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**TRANSFERRING TRUST
THROUGH RELIGION?
An Analysis of Trust in South Korea**

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ABSTRACT

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BACKGROUND: The main purpose of this thesis was to study the relationship between religious affiliation and individuals' general trust with particular reference to South Korea. More precisely the intention was to examine if a religion that has been transplanted from one cultural context changes the moral values of its adherents in the different cultural context into which it has been introduced. The empirical part of the study was based on data from 3 waves of the World Value Survey carried out in 1982, 1990 and 2001, totally including 1 509 Buddhists and Christians.

RESULTS: For all the three waves – 1982, 1990 and 2001 – the null hypothesis, stating that Protestants have the same level of generalized trust as Buddhists, could not be rejected. Only 1982 showed a significant difference between Protestants and Buddhists ($p=0.008$). However, when education was brought into a logistic regression model, the difference between Buddhists and Protestants in 1982 ceased to exist ($p=0.185$).

CONCLUSION: This thesis has concluded that there is not a difference in the level of trust when comparing Buddhists and Protestants. This makes sense, since the main branch of the Protestant Church shares many similar ideological traits with Confucian ideas. Despite being regarded a foreign element in the Korean context, the result of this study seems to suggest that as Korean Protestantism has becoming increasingly integral part of Korean society and culture, Korean Protestants demonstrate similar attitudes to trust as do Korean Buddhists.

Keywords: South Korea, Trust, Religion, Buddhism, Christianity, Protestantism.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Everyone from the cradle to the grave is in some way or another dependent on the actions of others. To be comfortable in life we must have trust in our friends and family and we have to trust the society with its institutions to feel secure. People trust each other, people trust things, and people have trust in ideas or higher beings.

Different researchers have revealed that a certain level of trust is a keystone in the economic development of poor countries¹ and it is probably a necessary condition in the creation of a well functioning society. Naturally, because of this it is important to examine the underlying factors that generate a high level of trust. The question we therefore must ask ourselves is: What is actually influencing the level of trust?

Religion is a strong force affecting the behavior and attitudes among human beings. Religion provides the answers to the everlasting questions and it gives people a sense of security and belonging. Religion also gives guidance in ethical dilemmas, offers a scheme of right and wrong and it establishes moral values among its followers. Overall, religion significantly shapes people's view on life and the relationships between human beings. But what happens when a new religion is transplanted from one cultural context to another? Do the moral values of its adherent in that specific culture change?

Trust can be described as such a moral value.

Though several studies have been conducted regarding trust, not many have paid specific attention to trust *and* religion.² Thus, to deepen our understanding of religion and how values are transferred this survey intends to study the interaction between trust and religion further. Consequently, this brings us to the main question of this thesis:

Is there a relationship between trust and religion and is it possible for trust to be transplanted into another cultural sphere through mission?

This is of course a very large and complex issue to deal with. Therefore, with the intention of hopefully clarifying at least one small part of the problem, the study is limiting itself to one specific setting, namely South Korea.

1.2 Why South Korea?

In the course of history, South Korea has been deeply affected by various religious traditions and thoughts. In recent times, it is the introduction and growth of Christianity that has led to the most rapid change in the religious and social landscape of Korea and today South Korea is, with the exception of the Philippines, the country in the Far East with the largest proportion of Christians. This raises interesting questions about the interaction of Christianity, as a Western religion, with indigenous Asian religions, and the

¹ e.g. Fukuyama, 1995; Knack, et al, 1997.

² e.g. Johansson-Stenman, et al, 2004; Siala, et al, 2004; Siso, 2005; Welch, et al, 2004.

significance of such impact on the relationship between religion and trust. It is then reasonable to anticipate that a pattern should appear regarding trust when a new religion is introduced in a different context. South Korea thus offers an opportunity of examining the exchange of ideas and notions since a new religion actually has been introduced and established quite recently.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that religion on a more general level is a factor that even today can be counted for. Religion still exerts a far-reaching influence on several aspects of the Korean society and despite being a modern nation South Korea has a thriving religiosity, where religion for many Koreans plays an important part of life. This ought to be beneficial to the study.

Naturally, we will explore the religious history of Korea further, but let us for a moment put that huge topic aside. From what has been said and from what will be described later, let us accept that South Korea has a specific setting – with a special mixture of religions and a strong religiosity – yet with an ethnically and a culturally homogenous population. The conclusion is that the specific situation in Korea lends itself to our study, and commends South Korea as a place that may yield interesting answers to our research question.

1.3 Aim

The main purpose of this thesis is *to study the relationship between religious affiliation and individuals' general trust with particular reference to South Korea*. More precisely the intention is to examine if a religion that has been transplanted from one cultural context changes the moral values of its adherents in the different cultural context into which it has been introduced.

1.4 Methodology

The empirical part of the study is based on data from 3 waves of the World Value Survey carried out in 1982, 1990 and 2001, totally including 1 509 Buddhists and Christians. Furthermore, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of Korean religiosity, three interviews were made with Korean scholars together with observational studies of Buddhist and Christian religious services in Korea during 4 weeks in April 2004.

1.5 Outline

The introduction, *Chapter One*, presents the problem and specifies the aim. *Chapter Two* examines the theoretical concepts of trust and religion. *Chapter Three* explains the complex religious background of Korea, discusses the social situation and forms a hypothesis. A description of the methodology and data used is presented in *Chapter Four*. The results and analysis of the empirical study are shown in *Chapter Five*. Lastly, *Chapter Six* concludes our thesis.

Chapter II

CONCEPTIONS OF TRUST AND RELIGION

2.1 What Is Trust?

The intention of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical background of how and why religion and religious affiliation may influence individuals' trust. To do this, it is necessary to be perfectly clear about what we are referring to when talking about trust, thus let us in this chapter discuss selected theoretical approaches to trust. Most people probably have at least some notion of what trust is and most of us would maybe refer to trust as being something related to honesty and reliability of someone or perhaps something about handing over an important matter in someone else's hands. However, only saying this is not enough. Which kinds of trust are we talking about? Is there a difference between trust in friends or trust in strangers? Can different levels of trust really exist, considering that some might think that you have either complete trust or no trust at all?

Strategic Trust versus Moralistic Trust

Since there is a need to understand the underlying mechanisms of human behavior and the development of societies trust has caught the attention of researchers within the social and behavioral sciences.³ There is to some extent a convergence among researchers that trust consists of several elements such as confidence, expectations, motivations, cooperation, and collaboration and it is obvious that the concept of trust becomes rather complicated as the analysis deepens. To analyze trust, different research strategies have been applied, where the most common approaches of how to encapsulate trust are either from an analytical point-of-view, focusing on the strategic aspects, or from an anthropological perspective where focus lies on examining the view on human nature and moral values.⁴

Strategic Trust

The most common perspective on trust among researchers is the analytical one, which analyzes trust from a strategic point-of-view. It is summarized by Gambetta's definition of trust in *Who Trusts Trust?*⁵:

Trust is a particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent or group will perform a particular action, *both* before he can monitor such action (or independently of his capacity ever to be able to monitor it) *and* in a context in which it affects his own action.

³ e.g. Luhmann, 1979; Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995; Hardin, 2002; Uslander, 2003.

⁴ Dasgupta, 2000, 56.

⁵ Gambetta, 2000, 217.

The analytical perspective suggests that when somebody is trusted we are indirectly thinking about a high probability of a person performing an action that is favorable to us. Equally, when distrusting someone, we assume a low probability of a person carrying out a particular assignment. What the definition explicitly says is that trust involves a situation of risk and uncertainty, which is logical since if we were fully aware of the future outcome there would be no need for trust.

