played an active role in promoting the work of Creation-Carers, especially in Singapore. Ferdinand is the Secretary for Social Engagement of the International Evangelical Youth Fellowship and he regularly travels to various countries to deliver talks on Christian social involvement, of which one aspect is Christian environmentalism. He described his involvement in Creation-Carers below:

There are two main roles I play: firstly, to promote the work of Creation-Carers through my public speaking engagements. Secondly, I help to recruit people to join Creation-Carers or start Creation-Carers in their countries…Members of the International Council of Reference are people Creation-Carers like to be identified with and it is good for their publicity (Luke Ferdinand, Creation-Carers International Council of Reference).

Members of the International Council of Reference are renowned in their field of expertise – mainly theological education or scientific research. For example, Ferdinand has delivered several talks in Singapore to audiences ranging from tertiary students' Christian groups, to members of Resurrection College, one of the largest seminaries in Singapore. It is through their work that members of the International Council of Reference create awareness of Creation-Carers. Thus whilst Joseph Scott is a newcomer in Singapore Christian circles, certain members of Creation-Carers' International Council of Reference already have an established reputation in Singapore.

When asked about the reasons for selecting the above actors for the promotional video, Scott' reply was insightful:

> It's a curious thing but in my opinion anyway, the informal authority structure of the Evangelical world means that there are relatively few thought leaders and for many people, it is sufficient for them to know that those thought leaders are on board. And they find that easier than thinking themselves. It shouldn't be like that but it is (Joseph Scott, Founder/Director, Creation-Carers).

The strategic selection of interviewees in the promotional video is crucial. Even though Scott is not renowned globally, members of his organisation's International Council of Reference are. Their endorsement of Creation-Carers helped the organisation attain an 'insider' status as local Christian audiences were familiar with these figures and trusted their opinion. Many interviewees told me they believed Creation-Carers is a trustworthy organisation because 'the thinkers' like Lewis and Ferdinand support it.

By drawing on the organisation's genetic code of being an Evangelical Protestant FBO, Scott's strategy in selecting globally-renowned Christian leaders to constitute Creation-Carers' International Council of Reference greatly enabled the embedding process. On a general structural level, and as Scott highlights, Protestant Christianity does not have a sole source of religious authority, thus Evangelical Protestant thought is shaped by several leaders including Timothy Lewis. As discussed in Chapter Two, one's religious background can be an important marker of one's 'insider status' in the 'faith imaginary' of civil society (Sajoo, 2008). For example, in a study of religious mappings Levitt (2001) shows how transnational migrants create new religious spaces by drawing on identifiable religious icons to relocate themselves spiritually in new settings. Similarly, the above case of Creation-

Carers' International Council of Reference demonstrated how transnational FBOs use tools, such as videos linking key thought leaders, to create an imagined community of Evangelical Christian environmentalists with the organisation at the centre. Moreover, another reason why Creation-Carers' background aided the embedding process results from the particularities of the Singapore context. This is because whilst Protestant denominations in North America have Evangelical and non-Evangelical segments, 'Singapore Christian leaders unanimously observe that in Singapore the non-Evangelical wing of mainline Protestantism is virtually non-existent' (DeBernardi, 2008: 120). The general theological stance of Creation-Carers is thus aligned with the majority of Protestants in Singapore and the local audience would also be familiar with members of Creation-Carers' International Council of Reference who are Evangelical leaders.

6.4 Creation-Carers' Identity – 'Western' Organisation with 'Foreign' Theology

The process of fostering trust in a new local context, even for key actors with social capital, however, is not straightforward. The 'foreignness' of Creation-Carers in the Singapore context is a factor several interviewees highlighted:

> I would have been very happy to see a local guy execute the conference…Of course you can have an *ang moh* (dialect for Westerner) involved but the two (Joseph Scott and Kevin O'Connor) kind of flew in, did their stuff and flew out (David Berry, Lecturer, Singapore Theological Seminary).

The lack of sustained contact and its implications on nurturing ties with the local audience aside, the organisational identity of Creation-Carers was intrinsically tied to the 'Western' identities of the two Creation-Carers representatives – Joseph Scott and Kevin O'Connor, the speaker at the second day of the conference. As a potential Creation-Carers partner observed:

I am not too keen on connecting with Creation-Carers so fast because they are a Western organisation and they have their resources…We have been, for the past seven years, raising the flag for Asian environmentalism. Why would we want all the good work to go under a Western organisation? (Nicholas Lim, Founder/Director, Earth-Leaders).

Lim is the founder/director of Earth-Leaders, a local Protestant FBO that engages in sustainable development projects. Even though Scott's background enabled him to successfully initiate Creation-Carers's embedding process within Singapore, the comments by Berry and Lim highlight problems Creation-Carers may have sustaining the work Scott started. The lack of sustained contact with local audiences and partners, and the attendant identification of Creation-Carers as a 'Western' organisation could potentially hinder the embedding process.

The genetic code of an actor can (and does) constrain the organisation's development. This is due to the history of Christianity and Christian identities in Singapore. In a pattern similar to other Southeast Asian countries, Christianity arrived in Singapore with the colonial powers. This has led to 'the persistent conception of Christianity as inextricably bound to the cultural and political beliefs of European, North American and other countries' (Goh, 2005: 74). As a key imagineer, Scott's strong influence portrayed a coherent organisational identity in Singapore. The effect of this strong identity, however, was ambivalent because while there was a clear articulation of Creation-Carers' goals, there was also an exclusion of other identities within Creation-Carers, such as local voices. Coupled with the historical antecedents of Christianity as a 'Western' religion in Singapore, having 'Western' imagineers as key representatives of the organisation perpetuates the idea amongst local audiences that Creation-Carers is a 'Western' organisation bringing 'Western' values in, rather

than a transnational FBO seeking to establish local movements with local leadership. Thus local chapters of transnational FBOs may fail in developing local partnerships due to a combination of the background of the transnational organisation and the way local potential partners perceive it.

Apart from being deemed a 'Western' organisation and hence an 'outsider' in Singapore Christian circles, certain members of the audience raised concerns about the 'foreignness' of the theological underpinnings of Creation-Carers' work. In Singapore, discussions about Christian 'missions' tend to concern activities that are clearly 'sacred' such as sending missionaries to other countries to establish churches and the training of local Christian leaders (Sng, 2003). Creation-Carers' notion of 'missions', however, differs from the dominant model in Singapore as there is no differentiation between 'sacred' and 'secular' activities. Instead, everything Christians do can be considered 'sacred', including environmental action. Objections to the 'foreignness' of Creation-Carers' message were seen in the following comments from participants at the Creation-Carers' Conference:

> I don't fully agree with Luke Ferdinand. He is from South Asia and comes to Singapore speaking about integral missions, not knowing the issues we face. And then he says 'oh it (issues in Singapore) is for you to think through', but that is unsatisfactory. I know he is a strong supporter of Creation-Carers, but he does not know the environmental challenges we face in urban Singapore…so how does integral mission feature in Singapore? I don't know (Wilson Huang, Creation-Carers' potential Partner).

> I don't know if it is just Singaporean Christians. They are apathetic, like 'why should we be concerned about the environment, shouldn't we be concerned about saving souls? Why are we pumping money into Christian work that is so controversial rather than straightforward things church-planting?' I think because 'integral missions' is so unfamiliar, they can't really grasp it (Jerome Chia, Creation-Carers Supporter).

The introduction of Creation-Carers' message in Singapore came under the larger auspices of 'integral missions' and Ferdinand is one of its main proponents. 'Integral missions' reworks current Evangelical understandings of what constitutes Christian 'missions', and how Christians are to respond to challenges they face, including environmental problems. Proponents of 'integral missions' argue that rather than conceptualising Christian missions as 'a set of special 'projects' and 'programs'…the mission of the church is located in the adequacy and faithfulness of its witness to Christ' (Ramachandra, 2006: 9). The concept of integral missions reshapes the sacred-secular dynamics of FBOs as the distinction between 'sacred' and 'secular' activities becomes less clear. Thus Creation-Carers' emphasis on environmental work, rather than the traditional aim of Christian missions ('saving souls'), is called into question. Creation-Carers' work is deemed contentious because in Singapore at least, there has not been a Christian organisation whose activities do not primarily involve working with people. The 'sacred' dimension of Creation-Carers' environmental activities seems to be lacking, thus making the audience question the validity of Creation-Carers' ethos.

The differences in the way Creation-Carers and Singapore Christians understand the 'sacred/secular' distinction partially arises from differences in theological understandings concerning the end of the world. The reflections of those who attended the Creation-Carers Conference in 2009 summed up the difference between both:

> I hold to the theology that everything will be gone with fire and then poof, we start everything new and perfect. But they [Creation-Carers] are saying that after the end of this world, it is not a 'new heaven and new earth', but 'new heaven and *renewed* earth'. If we don't conserve the biodiversity we have

now, it wouldn't be there in the renewed earth. Taking care of the earth is thus a way of doing what God wants us to do, which is missions. I [have] never heard that preached before until I encountered Creation-Carers (Jerome Chia, Creation-Carers Supporter, emphasis his).

I believe God will destroy the world in the end. In Genesis, Christians are told to subdue the earth which means to use and not abuse. So our duty is not to abuse it…I am unconvinced about their [Creation-Carers] 'renewed earth' concept. I still believe God will create a new earth after the end of this world (Simon Kwang, Participant, Creation-Carers Conference).

One factor affecting the success of transnational faith-based organisations is its ability to glocalise religious teachings (see Section 2.5.3). The above comments highlight how the type of teaching Creation-Carers promotes may be difficult for local audiences to accept as they are unfamiliar, or disagree, with such forms of theological discourse.

Regarding the forms of transnational evangelical practice that finds expression locally in Singapore, DeBernardi (2008: 123) observes that the 'theological interpretation that motivates the strongest Evangelical reading of the Bible for Protestants is dispensational pre-millennial theology', a view that God will take Christians away from the world in the period before the end of this world, as seen in Chia's description of what would happen at the end of the world. This teaching 'contributes an overwhelming logic and urgency to the matter of conversion and evangelism' in Singapore (DeBernardi, 2005: 185) and places people (what Chia earlier referred to as 'saving souls') as the key focus of Christian missions, rather than concerns such as the environment. Creation-Carers' message runs somewhat counter to dispensational pre-millennial theology in that the organisation's theological stand is that instead of an entirely 'new earth' after the end of the world, the earth will only be restored to a certain extent. Engaging in environmental action becomes a form of

Christian missions – doing what God wants Christians to do. The difference in beliefs between Creation-Carers and (the majority of) Singapore Christians concerning the both the end of the world and what Christian missions should constitute demonstrates how whilst religions can provide a framework for environmental action, transnational environmental FBOs need to examine the main strands of theological thought in the local context. An inability to glocalise their teachings gave the audience the impression that Creation-Carers actors were unable to grapple with differing opinions about the organisation's theological underpinnings. This intersection of the sacred-secular binary with transnational and local processes of transmitting religious ideas greatly hindered the embedding process.

Evidently, much negotiation occurs when a transnational faith-based organisation seeks to embed in a new locale. The social capital of imagineers such as Scott and Lewis is important for network extension. As Bourdieu (1986: 251) asserts, for such actors, 'they are known to more people than they know, and their work of sociability, when it is exerted, is highly productive'. The imagineers are powerful actors within evangelical Christian circles and their social capital draws potential partners into collaboration with Creation-Carers. Being members of the same transnational evangelical network, however, is a necessary but insufficient condition for Creation-Carers' successful embedding within Singapore. Instead, the glocalisation of religious teachings is necessary; otherwise local audiences might deem the organisation unsuitable for the local context.

One factor that mitigates the effects of Creation-Carers' identity as a 'Western' organisation, however, is the identity of its local actors Hannah Koo and

Thomas Lu. Their identities as Singaporeans were important to potential partners like Kevin Foo. He is the founder/director of Eastern Doves, a Protestant FBO that engages in development projects in Asia. As he elaborated:

> I believe Singapore churches are largely wary of Western organisations because of a 'I am here, please send your people and money to support us' mentality from Western organisations…The good thing for Creation-Carers is that Hannah and Thomas are based here and they are Singaporeans, hence they have a better chance as compared to those Western organisations that locate their regional office in Singapore but don't engage local churches (Kevin Foo, Founder/Director, Eastern Doves).

Foo's point concerning both the institution's and individual's identity is crucial. Whilst to the audience in Singapore, Creation-Carers' identity as a 'Western' organisation was an obstacle in light of the colonial past, Koo and Lu's identity as Singaporeans created another dimension to Creation-Carers' organisational identity, opening up avenues for partnership. Furthermore, Foo provided a contextualised perspective of Christian FBO activities in Singapore. He highlighted the current trend in Singapore where many transnational Christian organisations with headquarters mainly in the United Kingdom or the United States situate their regional offices here to obtain funding but do not engage local Christian communities (see Goh, 2004). An issue that best exemplifies the complexity of the relationship between the locality and transnational practices is the subject of Foo's main criticism – funding (or the lack thereof), which I take up in the next section.

6.5 Creation-Carers' Identity – Partnering Organisations of Other Faiths

Funding is an important factor influencing NGO activities. In this section, I unpack how Creation-Carers' organisational commitment to partnering FBOs of different religions has detrimental consequences for Creation-Carers' future in

Singapore. An important actor is Simon Kwang, the chairperson of Koo and Lu's church's Missions Committee that financially supports them, indirectly supporting the work of Creation-Carers in Singapore. Kwang objects to the notion of partnerships between Christian organisations and FBOs of other faiths. The potential lack of funding for Koo and Lu in Singapore is a pressing problem that could hamper the development of Creation-Carers activities in Singapore.

Partnering with different types of organisations, both religious and otherwise, is part of Creation-Carers' genetic code. This is evident from Scott's description of how the aforementioned Five Commitments influences each Creation-Carers national movement:

> As long as Creation-Carers national movements share the Five Commitments: that they are Christian as we are; that they are concerned primarily with biodiversity conservation; that they take a community approach – both involving the local community and are strong relationally within themselves; that they are cross-cultural and that they are highly cooperative – *that is to say they work with people of all faiths and none*, who share the same objectives, then how that works out in their local programme would be entirely up to them (Joseph Scott, Founder/Director, Creation-Carers, emphasis mine).

Evidently, part of Creation-Carers' genetic code is to partner FBOs of different religions. The criterion for partnership with other organisations is not based on the potential partner's religious affiliation, but rather, whether that organisation is similarly engaged in conservation work.

This partnership criterion, however, did not fit well with Simon Kwang's theological framework and has implications for funding of Creation-Carers activities in Singapore. As Kwang remarked:

> We are not giving money to Creation-Carers. We are supporting our church members. We do not support Creation-Carers because they take legal action and they work with Muslim organisations. As a church, we do not believe in doing either (Simon Kwang, Chairperson of Missions Committee, Disciples of Christ Church).

Certain Creation-Carers national movements are in partnership with organisations from different religions (such as Islam). One Creation-Carers national movement is currently involved in legal action against land developers whom they deem to be encroaching in the land owned by that national movement. Kwang's objections to supporting Creation-Carers as an organisation resulted from the interpretation of certain Biblical passages concerning activities Christians should not engage in including certain forms of partnerships and taking legal action.