The characteristics of strategic trust can easily be comprehended by observing trust within the framework of a game. The perhaps most famous trust-game is the Prisoners' dilemma.⁶

Table I Prisoners' Dilemma

| | Prisoner B stays silent | Prisoner B betrays |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Prisoner A stays silent | Both serve 1 years | Prisoner A serves 10 years Prisoner B goes free |
| Prisoner A betrays | Prisoner A goes free Prisoner B serves 10 years | Both serve 4 years |

It involves two persons arrested for several crimes, but for which the police only have limited evidence. The suspects are interrogated separately and if both stay silent, they can only get a smaller sentence for a minor offence. However, if one of them speaks, the other one will have to serve 10 years in prison. The problem is that if both betray the other, both will also be sentenced to 4 years prison. Table I shows an overview of the outcome.

According to game theory, taking into account only the gains and losses, the game will end up with a sub-optimal equilibrium where both the prisoners will serve 4 years in prison. Of course, in reality it would be relevant to incorporate additional information which will affect the strategy (i.e. change the probability of a cooperation), such as if the participants previously have proven themselves trustworthy. Additionally, the specific situation by itself influences the level of strategic trust. Person A perhaps feels perfectly safe about loaning money to person B, but will on the other hand not allow person B perform a medical-checkup on A since B lacks the formal education.

To summarize, strategic trust can be recognized as the probability of making a choice, where the person who trusts takes into consideration the gains and losses of a cooperation combined with all other information available about the person to be trusted. For this reason, this kind of trust is denoted strategic trust since it is based on a calculation of probabilities. In this sense it is a knowledge-based trust. Hence, strategic trust or knowledge-based trust enables an individual to make a risky investment in a situation of uncertainty, or following Luhmann "[strategic trust is] the specific solution to a problem of risk".⁷

Moralistic Trust

Strategic trust is very useful when logically trying to find a solution to a specific situation, but it has a number of limitations. For instance, people are generally imperfectly informed about other people's references. In addition, in most situations, both for social and cognitive reasons, it is difficult to make rational calculations.⁸ Another problem is that strategic trust only deals with specific situations and therefore can not be generalized. Still, it is obviously possible to say, "I trust people", without having a specific situation in mind, and yet make sense. Though several limitations can be managed by extending original trust-games, Gambetta's definition is not always appropriate or even feasible to utilize.

⁶ A more comprehensive description of the Prisoners' Dilemma is found in most introductory literature in economics and political science.

⁷ Luhmann, 2000, 95.

⁸ Williams, 2000, 4.

Uslaner argues in his book *The Moral Foundations of Trust* that strategic trust is actually of rather limited use for social scientists. It is “all about reducing transaction costs by gaining additional information”⁹. Instead, Uslaner proposes an idea of a moralistic trust, a trust not based upon experience and strategic thinking but based on a moral belief and values. A moral belief in some sort of goodwill of the other, that others will not try to take advantage of us.¹⁰ A belief that others share your fundamental values and therefore should be treated as you would like to be treated by them. That is, moralistic trust is a moral choice to treat people as if they were trustworthy.¹¹

The moralistic trust answers questions that the strategic view cannot.¹² When putting our faith in strangers and getting involved with new relationships, without any prior experience and information to rely on, can strategic trust really be useful? Strategic trust works well within social networks where people know or at least have some information about each other, but Uslaner suggests that it is moralistic trust that enables us to connect with people who are different from ourselves, and of whom we have no knowledge.¹³ In addition, as mentioned earlier, when talking about trust in general terms without referring to a specific situation (for instance when saying, “I trust people”), it is moralistic trust we are thinking of.

Maybe the following example of moralistic trust more clearly illustrates what moralistic trust really is about. In Southern Sweden, there is a garden on the countryside selling flowers and different kinds of vegetables. When buying potatoes and carrots, you do as usual and put your vegetables in a plastic bag. However, there is one peculiarity about this store; you are by yourself responsible for weighing the vegetables and paying for them. You put your money in small envelope, which is then placed in a box. Obviously, the owner of this garden has a high degree of moralistic trust, and presumes that people are trustworthy and pay for the vegetables.

A person with high moralistic trust considers the world a good place, inhabited with decent people. This is because only a person with a positive view of human nature could treat others as trustworthy just by faith. Strategic trust reflects how people are likely to behave, but moralistic trust emphasizes how people should behave.¹⁴

The Boundaries of Trust

According to Fukuyama every culture and society consist of boundaries of trust, where people within the boundaries are more trusted than people outside. Boundaries can for example be different ethnic groups, social classes, families, or religions.¹⁵ It is evident that strategic and moralistic trust are in fact related to how far these boundaries reach and one can actually distinguish between two boundaries or levels of trust – particularized trust and generalized trust.¹⁶ Which group a person belongs to depends on how inclusive that person considers his community to be. For instance, the particularized trusters have confidence only in their own kind and base their trust upon experience and familiarity, while generalized trusters to a greater extent believe that people share their moral values.

But how are these kinds of trust separated? Where do we draw the line? No specific line can actually be drawn, since a continuum exists between particularized trust and generalized trust. People just place themselves on different parts of that scale and not in discrete categories. Yet, people belong more or less to either category and generalized trusters put confidence in everyone, while particularized trusters only trust people they know well. Thus, we are able to separate the types of trust by asking different questions.

⁹ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 2-10.

¹⁰ Ibid, Chapter 2-6.

¹¹ Ibid, Chapter 2-5.

¹² Ibid, Chapter 2-7.

¹³ Ibid, Chapter 2-8

¹⁴ Ibid, Chapter 2-11.

¹⁵ Fukuyama, 1995.

¹⁶ Lecture notes, Political Science, Fribourg, 2004.

The question “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” tells whether a person generally trusts the average person and it ought to represent generalized trust. On the contrary, survey questions involving trust in neighbors, co-workers, people at church and families should measure particularized trust.¹⁷ It must be noted, generalized (moralistic) trusters do not avoid trusting people like themselves. There is no contradiction in having high trust for the man on the street, and in addition trust your co-workers. Nevertheless, should a person not extend his or her trust, being suspicious to other groups, he or she can be categorized as a particularized truster.

Table II provides a general outline of the above discussion, though the different perspectives and levels are not perfectly related. (I.e., it is for example possible to base particularized trust on moral values.)

Table II Boundaries of Trust

| Perspective on trust | Connecting factor | Level of trust |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Strategic trust | Experience, information | Particularized (Family, friends, people like ourselves) |
| Moralistic trust | Moral values | Generalized (Strangers, people different from ourselves) |

The distinction between particularized and generalized trust is an important one to make, since their characteristics and social effects are considerably different. Particularized trust is about bonding within already known existing relationships and generalized trust builds bridges to other unknown social networks. Naturally, both kinds of trust should lower the transaction costs, though the effects of particularized trust are local.

Another important aspect is – particularized trusters may help their friends and people like themselves, but generalized trusters will reach out to others. Particularized trust is beneficial for yourself and the people of your own kind, but when it comes to building a society, it is only generalized trust that does the trick. Generalized trust (trust in strangers) teaches us to be more tolerant of people who are different, since other people are a part of the same moral community. This make generalized trusters feel guilty when injustice is present in society, such as discrimination.¹⁸ The benefits of generalized trust are many and La Porta et al show that high trust societies have low corruption, a functioning income redistribution, high growth rates and low crime.¹⁹

The Origin of Trust

Who becomes a moralistic truster? From where do we learn to trust strangers? Without discussing this further, it has been shown that trust based on experience can be quite volatile, for instance a betrayed person could alter his or hers level of trust significantly. Moral values on the other hand are quite stable, thus moralistic trust should include the same characteristics as a moral code.

Being a moral value Uslaner suggests that the roots of trust can be found in an optimistic view of the world initially learned from our parents, and even though different events in life do affect the generalized trust, they are not the main reasons for it.²⁰ To clarify all these issues let us begin with examining the concept “optimistic world-view”.