Funding is crucial for projects to be completed, especially for NGOs. As NGOs do not generate wealth, DeMars (2005: 44) argues that they are not just dependent on funding partners; instead, NGOs 'are constituted by their partners. Without crucial partners, a particular NGO would cease to exist or become something else'. Thus, in general, the donor partner's agenda strongly influences the NGO's activities. During our interview, Scott commented that Creation-Carers' staff are funded by churches and individuals. Thus, for Creation-Carers national movements, not only is funding necessary for projects to be carried out, it is crucial for the national movement's existence. At the point of writing, it is still uncertain how much longer Koo and Lu would continue receiving funding from their church. Creation-Carers' partners – those they collaborate with on certain projects and those who fund Creation-Carers activities – play an influential role in the embedding process (see Section 2.4 regarding donor influence). In this case, the main Singapore donor's

interpretation of, and objections to, Creation-Carers' genetic code has a large potential to hinder future Creation-Carers activities.

In the previous chapter, I highlighted how actors can undertake flexible identities. Not only is this a strategy adopted by actors seeking to negotiate certain structures, other actors can also choose to distinguish between different aspects of an actor's identity. Notably, Kwang emphasised the distinction between supporting Koo and Lu as members of his church, and supporting Creation-Carers. The religious dynamics of FBO-partnerships becomes a key analytical point because for theological reasons, Kwang strongly opposes Creation-Carers' partnerships with FBOs of different religions in the other national movements. This demonstrates how an organisation's genetic code influences the embedding process. In his survey of the field, Hess (2009: 428) concludes that because 'much of the embeddedness literature has empirically focused on successful regions and positive outcomes, there seems little room to consider the dark side of embeddedness'. The 'dark side' of embeddedness, or the disagreements amongst actors during the embedding process, is evident in this case. The possibility that the development of Creation-Carers in Singapore may be halted resulting from theological disagreements a local donor has with the transnational organisation's genetic code demonstrates how the embedding process is not always a 'positive, benign form of development based on collaboration and equality' (Hess, 2009: 428).

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how Creation-Carers' background both enabled and constrained the embedding process. I showed how imagineers of Creation-Carers, as

key Evangelical leaders, enabled the embedding process. However, whilst starting the embedding process in Singapore was relatively easy, the longer-term view of sustainability of a Creation-Carers presence – both in terms of finding partners and donors – is difficult. This is because an organisation's genetic code can constrain the embedding process, as evidenced in the case of Creation-Carers being construed as a 'Western' organisation, and in a major donor's objection to Creation-Carers' practice of partnering organisations from different faiths. Additionally, I argued for the necessity of going beyond Hess' notion of a singular genetic code as the sole determinant in the societal embedding process, highlighting the need to consider local actors' perceptions of the transnational organisation. I further unpack this transnational-local nexus in the next chapter as I examine how the particularities of the local context influence Creation-Carers' embedding process.

Chapter 7

Territorial Embeddedness

7.1 Introduction

Together with factors influencing societal and network embeddedness, the extent to which Creation-Carers becomes embedded in Singapore is also dependent on the particularities of the Singapore context. In this chapter, I examine the third aspect of embeddedness, territorial embeddedness, to understand the degree of anchoring of a transnational organisation in a space. The territorial embedding process of transnational organisations is influenced by processes operating in a space, which, in turn, aid and/or hinder the embedding process. In studying territorial embeddedness, clustering is an important phenomenon as researchers can examine key features of the space that attract similar organisations to it. In Christian circles, Singapore is known as the 'Antioch of Asia' due to the presence of many transnational and local Christian organisations. The potential to learn and partner with these organisations is a positive factor leading Creation-Carers to embed in Singapore. However, I argue that the potential benefits of locating in a cluster are reduced due to competition for limited resources between Creation-Carers and already-existing parachurch organisations and churches.

Besides the concept of the 'cluster', the 'territory' is another central idea in understanding territorial embeddedness. In this chapter, I examine the state's role and the power it exerts in a territory. I argue that even though transnational studies highlight the increasing porosity of national borders, state policies still have much

bearing on transnational processes in a particular territory. As I will demonstrate, the sacred/secular binary and the (spatial) circumscription of Creation-Carers activities are crucial to understanding the hindrances to Creation-Carers' territorial embedding process.

This chapter consists of five sections. Following the introduction, Section 7.2 outlines Hess' concept of territorial embeddedness, focusing on how activities existing in a space influence a transnational organisation's embedding process. Subsequently, in Section 7.3, I examine the phenomenon of Christian organisations clustering in Singapore (the 'Antioch of Asia') and the cooperation and competition that exists in the cluster. I study how state-defined roles concerning what FBOs can do in Singapore society hinder Creation-Carers' embedding process. I summarise the main argument of this chapter in Section 7.5.

7.2 Territorial Embeddedness

Studies of territorial embeddedness examine the extent to which actors are 'anchored' in particular areas. The strength of this 'anchoring' is related to the degree to which actors are influenced by processes already occurring in the space. For example, in economic geography, transnational firms may choose to locate in places with clusters of local small and medium enterprises prior to establishing ties with them. The presence of strong local business activity in the area attracts the transnational firm to locate there as it can potentially establish sub-contracting operations with local firms that have access to local labour markets (Hess, 2004).

Yet the particularities of a place do not always encourage an organisation to embed there as existing relationships, such as those amongst the state and local firms and consumers, may hinder the entrance and/or development of certain organisations. Hess (2004: 177) asserts that actors may 'in some cases become constrained by…activities and social dynamics that already exist in those places' (Hess, 2004: 177). Thus, to provide a balanced view of territorial embeddedness, I also examine how different factors, such as state policies, can hinder Creation-Carers' embedding process.

A concept linked with notions of territorial embeddedness is that of districts and clusters as both are concerned with where actors gather and how this leads to growth. Used mainly in economic geography, the focus on industrial and business districts and their locations highlight the importance of the characteristics of the place and its histories as factors influencing an organisation's embedding process. Lazerson (1993: 214-215) asserts that in the case of small artisanal firms in Italy, locating within an industrial district is beneficial as its 'homogenous culture creates rules and engenders trust, and its geographic boundedness increases the probabilities of social interaction'. Firms benefit from locating close to related firms as clustering facilitates cooperation and rapid learning (Schmitz, 2004) and enables the transferral of tacit knowledge between actors (Sturgeon, 2003). Territorial embeddedness, then, helps explain the firm's decisions to embed certain portions of its activities in spaces considered suitable for that particular activity. Yet, cooperation is not the only form of inter-firm interaction in a cluster. Intense inter-firm competition also occurs as each tries to outdo the other in gaining market share (see, for example, Kong, 2009 regarding competition in Singapore's creative arts cluster).

The clusters concept, however, is not without critique. Scholars such as Martin and Sunley (2003) caution that the popularity surrounding the idea of 'clusters' may have obscured its conceptual and empirical weaknesses. The first criticism Martin and Sunley (2003: 28) raise is that 'clusters' may be just a successful branding exercise by Michael Porter who is trying to promote his theory amidst similar theories of industrial agglomeration. Conceptually, then, the clusters idea may be unable to explain what factors influence the emergence of the empirical phenomenon; instead, it could just be a construct by powerful scholars like Porter. The second criticism Martin and Sunley raise concerns the imprecision of geographical terms in cluster studies. They highlight that the concept's 'key weakness is that there is nothing inherent in the concept itself to indicate…whether and in what ways different clustering processes operate at different geographical scales' (Martin and Sunley, 2003: 12). As transnational-local dynamics are important in my study, and as scholars have argued for the continued relevance of the national scale in transnational studies, the lack of scalar specificity in cluster studies is problematic and should be addressed.

7.3 Clustering of Christian Organisations in Singapore

The concept of industrial and business districts is helpful for thinking about FBOs in Singapore. As elaborated in Chapter Three, there is a significant cluster of transnational Christian organisations in Singapore as many choose to locate their headquarters or regional offices here. In this sense, the gathering of these organisations makes Singapore a "cluster". There is, however, an important caveat about the spatial organisation of Christian organisational activities in Singapore. Whilst physical proximity of actors, the cluster's geographic boundedness and cluster-

specific government policies are some characteristics of clusters (Lazerson, 2003), this is not the case with the "cluster" of transnational Christian organisations in Singapore. There are no clear physical boundaries delineating a Christian cluster in Singapore, nor are there government policies aimed at creating one. The physical proximity of actors is true only insofar as Singapore is a small island. However, Singapore is a cluster of Christian organisations to the extent that it hosts many transnational Christian organisations. The cluster is thus considered at a different scale.

7.3.1 Cooperation in the Cluster

According to much of the literature on clusters, cooperation among actors, particularly in terms of learning, is important. For firms, the primary benefit of clustering is to be near other firms engaged in similar practices such as product development and to enhance knowledge transfer among actors conveyed through face-to-face interaction, hence the need for spatial proximity (see, however, Faulconbridge, 2005). The type of cooperation Creation-Carers is engaged in, however, is not focused on product development; instead, as a transnational organisation operating mainly in non-Asian contexts, embedding within Singapore enables Creation-Carers actors to learn from other organisations about the intricacies of operating in Asia.

The aims and positive outcomes of the learning process can be seen in Creation-Carers' partnership with Transformational Development, a Singapore-based Christian FBO that engages in development projects in Asia. Michael Sim, the founder/director of Transformational Development, was the first person Hannah Koo

contacted when she organised the first Creation-Carers seminar in Singapore in 2004 and he was instrumental in ensuring the seminar's success. I asked Sim about the difficulties Creation-Carers may face. He downplayed them:

> After all, here [Singapore] is the so-called Antioch of Asia and there are many international Christian organisations here. Plenty of opportunities for Creation-Carers to partner us, our partner organisations in Singapore, and the many Christian organisations in Singapore (Michael Sim, Founder/Director, Transformational Development).

As Creation-Carers actors may not have much experience organising activities within an Asian context, locating within a cluster of Christian FBOs is advantageous as actors already located in Singapore can help the new entrants negotiate potential difficulties. The strategy that David Berry proposed Creation-Carers take is similar to what other interviewees suggested:

> Creation-Carers should make an alliance with maybe Ravi Zacharias [a transnational Christian FBO], just to get this Creation-Carers presence in Singapore, piggyback onto an established ministry that is here (David Berry, Lecturer, Singapore Theological Seminary).

Evidently, for Sim and Berry, locating within the cluster is advantageous as there are opportunities for Creation-Carers to develop partnerships with other transnational Christian FBOs located in Singapore. Such partnerships help anchor Creation-Carers to Singapore as these activities promote Creation-Carers' work locally, in turn enabling Creation-Carers actors to build ties with local partners and the local Christian audience.

Additionally, Creation-Carers has international partners that are already in Singapore. This further enabled the embedding process as seen in the comment by the

Associate General Secretary of the Evangelical Youth Fellowship Singapore, Peter Eka. The Evangelical Youth Fellowship Singapore has student groups in many Singapore tertiary institutions. Creation-Carers actors, Koo and Lu, have delivered talks at several of their group meetings. Members of the Fellowship also formed about one-third of the audience at the 2009 Creation-Carers Conference in Singapore. Regarding the benefits for Creation-Carers locating within a cluster, Peter Eka's comment was insightful:

> Creation-Carers International is considered a *preferred partner* by Evangelical Youth Fellowship International, our parent body. They [Creation-Carers] are our international partners in environmental conservation. When I heard Creation-Carers was in Singapore, I publicised it to our student groups, encouraging students to join Creation-Carers events. My organisation has been in Singapore for about fifty years and is partners with parachurch organisations here so I also introduced Hannah and Thomas to these organisations, help them know more contacts, make their presence known (Peter Eka, Associate General Secretary, Evangelical Youth Fellowship Singapore, emphasis his).

There is the possibility that some of Creation-Carers partners may be located within the cluster of Christian organisations in Singapore too. The institutional ties between international partners became an avenue for Creation-Carers actors in Singapore to begin the embedding process, and a way for them to meet new local partners.

The above comments on the variety of partnership opportunities in Singapore are similar to what Goh (2004: 8) terms as 'collaborative cultures' in Evangelical organisations in Asia. Goh notes that there is the increasing trend of transnational organisations headquartered in the United Kingdom or the United States that are partnering local Christian organisations in places with a strong Christian presence in Asia, such as Singapore and Hong Kong. The result of these 'collaborative cultures' is

that 'networking is maximised over more countries and peoples over time' (Goh, 2004: 9). For Creation-Carers, locating in a cluster positively impacted their partnership-formation as there were networking opportunities which anchored Creation-Carers to Singapore. Thus, as Hess (2004) highlights, activities already occurring in a space, such as the intra-cluster linkages, can aid a transnational organisation's territorial embedding process.

7.3.2 Competition in the Cluster

In the cluster literature, cooperation and mutual learning among firms is only one dimension of cluster activities, the other dimension being competition. An example of competition can be seen in strategies to improve product quality – firms within the same cluster learn from one another whilst competing to be the firm with the best product quality (Schmitz, 2004). Just as the type of competition a firm is engaged in is sector-specific (see Sturgeon, 2003), the competition Creation-Carers engages in Singapore is related to the type of organisation it is.

Creation-Carers is a parachurch organisation. In his extensive work on the history of Christianity in Singapore, Sng (2003: 262) defines a parachurch organisation as one 'which set [sic] for itself a limited scope of operation…[and does] not pretend to undertake all the usual functions of a church. Its members…[are generally] drawn from different churches…[and it relies] upon a large pool of lay people who are willing to volunteer time and energy'. The parachurch organisation, then, is not a substitute for the church. However, both share common resources such as Christians who are both church members and volunteers in parachurch organisations.

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Such sharing of a resource base amongst local churches and parachurch organisations and amongst parachurch organisations becomes a form of competition. An aspect of this local inter-cluster competition for human resources that Creation-Carers faces is its ability to attract local Christians to participate and support its activities. This was seen in Michael Sim's comment about the oversupply of activities by Christian organisations in Singapore:

> I think if Creation-Carers wants to make an impact, they need to do more than have conferences and talks because Singapore is saturated with such things. Many of the Christian organisations, seminaries, churches already do that (Michael Sim, Founder/Director, Transformational Development).

Being located in a cluster means that there are similar organisations (both church and parachurch) that may conduct programmes, such as conferences and talks, in a similar form as what Creation-Carers had organised in Singapore thus far. This reduces the distinctiveness of Creation-Carers activities and their ability to attract and sustain an audience base.

Not only does Creation-Carers have a problem attracting supporters, it faces difficulties recruiting volunteers. Creation-Carers volunteers are crucial to the success of a national movement as they spend dedicated periods of time running events together with national staff. The difficulties of recruiting volunteers were seen in the following comments:

> I feel like when I talk to Christians in Singapore, they are at breaking point. They are struggling – working and involved in church ministry. They don't have time to think about this new thing [Creation-Carers] (Hannah Koo, Creation-Carers International Staff).