Optimism represents the idea that the future will be better than the past and the feeling that we to a certain degree can control our environment to make it better.²¹ Consequently, optimists are those with the belief that things are heading in the right direction and that the situation will continue to get better²², and those with the notion that it is possible to

¹⁷ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 3-4.

¹⁸ Ibid, Chapter 2-34.

¹⁹ La Porta, et al, 1998.

²⁰ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 4-1.

²¹ Ibid, Chapter 4-7.

²² Rahn and Transue, 1998.

change the future and to be masters of their own fate. On the contrary, the pessimists' idea is that things are taking a wrong turn and that the condition is getting worse. The pessimists believe that they cannot control nor change the world and therefore focus on protection. People must be protected from the bad world and safety exists only within the boundaries of a family or small circle, where the pessimist can be relatively certain that people are not exploitative. This is a description fitting quite well into that of the particularized truster.

The fear of being exploited makes pessimists busy with just getting by and it brings worries about the financial situation, even if doing well. Therefore, pessimists to a greater extent emphasize material success, which explains why materialistic people are less likely to trust people (assuming a link between optimism and trust).²³ Furthermore, since the world, according to pessimists, is hostile, attaining a good social position in it is vital. The top must be secured and others must be kept down or put down. This develops an authoritarian attitude, where the one's ideals and values are more important than the ideals and values of others. On the opposite, optimists would instead assume that the ideals of others can be changed for the better or accept them as equal.²⁴

Following the arguments above it is obvious that the optimist is closely related to the generalized truster, who considers the world as a compassionate place with many opportunities. People share your basic values and are not liable to take advantage of you. It should for that reason be perfectly natural to trust a stranger.²⁵ While optimists regard extended horizons with strangers as opportunities, pessimists regard them as a potential threat. So optimism is in other words a positive world-view. The optimist has a positive world-view and the pessimist a negative one, and with a positive view on the world, then you are more likely to be a generalized truster.

Still, it must be noted, as Uslaner also points out, that although a person's mindset about the world is not easily changed, it is not totally rigid. Some people do in fact change their values in life, therefore, a new question is raised: What affects the world-view? One would perhaps say that personal experiences like marriage, crime, divorce and health could support or contradict the view on the world and consequently affect trust. Though this is partly true, the discussion earlier argues that generalized trust is a stable trait. This issue obviously needs to be clarified.

Personal experiences could support or contradict a personal world-view. This is not the same as creating a foundation for a world-view. Getting a good job or perhaps getting married does not create an optimistic world-view; rather it promotes it. Maybe it can be a part of personal happiness, which in turn perhaps shapes an optimistic mood, enabling people to trust. On the other hand, it is not the experience by itself, but the perception of it that determines the outcome. One person may not be satisfied with a new job, whereas another person getting that same job would be perfectly content. Another example is crime. People having bad experiences of crime would perhaps be more likely to mistrust strangers, and this is obviously often the case when a victim becomes traumatized by an event. Yet, studies show that for instance older women is the age group worrying most about crime, but that it is younger men that actually are at greatest risk of being victims of crime. Still, younger men report to a higher degree that they feel safe in society.²⁶

However, it is not proposed that the experience totally lacks relevance. Instead, what the discussion demonstrates is that experiences, objective and subjective, do not play an essential part in creating optimism and moralistic trust because people essentially are predisposed to think in a certain way. As we all know, some people always think positively no matter what the experience, while others have the Seinfeld character George Costanza's view on life where all good things essentially are bad things waiting to

²³ Rahn and Transue, 1998.

²⁴ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 4-9.

²⁵ Ibid, Chapter 4-5.

²⁶ Brottsförebyggande rådet, several publications.

happen.²⁷ People who feel good about themselves should feel good about others²⁸, and experiences are not the origin of optimism. Optimism stems from a deeper source and personal life stories are not as important as the early socialization.²⁹ The values and ideals that people come to accept later on in life could of course influence trust, so that trust is a combination of what we have learnt as children and what we have discovered as adults, yet – quoting Uslaner – “trust must be learned, not earned.”³⁰ This is consistent with psychoanalyst Erik Eriksson’s theory of psychological development, where Eriksson suggests that trust and mistrust are developed in the first infantile period of life, where the mother creates trust in their children.³¹

So far we have discussed the role of optimism and trust. There is also another important determinant of generalized trust, namely egalitarianism.³² We already know that to be a moralistic (generalized) truster other people have to be considered as being a part of the same moral community. If you feel that others share your community then it is natural to believe they also share its moral values. However, if a person or a group of people feel separated from another or even alienated it is difficult to see a connecting link. Gaps and barriers (such as social and economical inequalities) between people within the society increase the separation and alienation. Income equality is one major factor determining generalized trust.³³ Even if countries have experienced a high growth rate (where one would expect an increase in trust since people are better off), a drop in the generalized trust occurs if the gaps are not closed. When inequalities increase, several social phenomena are affected; anti-immigration opinion thrives, the opposition to free-trade strengthens and fundamentalism rises. Tolerance is attacked. As a result, not high economic standard determines trust, but instead the feeling that people belong to the same society and share the same opportunities in life.

Trust, its boundaries and sources contains several elements and the discussion easily becomes rather incomprehensible. Hence, we can summarize the determinants of trust as follows in a one by one scrutiny of different determinants in an attempt to sort out all the previous suggestions and arguments. The intention is not to provide a complete over-view of every single source of generalized trust, but at least it can provide the reader with a somewhat more graspable view of trust.

Optimism

A person with a positive world-view is more likely to be a generalized truster.³⁴ In addition, a negative world-view should contribute to the construction of barriers against the surroundings, therefore encouraging particularized trust.

Sense of control

To be able to trust a stranger it is important to feel secure and in control of one’s own life. The sense of control and the notion that changes can be made tends to promote generalized trust.³⁵ For this reason, it can be assumed that for instance political activists to a higher degree are generalized trusters because they essentially believe that they can make a difference.

²⁷ “When women smile at me I don’t know what it means. Sometimes I interpret it as they are psychotic of something.” – George, in “The Phone Message”, *Seinfeld*.

²⁸ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 4-12.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, Chapter 4-2.

³¹ Wulff, 1993.

³² Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 4-1.

³³ Park and Shin, 2005.

³⁴ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 4-50.

³⁵ Ibid.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>Materialism</i> | Materialistic people are more likely to be particularized trusters. |
| <i>Authoritarian attitudes</i> | People with authoritarian attitudes and people accepting a authoritarian system are more likely to be particularized trusters. |
| <i>Parental influence</i> | Strong impact on both generalized and particularized trust. ³⁶ |
| <i>Personal life experience</i> | For instance, divorce, marriage, crime are not strong influencing factors because of the normally predisposed attitude about the events. |
| <i>Group membership</i> | Mostly not significant for generalized trust, but it can in certain cases promote or destroy generalized trust. Hierarchical organizations (such as the Italian mafia ³⁷) are not good for generalized trust, while egalitarian (horizontal) organizations have positive influence. Furthermore, bridging organizations (organizations reaching out for other networks), are more favorable to generalized trust than bonding organizations, (organizations focusing on in-group ties). However, strong bonds do not necessarily destroy generalized trust. It depends on how exclusive or inclusive that group is. Still, individuals affiliated with groups that are focusing on tightening a close network are probably more likely to be particularized trusters. |
| <i>Financial situation</i> | Not a major predictor of general trust on a personal level. ³⁸ Still, it should be plausible that persons with a high income (or at least a person having the perception about feeling secure in their financial situation), also to a higher degree believe that they are in control of their life. Hence, the financial situation could have a small positive influence on generalized trust. |
| <i>Education</i> | Education and knowledge should increase tolerance, thus leading to more generalized trust among highly educated people. ³⁹ |
| <i>Egalitarianism</i> | Large economical and social inequalities have a major negative impact on generalized trust. People belonging to minorities who feel mistreated are more likely to be particularized trusters. ⁴⁰ |

³⁶ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 4-50.

³⁷ Putnam, 1993.

³⁸ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 4-50.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, refers to race. Data shows that African-Americans in the United States are more likely to be particularized trusters. Analogously, an assumption is made that the same may be valid for other minorities also carrying a history of hardship and discrimination.

Collectivism versus individualism

According to Fukuyama⁴¹, collectivist societies create boundaries, which by itself promotes particularized trust. Individualistic attitudes are on the other hand strongly linked with egalitarian values.⁴² Individualistic societies are characterized by having weak class divisions and by the fundamental belief that every person is equal. However, individualism can also, if not being careful, lead to a society where people are only looking out for themselves and where materialism is significant.

Trust in Government

A small but sporadic influence on generalized trust.⁴³ This should correlate with both the positive world-view and the feeling that the people in the government share the moral community.

Age

Age as a predictor has not been discussed nor mentioned. The reason why is the difficulty in giving account for a theoretical explanation of why different age groups are supposed to have more or less trust. Empirical data show (at least for the United States) that young people are less trusting and more likely to be particularized trusters. This is however only relevant for the United States and factors, such as cultural attitudes and demographics, could change the results when data from a different country is used.

There is a vast array of arguments, but maybe the origin of trust for a person can be concluded in a rather colloquial manner by answering two basic questions: *Is the world good or bad? Are other people a part of my world?*

2.2 Religion and Trust

Exactly how is it possible for religion to influence generalized trust? To know this, a definition of religion is essential, since it establishes limits of what aspects to include under the topic of religion. Still, it is important to keep in mind that a definition acts more like a strategy than being a “truth” of what religion really is.⁴⁴

Though this chapter intends to examine trust and religion on a general basis, the cultural context of the thesis considerably shapes the definition. The thesis examines cross-cultural issues where a Western religion encounters Eastern traditions; hence, our definition must be inclusive and broad. In the European tradition, philosophy and religion are clearly separated where philosophy describes reality through reason and beyond its border lies the meta-rational or religious. In East Asia the situation is rather the opposite, as a clear-cut distinction between religion and philosophy is not being made.⁴⁵ From an East Asian perspective this renders many of the Western definitions of religion inadequate, since philosophies are omitted which by the use of a more inclusive definition would be regarded as religions. Buddhism is an obvious example and is also repeatedly being subject to a debate whether it can be categorized as a religion in the Western sense or not⁴⁶. From an East Asian position however, being a philosophical system does not exclude Buddhism from also being a religious doctrine.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Fukuyama, 1998.

⁴² Uslaner, 2002, 8-16. Uslaner 4-10.

⁴³ Ibid, Chapter 4-50.

⁴⁴ Geels and Wikström, 1996, 13.

⁴⁵ Cho Sung-Taek, 2002.

⁴⁶ Herbrechtsmeier, 1993.

⁴⁷ Cho Sung-Taek, 2002.

On the other hand, a dilemma exists since an appropriate definition of religion also should be easy to adapt to survey research, which would call for a more explicit definition, with strict boundaries of what religion is. Finding a fitting definition meeting the requirements of both these demands is complicated and a summary of the academic discussion would conclude that a perfect definition is unattainable. For that reason, there is no point in being caught up in the academic debate. Nevertheless, due to the cultural circumstances a functional definition should be preferred, and according to Clifford Geertz's religion is:⁴⁸

(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting mood and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.

Religion functions as a comprehensive meaning system that locates all the experiences of the individual into one single explanatory arrangement – a world-view.⁴⁹ Following Geertz's definition, it is apparent that religion significantly shapes how the believer perceives the world and provides an individual with a mindset and moral system. The meaning system not only interprets the reality and everyday experiences, but it also shapes it and orients the individual's actions.⁵⁰

Religion as a meaning system influences the individual through several levels and every religion essentially encompasses four aspects – the religious belief, the religious ritual, the religious experience and the religious community.⁵¹ All these different elements of religion are of course closely intertwined, but in order to perform a more detailed analysis of how religion influences meaning-systems and consequently, trust, it is necessary to analyze each aspect separately.

A more specific analysis of how Christianity affects trust in Korea is left out of the discussion and the next chapter deals with those issues. The reason for this is that the cultural and social context is extremely important and without a thorough understanding of the South Korean framework, we are not able to draw any conclusions.

Religious Belief and Trust

Religious belief is the cognitive aspect of religion and it shapes what an individual knows about the world. The knowledge, which is based on both formal and informal beliefs, sorts out the perceptions of the world and acts like a basis for action.⁵² The formal religious belief is the official theology of a religion, which often can be found in scriptures and documents, while informal religious belief consists for instance of myths, images and values, often transmitted through song or dance rather than by the written word. Formal or informal, the religious belief explains to an individual why things are as they are and why things should be done in a certain way. For instance, religious belief helps an individual understand why non-marital sex is considered a taboo, but it also shapes the believer so that he or she does not get involved in such an action in the first place.

Depending on the values, norms and attitudes of the religious belief, religious belief can influence moralistic trust in either direction. One positive example should be the Golden Rule, which says treat others as you would like to be treated. Following Luke 6:31, Jesus said "Do to others as you would have them do to you".⁵³ Correspondingly in Buddhism "...a state that is not pleasing or delightful to me, how could I inflict that upon

⁴⁸ McGuire, 2002, 11.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 27. Non-religious meaning systems, based on for instance ideologies, also exist, but due to convenience I will only address religious meaning systems in the discussion.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 27.

⁵¹ Ibid, 15.

⁵² Ibid, 15.

⁵³ Luk 6:31.

another”⁵⁴. It seems that the ethic of reciprocity is universal among the world religions, and a strong emphasis on it probably benefits moralistic trust.

Furthermore, religious beliefs make people, like priests and nuns, to take vows of poverty and work in missions in poor countries. To them, Jesus serves as a role model, feeding the poor and the hungry and by interpreting texts, such as “..., it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”⁵⁵, virtuous behavior is encouraged. In this case non-materialistic behavior is promoted, which in turn benefits generalized trust. Harris argues, based on results from his survey, that people of faith puts less emphasis on materialistic values and more on how to help others.⁵⁶ However, other studies suggest that there is no correlation between humanitarian actions and religiosity, which means that results must be interpreted with care.⁵⁷

On the other hand, religious belief might just as well have negative impact on trust. Consider fundamentalists, who believe that the Bible is the literal word of God and that one of the key elements in the Scriptures is that humans are born with original sin. This view of human nature naturally opposes an optimistic world-view that motivates generalized trust.⁵⁸ This is an illustration of how religious values may lead people to protect themselves from strangers and a perfect reason why fundamentalist are more likely to be particularized trusters. As an example, Uslaner shows that countries where many people believe that there is only one true religion have less trusting citizens.⁵⁹

Another negative aspect of religious belief is that religious people to a higher degree seem to accept authoritarian attitudes. The reason for this is found in several biblical passages, but it is also some sort of defense mechanism against outer threats.⁶⁰

What we can conclude is that religious belief clearly has an impact on generalized trust, generally in terms of promoting it, but some respects diminishing it.

Religious Ritual and Trust

The religious ritual enacts what is explained through belief.⁶¹ It functions as an enforcer of a group’s faith creating a sense of unity and identification, as a result participation in religious rituals builds group solidarity.⁶² According to Durkheim the fundamental nature of religion is social and rites are collective actions by which individuals bond with each other within a social group.⁶³ The ritual performance is an effervescent state that minimizes individual distinctions and puts emphasis on the unity of the group.