It is easier to serve in church than outside [at parachurch organisations]. People are so focused on their lives and their church, which takes up time, and they may say what has Creation-Carers got to do with me? (Sue Chow, Creation-Carers Supporter and local church leader).

The above examples suggest, therefore, that locating in a cluster is not necessarily always beneficial as actors within it may already be engaged in cluster-related activities. Regardless of the argument that parachurch organisations are sources of religious innovation (Finke, 2004; Wuthnow, 1988) and hence purportedly a positive phenomenon, Christians in Singapore may view the presence of yet another parachurch organisation negatively, as an additional burden on their time.

Moreover, churches in Singapore may consider parachurch organisations to be of little or no priority. This can be seen when one considers the difficulties Creation-Carers actors face while trying to engage the local churches. For example, when Koo and Lu returned to Singapore in 2008, they were introduced to Ashley Goh through a mutual friend from Creation-Carers Canada. Goh had recently graduated from Sovereign College and works at a Singapore church – Kairos Community Church. Together, Koo, Lu and Goh planned a large-scale nature walk for Kairos Community Church members (2000 in total) to celebrate the church's anniversary. However, leaders of the denomination that Goh's church belonged to asked the church leaders to host a job fair for the community that the church was situated in, as many became jobless during the recent economic crisis. As the directives from the denominational leaders were of a higher priority than the nature walk organised by Creation-Carers and as the church's schedule for that year had been filled, the nature walk was postponed indefinitely and the job fair was held on the church's anniversary date in its

stead. A similar failure to engage a local church occurred when Creation-Carers was introduced to City-Blessing Church. City-Blessing Church's pastor, Felix Wong, cancelled the mangrove boardwalk activity that he had initially invited Koo and Lu to organise as the Creation-Carers event coincided with a prominent Christian conference that he wanted his members to attend. Thus, even in instances when churches are willing to partner parachurch organisations like Creation-Carers, other actors (such as denominational leaders) place competing demands on the church schedule. Actors and activities that church leaders consider less important are edged out in the competition.

The problems that Creation-Carers faces are similar to what Grabher (1993) terms the 'dilemma of embeddedness'. He argues that for an organisation, too little embeddedness may lead to an erosion of support for it, whereas too much embeddedness 'may pervert networks into cohesive coalitions against more radical innovations' (Grabher, 1993: 26). As the above discussion showed, Creation-Carers is weakly embedded in Singapore. There is almost no resource base from which Creation-Carers actors can rely on. Religious organisations, just like firms, compete with one another, consequently hindering the embedding process of new entrants. Whilst Creation-Carers actors try to engage local Christians and churches, more powerful actors have a competitive edge in the local inter-cluster competition.

Even though the clustering of (firm) activities occurs also at national and regional level (see, for example, Lazerson, 1993), in this section I have shown that local cluster interactions are particularly influential in the territorial embedding process. Whilst being embedded in the 'Antioch of Asia' presents partnership

opportunities for Creation-Carers actors, cooperation among actors is not the only mode of interaction in the cluster. Competition also happens and activities already occurring within a space can hinder a transnational FBO's development. Thus, embedding in a cluster has ambivalent outcomes.

7.4 Christian FBOs and the Singapore State

In this section, I examine the Singapore state's secular stance. I focus on two aspects of the state's secular guiding principle – the absence of an official state religion and the separation of politics and religion. Dear (2000a: 788) describes the conventional understanding of the 'state', or more precisely 'nation-state', as 'an area of land (or land and water) with relatively well-defined, internationally recognised, political boundaries'. Such territorially-defined conceptualisations of the 'state', however, are challenged by new forms of organisational activity such as transnational entities (for example, firms) that destabilise traditional notions of the bounded nature of the 'state' (see Section 2.3.1). Yet, this does not mean the power of the 'state' is completely obliterated. Instead, the 'state' still figures prominently in transnational relations and its continued importance is seen when one conceptualises the 'state' as a 'set of institutions for the protection and maintenance of society…(which) guarantee the reproduction of social relations in a way that is beyond the capability…of any individual or single social group' (Dear, 2000a: 789). Through apparatuses such as the government, the 'state' plays a regulatory role by extending 'state intervention into non-state activities, including family and industrial relations…(to, amongst other things,) *secure social consensus*' (Dear, 2000b, 791, emphasis his). The 'state', then, is not just a territorially-defined portion of land and water, but is also a source of

power with the ability to influence processes occurring within it in order to maintain certain principles or achieve some aims.

As discussed in Chapter Three, two facets of state-society relations are crucial to understanding Creation-Carers' embedding process in Singapore. First, as the boundaries of state-NGO engagement are maintained by state apparatus such as the Registry of Societies, NGO actors need to be cognizant of the malleability of their 'insider/outsider' status. NGOs seeking to enact changes from the 'outside', or those who openly criticise government policies, may have their actions severely limited. The second dimension concerns the secular nature of the Singapore state. The secular aims that the Singapore state pursues, such as a distinct separation between politics and religion, is not to remove religion from the public sphere. Instead, the state is 'deeply involved in, concerned with, and exerts a measured influence over religious matters' (Tan, 2008: 66). Such enactments of state power in NGO and religious issues have considerable influence on Creation-Carers' territorial embedding process.

Whilst the extent to which religious groups can participate in larger Singapore society is largely restricted by the state, this does not necessarily mean that religious groups have not participated in the social arena. Indeed, the Singapore Christian community has contributed greatly in the aspect of social service provision (Mathews, 2008). However, one effect of this constant and clear circumscription of activities in Singapore is that alternatives to the model (that religious groups' main involvement in society is in the sphere of social service provision) are rarely articulated. Consequently, when other forms of Christian social involvement are proposed, such as in the case of Creation-Carers' call for Christian environmentalism, it is considered

a deviation from the norm, and hence not easily acceptable. This is seen in the following comments:

> We have home missions like the nursing home beside our church where we do things like voluntary work in Singapore – to help the underprivileged, the poor, the non-Christians. This is missions. Missions is not about taking care of trees or protesting like Greenpeace whose people keep on shouting 'save the earth!' (Simon Kwang, Chairperson of Missions Committee, Disciples of Christ Church).

> Christianity and environment is a relatively new subject. The worst fear is that Christians may associate Creation-Carers to Greenpeace and these are radicals who chain themselves to trees. I think Christians may find them scary and might forget the Christian element of Creation-Carers (Linda Tan, Programme Coordinator, Joyland).

> For Christians, the cynics think it is all fluff because environmental action is associated with tree huggers, with the activists, the anti-government. Singaporean Christians are very *guai guai* (Mandarin for obedient) and they toe the line (Kevin Foo, Founder/Director, Eastern Doves).

Whilst the above views may seem diverse, the implicit argument made is that Creation-Carers' activities are out of place in Singapore. The hybrid nature of Creation-Carers' activities – a combination of religion and environmental action – posed significant problems for local audiences to accept the organisation's ethos.

The objections local audiences have are derived from two sources. First, in Singapore, Christian involvement in society is largely by means of social service provision, which involves the care for people. In his study, Mathews (2008: 537, emphasis mine) notes that for most Christian social service providers in Singapore, 'the injunction is for Christians who have the love for God to display this love in practical ways by serving *fellow human beings*'. Thus, for Singapore Christians such

as Kwang, the lack of the human element in Creation-Carers' environmental focus is incongruous with the typical role Christian organisations play locally.