It is hard to say whether the religious ritual will have any influence on trust or not, but what we do know is that groups focusing on tightening their bonds are more likely to be particularistic trusters. The symbolic meaning of the rituals matter and those strongly accentuating the exclusiveness of the group involved are likely to have a negative impact on trust. Such rituals exist within, for instance, sect type groups, where the meaning of the ritual is to distance the group from the larger society. However, even though most rituals create unity, the symbolic meaning for most them is not primarily to create tension between the religious group and the social surroundings. As a conclusion, I would suggest that religious rituals could influence trust, but that its influence normally is quite small.

⁵⁴ Samyutta Nikaya v353.

⁵⁵ Mat 19:24.

⁵⁶ Harris, 1994.

⁵⁷ Wulff, 1993, 317.

⁵⁸ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 4-15.

⁵⁹ Ibid, Chapter 8-27.

⁶⁰ Wulff, 1993, 326.

⁶¹ McGuire, 2002, 17.

⁶² Sosis, 2005.

⁶³ McGuire, 2002, 197.

Religious Experience and Trust

The religious experience is the subjective involvement with the sacred, and this personal knowledge is transferred to others through belief and rituals.⁶⁴ Still, every person's religious experience is unique and the intensity and content of it can differ greatly between two individuals sharing the same faith. Experiences may include rather brief feeling of harmony or extraordinary mystical experiences, which produces emotions like joy, completeness, fear and terror.⁶⁵ The content of the experience is derived from the group's belief about certain events or encounters, but the experience is also related to the sense of power or force with which the sacred believed to be endowed. A sense of security arises, because of the power of the sacred to protect from harm, while great fear is evoked due to the power of the sacred to cause harm.⁶⁶

Depending on the circumstances, religious experience influences the mood in either direction so each context must be analyzed independently, but it is evident that religious experiences do shape the mood of individuals. For a number of people the religious experience creates a sense of security and confidence in the future and according to some studies, people of faith actually tend to be optimists.⁶⁷ Another survey shows that the divine inspiration, in certain cases directly affects actions as it promotes political concern and the belief in political efficaciousness.⁶⁸

A factor worth noticing is that religious experiences may have an effect on the relationship between the individual and the rest of the society. Some contemporary societies discourage religious experiences, and are instead emphasizing rationality and intellectuality.⁶⁹ Other societies instead put a positive label on divine encounters.

To conclude, this shows that it is relevant to pay attention to religious experience when analyzing generalized trust.

Religious Community and Trust

The final part of our analysis handles the religious community. McGuire refers to it as the awareness of belonging to a group of believers.⁷⁰ The community is a part of the self-identity and this raises questions about belonging. Who I am primarily? Do I consider myself first and most a Protestant, or am I a Swede? Maybe I consider myself a European. The primary identification and the intensity of the identification will be reflected in how far the personal boundary reaches out.

As mentioned earlier, Fukuyama argues that collectivism, as the one represented in strict Confucian traditions, restricts trust. Such a community will be very close and tight and there will be difficulties in identifying with people outside the group. However, in collectivist societies people can rely upon their own groups and get by with particularized trust. In individualistic societies (represented by countries with large Protestant populations) on the other hand, generalized trust turns out to be essential because of the need to rely on strangers.⁷¹

A very intense identification with one's own group causes people to become suspicious of others. This is the case when fundamentalists look upon people outside the community as heathens, which in turn is a reason for them to avoid contact with society. Religious communities that underpin in-group ties make adherents less tolerant of people different from themselves. If the cost of leaving the community also turns out to be high or if there are barriers to entering other communities, a small community surely increases the danger of isolation

⁶⁴ McGuire, 2002, 18.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 19.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 19.

⁶⁷ Larson et al, 1996.

⁶⁸ Harris, 1994.

⁶⁹ McGuire, 2002, 20.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 8-6.

The structure of a community influences trust in several ways. Egalitarian organizations promote trust, whereas hierarchical do not.⁷² Religious communities can be of either type. For instance, Protestant culture frequently highlights the equality of all parishioners and many churches are rather decentralized. This is good base for a trusting society, since decentralization means local control, more responsibility and power, as opposed to the Catholic Church, which is strongly hierarchical. In fact, one study reveals a difference in trust between Protestant and Catholic societies.⁷³ However, the result must be handled with care because religious identification in many Western European countries is more a result of cultural heritage than a question of faith and devotion. Even so, Protestant Western European countries probably continue to have their cultural roots in what is labeled “the Protestant Ethic”.

Finally, let us say some words about religious communities as being a source for civic engagement. Surely, people doing charity work believe that a difference can be made and that the world is good, or do they? Charity can be the perfect example of a community reaching out to people outside the community. However, depending on whether the volunteer or benefactor is motivated by extrinsic or intrinsic reasons, charity will produce different results.⁷⁴ Charity work, induced by extrinsic reasons probably has not a positive impact on trust, whereas charity work motivated by intrinsic reasons has.

⁷² Putnam, 1993.

⁷³ Inglehart and Baker, 2000.

⁷⁴ Wulff, 1993.

Chapter III

SOUTH KOREA'S SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

To be able to draw conclusions from the empirical results, it is necessary to be acquainted with Korea and its social and religious background. Therefore, this chapter intends to briefly describe the social context, the historical development of the religions and account for the development of Christianity. From this, it is then possible to form a hypothesis about the impact of Christian values in Korean culture.

3.2 Social Development and Trust in South Korea

The country became a nation in 1948 and has since undergone a drastic and major change in several aspects of society. After being under the rule of the Japanese, North Korean forces invaded South Korea in 1950, marking the start of the Korean War. The war ended 1953 in a truce, which was followed by political and economical turmoil under the dictatorial regime of Rhee Syngman. He resigned after the April Revolution in 1960 and after a brief period of democracy, General Park Chung-Hee seized power in May 1961. Park controlled the country and imposed military dictatorship until his assassination in 1979.

Under the regime of General Park, the South Korean economy grew tremendously. This was due to an “export or die” philosophy, which involved putting pressure on wages at home and restricting imports and borrowing large amounts of money from abroad. However, the profits stayed within the *jaebol*, huge family-run Confucian style conglomerates, with closely tied relationships to government officials. As a result, South Korea was a corrupt society, where workers did not benefit from the economic growth and social inequalities rose. In addition, the dictatorial regime frequently violated human rights and suppressed freedom of speech. General Park more and more came to resemble his fellow dictator in the north.

The regime ended in the assassination of Park, after which people were finally ready for the transition to democracy. Unfortunately, another general, General Chun Doo-Hwan, took action. He declared martial law in May 17 1980 in an attempt to capture those associated with the assassination and to stop students from protesting around the country for democracy. In the events that followed, several leading opposition politicians were arrested, one of them Kim Dae-Jung. The students were not late to react and in May 18 riots erupted in Gwangju, to which Chun's answer was to send in the military. It ended in the infamous Gwangju-massacre resulting in the death of at least 200 people and thousands injured.

The national outcry that followed forced presidential elections. Though obviously staged, Chun Doo-Hwan was in 1981 elected president. He remained in this position until 1988 and during this period, the economy continued to grow which satisfied the general

public. Still, massive protests against the authoritarian government continued throughout his presidency and eventually forced new elections in 1988. Chun stepped down and nominated Roh Tae-Woo as a candidate for his party. In the election that followed the two opposition candidates, Kim Dae-Jung and Kim Young-San split the opposition votes between themselves enabling Roh to win. The fear of political turmoil in case of an oppositional victory also benefited Roh, since no Korean would like to have the upcoming 1988 Olympic Games cancelled.

Nonetheless, despite being one of Chun's puppets, several democratic reforms were made under Roh's regime and the process towards being a democratic country with respect for human rights and freedom of speech went on during the 1990s. Kim Young-San was elected president in 1992 and in 1997, when Kim Dae-Jung won the presidency, it was the first democratic transition between two opposing parties in the history of South Korea.