The second objection arises from the notion that environmentalism is linked with being radical and against the state. As discussed in Chapter Three, in Singapore, there are environmental NGOs that try to generate gradual change from within, by cooperating with government agencies (the 'insiders'), and those that are antagonistic toward the state and try to impose change from without (the 'outsiders'). It is important to note the interviewees' comments that Singapore Christians may associate environmentalism with 'outsiders' such as Greenpeace, a transnational environmental NGO that has taken a confrontational stance against governments over environmental issues. Such images of environmentalism as hostile to the state contrast greatly with the general image of religious groups in Singapore as non-aggressive and supportive of the state. Thus, there is a clear boundary demarcating the sphere of influence of religious organisations and what is considered as acceptable behaviour in Singapore (not being an anti-government environmentalist organisation). Taken together, the Singapore Christian audience may deem the hybrid nature of Creation-Carers' organisational aims – Christian environmentalism – as transgressing the state-inscribed ambit of religious activities in Singapore and hence inappropriate for the Singapore context.

As mentioned earlier, resulting from it being a secular state and hence having no official state religion, there is an expressed parity in the treatment of religions in Singapore. Whilst this means that all religions are treated equally in Singapore, it can also lead to reluctance by state-related institutions to engage with particular religious

organisations. An instance when the state-inscribed sacred/secular boundary impacted the progress of a Creation-Carers activity occurred when Creation-Carers actors were organising the second day of the Creation-Carers Conference in 2009. They encountered much difficulty trying to rent a venue with a government agency, Government Department B. As those involved in planning for the event related:

> I gave Hannah the contact for venue rental with Government Department B…in my personal opinion, for government-related agencies, religion is a tricky issue because they would not want to be seen as sponsoring a particular religion, church, mosque or temple and also because the environment is a pressure point (Lionel Lim, Manager, Government Department B).

> Being a government agency, they were very careful that they were not seen to be supporting any one religious group. We had to submit the publicity to Government Department B before they agreed to let us rent the place. Originally the title of the seminar had a Christian word in it…they called and said our topic on climate change is really in line with what they're doing, but because it is so obviously Christian, they can't be seen to be supporting it, so we cannot rent. But after I revamped the publicity and title, they approved it. I had a flash forward like 'this is what it is going to be like next time with Creation-Carers'. And because Creation-Carers is not registered locally, we could not apply for the NGO rate, the discount is 40%. I kept telling them Sir Jonathan Winston is our International Council of Reference Chair[person], trying to show that we're legit[imate]. I was very disappointed that they would be so by the book even though they know our track record. And even though we were partnering Christ College Singapore…I dared not take the risk of saying 'Christ College is a charity. Can we apply for your NGO rate under that name?' I didn't want to take the risk. I rather pay the full thing than get turned down again (Hannah Koo, Creation-Carers International staff).

As mentioned in Chapter Three, one aspect of Singapore's secular state policy is the state's commitment to an equal treatment of all major religions. Consequently, state agencies may display an unwillingness to engage with religious organisations in order to not be construed as supporting any particular religion. Thus Creation-Carers actors had to deliberately deemphasise the religious aspect of the seminar. This downplaying could be seen as the publicity was changed from the initial title of 'Climate change,

health and faith – calling Christians in medicine' to the approved title of 'Climate change, health and faith – the challenge facing the healthcare community'. The negotiations that Creation-Carers actors were engaged in regarding the religious identity of the FBO were similar to other local Christian social service providers. Mathews (2008: 544) observes that in Singapore, a primary reason for Christian-related 'agencies downplaying their religious…identification is the need to adapt to various sensitivities of operating in a secular state and multi-religious social setting'.

Whilst state power is not total or static (as Koo was successful in renting the venue from the state agency), the encounter with state officials made her dismal about the future of Creation-Carers operations in Singapore. On another occasion, Creation-Carers actors expressed interest in participating in a networking session with other environmental NGOs which was organised by a government Ministry. However, the Ministry's staff declined to invite Koo and Lu to the session, citing the reason that while Creation-Carers' environmental work is good, the Ministry did not wish to be deemed as supporting any particular religious organisation. Such negative encounters only served to dampen attempts at establishing Creation-Carers Singapore as the future seems fraught with difficulty, especially when it comes to encounters with state agencies.

The continued importance of the 'national' in influencing 'transnational' organisations is evident from the strength of the Singapore state's secular policy, especially with regards to the role religious actors are allowed to play. This substantiates Guarnizo and Smith's (1998: 10) assertion that 'transnational actions are bounded…(by) policies and practices of territorially-based sending and receiving

local and national states and communities'. Thus, despite Ignatow's (2007) study highlighting how transnational environmental FBOs such as the Alevi movement emerged from shifts in Turkey's secular policies (due to a resurgence of a mystical form of Islam), the outcome is different in Singapore, where secular national policies with a distinct separation of religion and the state is the mainstay. The territory then, with its existing relationship between actors such as the state and religious organisations, still plays a crucial role in influencing the embedding process of transnational organisations.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed how the particularities of the Singapore context affect the strength of ties anchoring Creation-Carers to Singapore. The focus on the territory is crucial as it highlights two phenomena surrounding religion in Singapore for closer examination: the cluster of Christian organisations in Singapore, and the relationship between religion and the state. I showed that locating within the 'Antioch of Asia' may not necessarily be beneficial for Creation-Carers. While there are opportunities for cooperation with other Christian organisations, the new entrant may be construed as an additional competitor of scarce resources, or as a separate entity from the church and hence of little priority. Moreover, the audience base that Creation-Carers developed in Singapore is less than what it requires, leading to questions of long-term viability. Additionally, there are constraints set by the state. The ambit that religious organisations are allowed to operate within poses a significant challenge for Creation-Carers as the hybrid nature of its activities – both environmental and religious – are deemed to transgress the state-imposed boundary. In sum, I have shown that whilst there are factors that both aid and hinder the

territorial embedding process, the obstacles Creation-Carers face are much stronger than the opportunities.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis began with the objective of examining the opportunities and obstacles a transnational environmental FBO encounters as it begins embedding in a new locale. There has been a long-acknowledged potential for religion to play a significant role in shaping religious adherents' environmental action and a recent emergence of an interest in how religions can be engaged in environmental action (Windsor, 2009). Yet, little attention has been given to analysing the roles that an increasing number of transnational environmental FBOs play in (re)shaping the relationship between religion and the environment and the problems these organisations encounter whilst embedding in a new locale. During the embedding process, the transnational-local interactions that these transnational organisations experience, the sacred-secular tensions these FBOs encounter, and the intersection of both dynamics, deserve empirical and theoretical attention.

The rest of the chapter is divided into two sections. In Section 8.2, I summarise my key findings and discuss the empirical and theoretical contributions of my study. Finally, in Section 8.3, I offer suggestions for future research and reflect on the closure of this study.

8.2 Summary and Key Contributions of Study

I began by outlining the research questions: first, to examine how partnership formation occurs as a transnational environmental FBO begins operations in a new locale; second, to understand how (religious) identities of transnational actors are interpreted by local actors and its implications; third, to study how processes in the locale influence the transnational organisation's development. Whilst much has been written about the link between religion and the environment, and some studies have been conducted of transnational religion and transnational FBOs, the increasing presence of transnational environmental FBOs has been largely neglected (with the exception of Ignatow, 2007). Apart from this empirical gap, theoretical problems also exist. Bebbington (2004: 729) argues that the 'emphasis on the organization as the unit of analysis has meant that discussions of NGOs continue to be plagued by the vexed and ultimately unanswerable question of 'what is an NGO?'' By conceiving of NGOs as self-contained 'black boxes', researchers limit their understanding of the processes these organisations are engaged in. Power relations between extra-NGO actors and the NGO itself would also be ignored.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed several bodies of literature including research concerning religion and the environment, the theoretical underpinnings of transnational studies, transnational NGOs, factors affecting the success of transnational FBOs as well as the limited literature on environmental FBOs. The neglected role of the state throughout the literature – albeit due to different assumptions informing the literature on NGOs (state as dysfunctional and monolithic) and FBOs (the separation between church and state) – was highlighted. Additionally, I surfaced how some scholars drew parallels between the organisational behaviour of

transnational NGOs and FBOs with transnational firms. Consequently, I synthesised certain theories of the firm, such as embeddedness, with concepts such as sacred-secular dynamics that affect FBOs, and notions of social capital in geographical scholarship on NGOs, to present the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was designed with the intention of problematising the notion of an NGO as a bounded unit of analysis, thus making a modest contribution to theorisations in NGO studies.

A key concern of the thesis was how the particularities of the local context influenced the embedding process. To that end, I outlined several factors that had bearing on Creation-Carers' embedding process in Singapore in Chapter Three. These factors included state-society relations and the contours of Christianity in Singapore. With the Singapore context in mind, in particular the notion that religion is a 'sensitive' topic, I illustrated how researchers could use fieldwork practices (such as consent forms) strategically when navigating the sensitivities of the particular research context for a positive outcome.

Central to understanding the opportunities and obstacles Creation-Carers faced while embedding in Singapore were the related issues of social capital, trust and the importance of space. A key contribution of this thesis was the analysis of social capital from both an individual and institutional perspective – each yielding important insights about embeddedness. Additionally, the hybrid nature of Creation-Carers work (being both religious and environmental) poses unique challenges to the embedding process.

The ease of organising the first Creation-Carers conference was indicative of the importance of an individual's social capital, and its attendant effect on trust-formation, on the embedding process. Hess (2004) noted that spatial proximity fostered trust between actors and that this form of proximity was key to understanding where firms locate their operations. However, Hess questioned the attribution of trust to a particular geographical scale (the local), arguing that the relationship between distance and trust may be a truism. The success of the Creation-Carers conference showed how relational proximity (between Scott and members of the same constellation of practice) rather than face-to-face contact was central during the trust-formation stage. Scott's social capital was generated by his institutional affiliation and participation in the 'faith imaginary' of civil society. By unpacking the reasons why local Christian leaders and audiences perceived Scott as a legitimate actor, it became clear that trust is not a feel-good consequence of social capital but instead denotes the ability of an individual to foster relations with other actors – in essence, trust is a modality of power. Relational understandings of space and the concepts of trust and an individual's social capital are thus important factors that influence the success of the embedding process for transnational organisations trying to establish a local presence.

Even for actors with social capital, the process of fostering trust in a new local context is not straightforward. From an institutional perspective of social capital, a major factor influencing Creation-Carers' embedding process was its organisational identity – what Hess termed the 'genetic code'. Creation-Carers' background as an organisation that is part of a global Evangelical Protestant community and which enjoys the support of key Evangelical leaders enabled Creation-Carers to gain

'insider' status in Singapore's Christian community. Yet, another aspect of Creation-Carers' genetic code – that of partnering organisations from different faiths – became a major obstacle to Creation-Carers ensuring they receive long-term funding from a major local donor who disagreed with such partnerships due to interpretations of certain Bible passages. Hence, while the social capital Creation-Carers' generated from the support of key Evangelical leaders was useful at the beginning stages of embedding, it was largely ineffective in sustaining Creation-Carers long-term operations in Singapore. Hess' notion of a singular genetic code was unhelpful as it discounted the possibility that while an actor's background may influence the way projects are initiated, negotiations between different actors in the local context also occur. To overcome the limitations of Hess' concept, I drew on Bourdieu's (1986) theory of social capital. Bourdieu focused on institutional behaviour and the way structures, such as religion, influence the (re)production of power relations. Examining the FBO's work in the web of relations (including religious structures and teachings) it was situated it, rather than analysing it as a decontextualised unit of analysis (Bebbington, 2004) was useful as it provided a more nuanced view into the transnational-local nexus confronting transnational environmental FBOs as they sought to embed in a new locale.

The philosophy underlying Creation-Carers' work – a combination of environmental and religious values – also influenced the success of its embedding process. The potential for religion to play a significant role in shaping the environmental thought and action of religious adherents is generally considered a positive phenomenon. Additionally, as Vásquez and Marquardt (2003) note, contemporary forms of religious transnationalism, such as transnational FBOs, fit well

with the spatio-temporal patterns generated by globalisation. Taken together, transnational environmental FBOs should be successful in motivating individuals situated in different contexts and who believe in the same religion to engage in environmental action. Yet, not only was the theological basis of Creation-Carers' activities considered 'foreign' and questioned by the local Christian audience, the hybrid nature of its activities – both religious and environmental – was also construed as transgressing the state-imposed ambit for religious organisations. Thus, the hybrid nature of a transnational environmental FBO's work by local audiences and state authorities poses unique challenges to its embedding process.

Additionally, while the empirical discussion was divided into three distinct chapters, focusing on each dimension of embeddedness (network, societal and territorial), the simultaneity and co-implication of the different embedding processes should be noted. For example, Chapters Six and Seven examined the conditions of the origin and destination of the transnational organisation. The transnational-local nexus at origin and destination have implications on the way Creation-Carers activities are conducted, and there is a need to examine societal and territorial embedding processes in tandem.

Another factor affecting all three forms of embeddedness was the importance of an actor's identity. The adoption of multiple identities and the strong link between Creation-Carers actors' identities had both positive and negative effects on the embedding process. As seen from the discussion on Creation-Carers actors' identities in Chapters Five and Six, the flexible identities of FBO staff is a strategy actors may choose to adopt. I demonstrated how Hess' theorisations afford a nuanced insight into

how the same concept of 'identities' impacts different types of embedding processes in diverse ways. During the partnership-formation process, not only do local Creation-Carers actors adopt multiple identities to gain access to different partners, the partners themselves also choose to distinguish between different facets of the actors' identities. Additionally, Creation-Carers' organisational identity was simultaneously constructed as 'insider' and 'outsider' to Christian circles in Singapore. Such multiple positionings have ambivalent effects on the local audience's reaction to the organisation.

My research also provided a multi-faceted perspective of the state and the influence it has on a FBO's access to space. In some situations, the 'sacred-secular' tension that emerged as a result of FBOs engaging with a secular state restricted Creation-Carers' access to the space owned by state authorities like Government Department B (as discussed in Chapter Seven). Yet, by downplaying the religious aspect of its activities, Creation-Carers actors managed to negotiate a successful outcome. This demonstrates that state power is neither total nor static. By deemphasising certain aspects of their institutional identity and highlighting those that are in line with state interests (in this case, the common aim of environmental protection), environmental FBOs can negotiate state-imposed boundaries and better engage state actors. Thus, as Somerville (2004) argues, and as my case shows, there is a need for researchers to reconsider state-NGO relations as the two entities may not be as separate from each other as has been previously thought.

Ultimately, through interrogating 'sacred/secular' boundaries, this thesis contributes to wider studies on the geographies of religion. By unpacking the FBO

'black box' (see Bebbington, 2004), the simultaneous challenging and strengthening of 'sacred/secular' boundaries was evident in the negotiations among different actors (those associated with Creation-Carers, the state, local partners). Some actors object to the blurring of the boundary between 'sacred' and 'secular' (such as in the case where proponents of 'integral missions' advocate that environmental action is a 'sacred' activity). Powerful actors also strengthen the boundary when 'sacred' activities supposedly encroach into 'secular spaces' (as exemplified in the 'secular' state's government official's reluctance to rent the office space for a 'sacred' event). Moreover, researchers also need to consider cases where 'sacred' spaces become more 'sacralised'. As seen in the discussion on FBOs locating within the 'Antioch of Asia', it is evident that even within a cluster of 'sacred' activities, not all new entrants are welcomed. Rather, similar processes of exclusion and boundary maintenance occur too. My examination of 'sacred/secular' boundaries highlights how issues surrounding the geographies of religion are complex and deserving of greater attention, and I turn to potential research opportunities in the next section.