Kim Dae-Jung launched the sunshine policy, aiming towards improving the relationship with the north and continued the process of democratic reforms. However, in 1997 an economic crisis struck Asia, which badly affected South Korea. To counter this, Kim Dae-Jung launched a number reforms aimed at reducing the power and influence of the *jaebeol*.

Even though the 1997-1998 financial severely hurt South Korea, the country remained one of the Asian Tigers with an astonishing economic growth over the past 40 years. From having an economic level comparable to the poorer countries in Africa and Asia, South Korea has today, in the beginning of the 21st century, a GDP per capita equal to the lesser economics of the EU. South Korea is no longer a developing country, but is a nation involved with high-tech industry and scientific research.

South Korean Trust in a Comparative Perspective

According to the World Values Survey, South Korea has less trust than its neighboring countries sharing the same cultural sphere and among all the countries involved in the 1999-2001 World Values Survey South Korea ranked 25 of 66 countries. Perhaps this indicates that Confucian countries actually have a rather average level trust, contrary to what Fukuyama suggests.

Nevertheless, if we are bold enough and still attempt a cross-cultural comparison, we see that countries with predominantly Protestant populations rank among the highest when it comes to having a levels of social trust. Furthermore, countries with large Catholic populations seem to have low levels of trust and according to the statistics Confucian countries fall between these two.⁷⁵ Even so, it is important to take such cross-cultural comparisons with a pinch of salt since numerous underlying reasons may explain differences in trust.

Table III Percentage Responding “Most people can be trusted” in Selected Countries

| Year | South Korea | Japan | China | Taiwan | Sweden |
|------------------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1981, 1982 | 38.0 % | 40.8 % | | | 56.7 % |
| 1990 | 34.2 % | 41.7 % | 60.3 % | | 66.1 % |
| 1995 | 30.3 % | 46.0 % | 52.3 % | 38.2 % | 59.7 % |
| 1999, 2000, 2001 | 27.3 % | 43.1 % | 54.5 % | | 66.3 % |

Source: World Values Survey.

Looking at the Korean case independently, a decline in trust clearly has occurred (at least between 1982 and 2001). The largest contributing factor probably is the rise in income inequality, especially after the 1997 financial crisis. In 1996, Korea's Gini coefficient,

⁷⁵ www.worldvaluessurvey.org

(measuring income distribution where zero signifies a completely egalitarian society and one indicates a situation where one single person possesses all the income) was estimated to 0.34 and it rose to 0.4 in 2000. In the same period, the share of the population belonging to the poorest group increased from 4.7 % in 1996 to 6.6 % in 2000.⁷⁶

However, the decline could also be the result of the transition to democracy. Naturally, one would assume that democracy promotes trust, but the issue is rather complex. It is true that democracies generally are more trusting than authoritarian states, but trust also depends on stability. A transition from dictatorship to democracy is often a period of turbulence and uncertainty. Moreover, it is also period of public enlightenment. Society becomes more open, media are able to report about corruption and this erodes trust. This has been the case in several countries and a brief analysis actually shows a negative correlation between democratization and trust.⁷⁷ It takes several decades to reach the state of a stable democracy (and a higher level of trust) and South Korea is still on the path towards being a stable democracy.

In addition, the country has become more polarized. Many Koreans perceive multiracial or multiethnic nations as quite strange (for reasons mentioned later),⁷⁸ and this notion has not only preserved Korean traditions, but also created tension, where immigrants in some circumstances are discriminated in for instance legal matters. The global world is today a reality, with its challenges, but for a homogenous country like South Korea, it takes time to adapt to this new situation.

3.3 An Outline of the Religious Context

Korean culture has its own unique flavor, despite being caught between two powerful neighbors. Due to a remarkable ability to accept outer influences and still not let them completely overtake Korean culture, but instead fuse them with indigenous Korean traditions and values, Korean culture has been able to survive. In addition, the Korean sense of nationalism has enabled Korean culture to live on. To a Korean, Korean citizenship is not about living in Korea. Instead, to be Korean is to be associated with membership in the Korean ethnic group, referred to as *minjok* by the Koreans.⁷⁹ The principle of bloodline defines the nationhood, and is held together with a common language and culture.

History has proven that Korea's religious soil is rich and fertile and the passionate and emotional orientation of religion is one trait that characterizes Korean culture.⁸⁰ There have been several successions of dominant religions – each one taking control for a period of time – but without destroying earlier faiths. Instead there has been a continuous fusion where old and new believes are mixed together.⁸¹

The historical development of religions is displayed by Figure I on the next page. Even today, Shamanism is an active religion playing an important role in many peoples' lives, Confucianism has a powerful influence on ordinary people and the traditions of Buddhism are deeply rooted among people.⁸²

Additionally, Christianity has as a recently added element, experienced a tremendous growth, where Catholics and Protestants combined comprise more than 26 % of South Korea's population, making it arguably the largest religion in South Korea.⁸³ During 1985-1995, the proportion of Protestant adherents increased by 23.8 %, while the

⁷⁶ Jin Kwon Huyin and Lim Byung-In, 2005.

⁷⁷ Uslaner, 2002, 8-12.

⁷⁸ Yu Chai-Shin, interview.

⁷⁹ Yu Chai-Shin, interview.

⁸⁰ Yun Seung-Yong, 1997, 12.

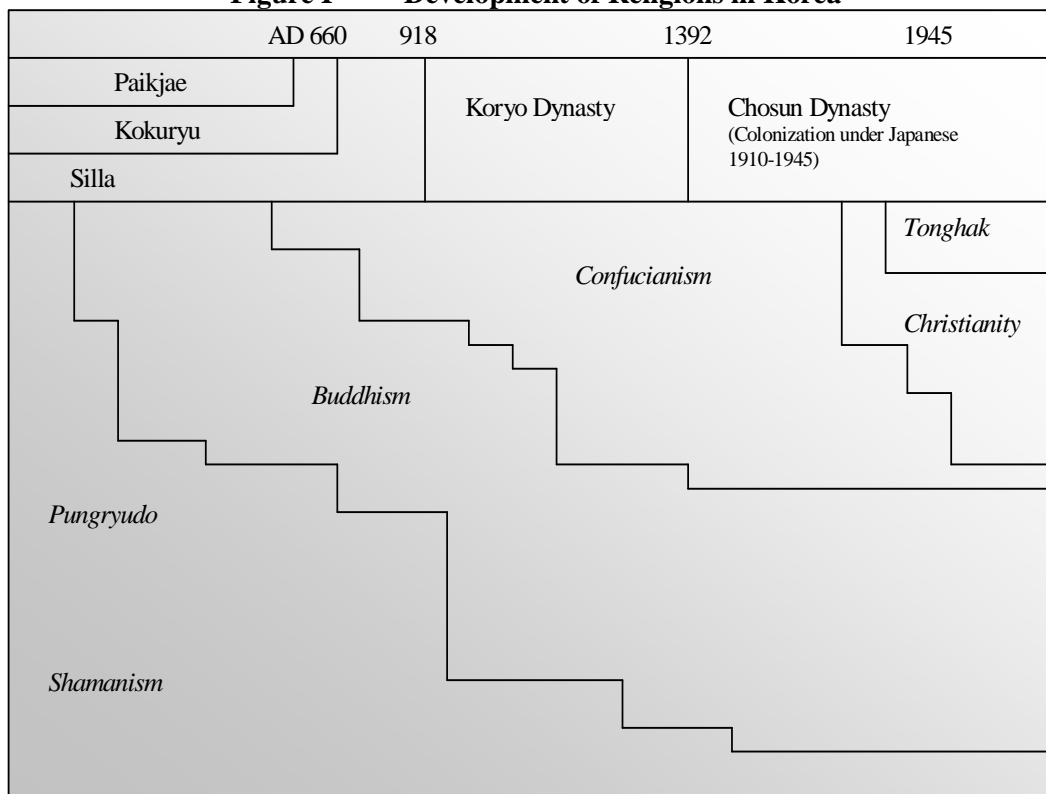
⁸¹ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1004, 59.