8.3 Openings and Closings

In the process of doing fieldwork, several new avenues for future research arose. First, much attention is focused on the role religious leaders (and their congregations) can play in engaging in environmental action, and the need for inter-religious cooperation in this area. This is seen in the aforementioned United Nations' 'Many heavens, one Earth' campaign. Additionally, in Singapore, recycling initiatives such as 'Waste Matter$' – organised by the Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles in conjunction with local district administrators – engaged religious communities from mosques, temples, and churches located in the district, together

with that district's residents, to cooperate in recycling projects. This is akin to the formation of what Agrawal (2005), drawing on Foucault, terms as 'environmentality' – how the governmentalising of the environment through new technologies of the state (and supranational organisations such as the United Nations) produces new environmental subjects. Whilst much geographical studies have examined inter-religious conflict (see Naylor and Ryan, 2002; Philp and Mercer, 2002), little research has explored the area of inter-religious cooperation. The conceptual links between politics, institutions and identities provide many opportunities for research and several questions are worth examining. For example, how do religious and environmental values feature in such inter-religious partnerships? What do partner organisations have in common? Consequently, are differences diminished? What are the religious institutions-state relations like and how does the sacred-secular dynamic play out? In Chapter Seven, I highlighted the case of Government Department B and how state authorities do not want to be construed as supporting any particular religion. In such cases, there is research potential in investigating how the state's (re)inscription of the sacred/secular boundary regarding (environmental) action of religious organisations has implications on religious institutions-state relations.

Second, my study was limited to an analysis of one transnational environmental FBO. My thesis, then, examined a particular form of Evangelical Protestantism and excluded other types of religious teachings. In Chapter Six, I highlighted how interviewees had different responses to Creation-Carers' message that engaging in environmental action is a form of Christian 'missions'. More research can study the way transnational religious networks spread the environmental message. Woodhead and Heelas (2000) classify world religions into three main

categories – 'religions of difference', 'religions of humanity' and 'spiritualities of life' – that can be arranged in a spectrum according to the amount of hierarchical structure in the religion's conceptualisations of the relationship between the divine, humans and nature. Importantly, they note that within each religion, there are many traditions, for example in Christianity, there is Evangelicalism – a 'religion of difference' – and the Quaker movement – a 'spirituality of life'. As there is much variety within (and between) religious traditions, an analysis can be done of a particular religion spreading its message through two separate traditions that have different notions of the relationship between the divine, humans and nature. How each tradition disseminates its message concerning environmental action within the broader framework of the religion's teachings and its impact on religious adherents' quotidian practices allows for closer scrutiny of the theoretical and practical relationship between religion and the environment (Proctor, 2006; Kong, 2010).

As calls for environmental protection become increasingly urgent in light of warnings about climate change and environmental destruction, and as religion continues to play a significant role in the everyday lives of many, organisations such as Creation-Carers would play an increasingly prominent role. In my thesis, I explored the opportunities and obstacles that a transnational environmental FBO encounters as it tries to embed itself in a new locale. In studies of transnational religion, religious teachings seem to play a unifying role, bringing together religious actors in different locales as they read the same set of scriptures. Yet, as my study has shown, there is a need to consider the particularities of the local context in which these actors are situated and its implications on the embedding process. While this thesis comes to a close here, it hopefully opens up more opportunities for a deeper

appreciation of the relationships between religion and the environment, the local and

the transnational, the secular and the sacred.

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Appendix A
Aide Memoire

1) Creation-Carers Actors

- General
    - What is your role in Creation-Carers?
    - What was your previous occupation before working with Creation-Carers?
    - What got you interested in Creation-Carers activities?
    - Why are attempts being made to establish a Creation-Carers movement in Singapore?

- Transnational environmental action
    - Do you keep in contact with other Creation-Carers actors in different countries? How and why do you do so?
    - What are the common themes across Creation-Carers' projects that you try to implement in Singapore?
    - How are such ideas modified in the Singapore context?

- Discourse (Theological)
    - In your promotional videos, certain theologians are featured. Why did you choose to interview them?
    - How have the teachings of such theologians impacted the development of Creation-Carers' activities and you personally?

- Discourse (Scientific)
    - What are your sources of information about the environmental crises?
    - How do you determine whether the information is accurate?
    - Do you use such scientific information when you present at conferences or when you talk to other people about your work? Why or why not?

- Praxis
    - What activities have you been engaged in (e.g. speaking in seminars, doing community farming)?
    - What do you do to raise awareness about your work in Singapore?
    - What plans do you have in the coming months/years?

- Partnership
    - What are the various organisations that you have been in contact with since establishing operations in Singapore? Who introduced you to them?
    - Do you have any criteria in the selection of partners (eg. must be a Christian organisation)? If so, what are the criteria and why?
    - What activities have you co-organised with them?

- o How do you keep in contact with them? Do you meet up face-to-face or is it primarily via email and other computer-mediated communication devices? How important are the face-to-face meetings?
  - o Why do you choose to engage in partnership?

- Volunteers
  - o How do you recruit the volunteers? Is there any selection criteria (eg. must be Christian)?
  - o What role do they play in your activities?
  - o Do they come mostly from a particular church or organisation? Is there a particular age group that the bulk of volunteers come from?
  - o How do you keep in contact with them? Do you meet up face-to-face or is it primarily via email and other computer-mediated communication devices? How important are the face-to-face meetings?
  - o Do they introduce other people to your organisation who may be potential volunteers as well?

2) Creation-Carers (Potential) Local Partners

- General
    - What is your role in your organisation?
    - What projects have you collaborated on with Creation-Carers, if any?

- Actual Partnership
    - Why did you choose to partner with Creation-Carers?
    - What objectives does your partnership try to meet? Do you think it has been met thus far?
    - Does your organisation share common objectives with Creation-Carers?
    - How do you decide what projects you would collaborate with the Creation-Carers? Is this decision-making process the same as when you work together with other organisations or when you plan your own organisational activities?

- Trust-building
    - How were you first introduced to Creation-Carers (eg. common friends, attended the same conference)? Who are they (friends) or what was it about (conference)?
    - What do you do in your meetings with Creation-Carers?
    - How frequently do you meet up face-to-face with Creation-Carers? Do you communicate regularly with each other? What mediums do you use?

- Network extension
    - Do you share resources such as books or websites or venues with Creation-Carers?
    - Do you (or would you) introduce Creation-Carers to the other organisations that you partner? Why or why not?

3) Creation-Carers Supporters

- General
    - o What other Christian organisations do you belong to (eg. church, student Christian group)?
    - o Do you volunteer at other organisations too?
    - o What projects have you collaborated on, if any?

- Supporting activities
    - o What were the various factors that made you decide to participate in Creation-Carers activities?
    - o Have your views on the environment and how Christians should response to the environment changed after attending such activities? Why or why not?

- Trust-building
    - o How were you first introduced to Creation-Carers (eg. common friends, attended the same conference)? Who are they (friends) or what was it about (conference)?
    - o How frequently do you meet up face-to-face with the Creation-Carers team? Do you communicate regularly with each other? What mediums do you use?

- Network extension
    - o Do you share resources such as books or websites with Creation-Carers?
    - o Do you (or would you) introduce Creation-Carers to the other organisations that you belong to? Why or why not?