⁸² Yun Seung-Yong, 1997, 7.

⁸³ CIA Factbook, 2006. The exact statistics of Christian adherents in South Korea is difficult to estimate, due to dual memberships, unrecorded transfers of membership and the incentives to increase the statistics.

Catholic and Buddhist proportions increased by 45 % and 17.1 % respectively (See Table IV).

Figure I Development of Religions in Korea



Source: Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 61.

Table IV Number of Believers in South Korea

| | 1985 | % of population | 1995 | % of population | Relative Increase of Percentage 1985-1995 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|---|
| Buddhists | 8 060 000 | 19.9 % | 10 388 000 | 23.3 % | 17.1 % |
| Catholics | 1 865 000 | 4.6 % | 2 988 000 | 6.7 % | 45 % |
| Protestants | 6 489 000 | 16 % | 8 819 000 | 19.8 % | 23.8 % |

Source: National Census Board (in Yun Seung-Yong, 1997).

Folk Beliefs

The heart of Korean religiosity lies in Shamanism. It came to the Korean peninsula about 1000 BC and is one form of animism that in different shapes is spread across Siberia, Manchuria and other parts of Asia. It does not have any doctrines, a main canon or even regular gatherings for the believers,⁸⁴ but everything is transmitted orally through the *mudang* – the shaman.⁸⁵

Shamanism essentially consists of three elements: One, nature is alive with spirits and deities that are the subjects of worship. Two, through the *kut* (the shamanistic ritual) people are able to meet with the deities. Three, the *mudang* is needed to act as a mediator between humans and spiritual beings in this ritual.⁸⁶

Today, Shamanism can be characterized as a folk belief, which is deeply rooted in the Korean culture and the mind of Korean people. The purpose of the *kut* is usually

⁸⁴ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 67.

⁸⁵ Yun Seung-Yong, 1997, 126.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 126.

concrete, for example healing, exorcism or material blessing and Koreans may still visit the mudang for help and advice.⁸⁷ Koreans are very emotional about shamanism and it has always existed parallel to the other official religions.⁸⁸ Still, during the course of history, the treatment of the mudang has varied. Sometimes she (because being a mudang is primarily a female occupation) has been considered a spiritual counselor and held high in regard, while sometimes she has been persecuted, most recently by fundamentalist Christians.

One should not forget the heavy Chinese influence on Korean culture, such as ancestral worship, astrology and fortunetellers (*jomchanggi*), who are frequently used by the Koreans. Taoism and Chinese philosophy even inspired the South Korean flag, the Taegeukgi. In the middle of flag is the *taeguk*, a Korean version of the yin and yang symbol, signifying unity, and it is surrounded by four trigrams, borrowed from the ancient Book of Changes, symbolizing Heaven, Earth, Fire and Water.

Buddhism

Chinese monks introduced the northern Mahayana Buddhism to Korea in the 4th century AD. This was during the time of Three kingdoms and Buddhism was partly able to gain foothold due to that Buddhist ideals were found useful by the central government. The ideas of Buddha as a suzerain ruler and the establishment of divine kingship was appealing for the kings and the ruling class. Furthermore, the ideal national society was thought to be the same as realizing Buddha Land in this world, which fitted well when trying to unify the small tribal societies on the peninsula.⁸⁹ Buddhism was the religion in power until Confucianism succeeded it, but its impact on the intellectual life and art has been immense.

The praxis for Korean Buddhists (which of course is applicable to Mahayana schools generally) is to live in the spirit of Bodhisattva.⁹⁰ This is different from the focus on individual enlightenment in Theravada Buddhism.⁹¹ The spirit of Bodhisattva is embodied by the Six Perfections: Generosity, Good Conduct, Vigor, Patience, Meditation and Wisdom. The Buddha way of living centres around self-command, self-sacrifice and altruism. That is, despite seeing the emptiness of the world, the Buddhist does not renounce the world, but instead works for the salvation of all conscious beings.⁹²

Korean Buddhism is unique in that it today is a living religion with believers that are devoted in a practical way. The Korean Seon (China: Chan, Japan: Zen) Buddhism has a strong emphasis on Seon practice in the monastery, and unlike in China and Japan, this is common even among lay practitioners. Lay practitioners regularly follow the winter and summer retreat system to continue the mediation tradition following the teaching of Buddha.

Another trait of the Korean Buddhism is the “One Vehicle” spirit, which has made Korean Buddhism very tolerant (and vulnerable) to outer influences. Being and non-being, life and death, nirvana and samsara are not two separate entities but only two sides of the truth, Reality.⁹³ Applied to different issues, it can be used to avoid sectarian conflicts or to be open to other religious thoughts as everything is a part of one single fundamental truth, but it also makes it vulnerable to syncretism.⁹⁴

Thus, over the course of history, Buddhism has been subject to syncretism with the indigenous religions and for instance, shamans frequently used Buddha figures as deities alongside the traditional spirits and deities of the nature. Therefore, Korean Buddhism has

⁸⁷ Ibid, 126.

⁸⁸ Kim Kyoung-Jae, interview.

⁸⁹ Yun Won-Cheol, 1997, 39f.

⁹⁰ Kim Kyoung-Jae, interview.

⁹¹ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 74.

⁹² Yun Won-Cheol, 1997, 44.

⁹³ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 74.

⁹⁴ Yun Won-Cheol, 44f.

always been very close to nature and while the temples in China were grand and magnificent and the temples in Japan delicate and made to perfection, the temples in Korea were designed to reflect harmony with nature.⁹⁵ A temple could for instance be situated on a mountain or in a beautiful cave in the forest. Additionally, the syncretism with shamanism also made it natural for females to enter the role of a religious person.⁹⁶

The introduction of Buddhism did not change the life-style of ordinary Korean people. Though worldly matters should be rejected, common people were fully concerned with them and it was only for a few to live the paradigmatic religious way in the monastery. There one could live in abstinence and renounce material possessions. In addition, monasteries continued or embraced the shamanistic tradition with providing religious services for lay people's personal well-being in return for almsgiving and material support.⁹⁷ The Buddhist monks were often the only literate persons who communicated with illiterates; therefore, they often took the role as priests for difference religious services and performing rituals involving praying for the prosperity of the families, for good after-lives of the dead, etc.⁹⁸

Buddhism did however introduce new ways of thinking to Korea. Instead of worshipping external powers, the innate power of the human being was highlighted. The philosophy of Karma and "cause and effect" made the human being completely responsible for his or her own fate.⁹⁹

Today about one forth of the population in Korea are Buddhists, most of them belonging to Jogye Order (an order of Seon Buddhism).

Confucianism

The core in the Confucian idea lies in the value of humanity, where Man is seen with great potential, limited by his ignorance. However, one can reach the full potential by following the moral principles of life and finally enjoy co-partnership with Heaven and Earth, the ultimate Confucian ideal.¹⁰⁰ Confucianism therefore puts emphasis on practical moral principles (such as loyalty, filial piety and wisdom) and the right order of social relations in human life, i.e. the Five Ethical Relationships – father-son, man-wife, old-young, friend-friend and emperor-servant.

Confucianism was imported from China around the first century AD and its impact on Korean society became visible during the Three kingdoms (57 BC – 668 AD). Its system of laws, social norms and government system, suited the rulers well and it was not until the end 19th century, when the political situation drastically changed, that the Confucianism bureaucratic system proved to be too rigid and idealistic to cope with the situation.¹⁰¹ One might say that the Confucian system was a victim of its own creation, by creating an inflexible and conservative society with large inequalities.

Today Confucianism is arguably the most fundamental value system in Korea, affecting all aspects of society. It has fused itself with the traditional religions and Buddhism into an inseparable entity and according to Kim Kyoung-Jae "every Korean unconsciously has a Confucian way of thinking."¹⁰² Loyalty, filial piety, respect for the elder and strong work ethics are held by most Koreans to be the standard of what is fundamental in a good society.

⁹⁵ Kim Kyoung-Jae, interview.

⁹⁶ Yeo Kwang Sunim, interview

⁹⁷ Yun Won-Cheol, 1997, 47.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 46.

¹⁰⁰ Seong Youm, 1997, 61.

¹⁰¹ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1997, 87.

¹⁰² Kim Kyoung-Jae, interview.

3.4 Christianity in Korea

The growth of Christianity in South Korea is remarkable and unique, yet we can explain why. The Korean people and society experienced a lot of hardship during the end of the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910). Government officials were corrupted and externally there was pressure from the imperialistic neighbors trying to colonize the country. The country also refused to make any kind of a treaty with any Western country, thus Korea was labeled the Hermit Kingdom

The first attempt to bring Christianity to Korea was made by Roman Catholicism in the 18th century. Since this thesis focuses on the impact Protestantism has had on Korean culture, details on Roman Catholic Church history are left out. However, some things must be noted. The Catholic Church came to a society where the Confucian feudal structures were challenged. Some intellectuals looked for new sources, and Catholicism seemed attractive in this context. However, the ruling class could not accept Catholicism as a religion of the people, since politics, society and family system were all based on Confucianism. In particular, official Catholicism rejected ancestral rites, and this was seen as a terrible step away from loyalty and filial duty.

The ruling authority could not in any way accept these new values and Catholics underwent persecution. Despite this, the church managed to hold on and even grew until the end of the 19th century when the country moved into a new era. Japan forced the Hermit Kingdom to open its doors and in 1899, freedom of religion was established.

The Growth of Protestantism

The history of Protestantism begins somewhat later. In the end of 19th century the first Protestant missionaries arrived in Korea, when the barriers to the country were opened. They came to a country in despair and in need of hope. Let us examine why Protestantism was so successful in spreading her roots into the Korean society.

To begin with, the Korean government in the 1880s was no longer able to resist foreign pressure to open its ports. The early Protestant missionaries could therefore, in contrast to the Catholics, act relatively freely and evade persecution.¹⁰³

Secondly, Christianity brought several new ideas into Korea – for instance the abolition of class barriers, the extension of human rights, the overthrowing of superstitions, freedom of press, and recognition of democratic values. In Christian congregations, all people sat together, reading the same bible and singing the same hymns.¹⁰⁴ This teaches egalitarian values and altogether made people view the Christian gospel as a liberating gospel for those who suffered under the feudalistic Confucian ruling ideology.¹⁰⁵ These were not merely ideas, but the church took them to a practical level and became a force resisting oppression of human rights and non-democratic military rule. Protestant Christianity thus came to be identified with Korean nationalism when the country came under Japanese rule.

Thirdly, since the general public could not easily understand the scriptures of Buddhism and Confucianism (because these were written in Chinese), the translation of the Bible into Korean script (*hangeul*), contributed highly to the success of Protestantism. It seems that the religious minds of the Korean people were emotionally touched by the Word and easily took it to their hearts.¹⁰⁶

Fourth, the early Protestant churches were not only engaged in preaching, but also in education and medical services. Obviously, this appealed to the common people, who became educated in modern knowledge.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 116.

¹⁰⁴ Park Chung-Shin, 2003, 58.

¹⁰⁵ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 117.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Fifth, the missionaries embraced the low class and women. One of the policies adopted by the mission council formed by Presbyterian Church of America and the Victorian Church of Australia states that “it is better to preach for the working class rather than the upper class.”¹⁰⁸ This approach proved successful, as commoners and outcasts benefited little from the Confucian establishment and had little to lose if converting.¹⁰⁹

Sixth, the Korean people could easily identify themselves with the Christian belief. The Confucian value system with emphasis on loyalty, honesty, filial piety and faithfulness, is in several ways very close to Christian norms and corresponds to fundamental Christian values. Moreover, the structure of Presbyterian Church resembles the Confucian value system to respect the aged and the seniors and this motivates why the Presbyterian Church has been so successful.¹¹⁰ In addition, Koreans were used to terms like salvation, repentance, rebirth, heaven, mind and power and could therefore easily interpret the gospel.¹¹¹

A Divided Church

We must be aware of that the Protestant Church in Korea is not a single entity.¹¹² Even though Presbyterians outnumber other Christians by two to one, the Presbyterian Church itself is divided. After the liberation from the Japanese in 1945, Korean Church leaders and members enjoyed higher social and political ranks in the secular society. Despite being considered liberal from the beginning (at least from Confucian standards), the majority of the Church moved away from controversial social and political issues.

From being a minority religion of the poor, it became in the 1960s a part of the established society and pro-authoritarian, where fundamentalists defended the authoritarian government and criticized liberal Christians for being pro-communists.¹¹³ This must be seen in the light of the historical context, as large amounts of Christian refugees fled North Korea, obviously carrying a strong anti-communist attitude.¹¹⁴ In addition, American real politics guided conservative Christians to positions of power as a way to protect American interests. This pro-authoritarian attitude was theologically justified by an otherworldly theology aiming towards the “paradise” after this world and not the promised heavenly kingdom on earth.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, conservative churches during the 1970s and 1980s argued that the Bible teaches Christians to pray for the secular powers and to obey them.¹¹⁶

However, liberal Christians continued their political activism for social justice and human rights in the 1960s and 1970s. The Christian activists began to act in the name of the Church and in 1973, the *Theological Declaration of Korean Christians* proclaimed: “We are commended by God to speak the truth and act in the present situation in Korea. [...] The people of Korea are looking up to Christians and urging us to take action in the present grim situation.”¹¹⁷

Despite being a minority of Korean Christians, liberals became a political force to be reckoned with and they mounted fierce opposition to the authoritarian regimes of Rhee Syngman and Park Chung Hee. Many believers were beaten and jailed. The outspoken critique of dictatorial governments continued in the 1980s.¹¹⁸ It became the core element of the democratization campaigns against Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo and was a

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 116.

¹⁰⁹ Park Chung-Shin, 2003, 26.

¹¹⁰ Yu Chai-Shin, interview.

¹¹¹ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 118.

¹¹² Park Chung-Shin, 2003, 194.

¹¹³ Park Chung-Shin, 2003, 49.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 75.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 94.

¹¹⁶ Park Chung-Shin, 2003, 75.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 90.

¹¹⁸ Kim Sung-Hae, 2001.

foundation of the 1980s mass protests and rallies.¹¹⁹ The incredible organizational strength of the Christian community also attracted democratic forces outside it, such as workers, students and intellectuals, who further strengthened the process.¹²⁰

Today, Christian political activism still exists and will continue to exist, should repressive rule be present. However, the situation in Korea has changed.¹²¹ The political turmoil of the past has stabilized and human rights are much more respected. This new situation presents a challenge to liberal Christians, since the coming of democracy has moved them into the center of establishment. Their strong stand for human rights and democracy helped to facilitate the tremendous growth many churches experienced in the 1970s and early 1980. But nowadays, some Christians may feel that the Church has become a victim of its own success. Freedom and prosperity has led to widespread complacency and for the first time in the history of Korean Christianity, the growth of the Church has lessened.

Additional comments to the above need to be made. Even though the majority of the Church can be considered conservative, one must put this into a comparative perspective. The standard of the Korean society is conservative and hierarchal and the conservative part of the Church actually correlates with the norm of Korean society. This does not mean that the conservative Church became *more* conservative than standard of the Confucian society. Since Christianity also brought egalitarian and anti-authoritarian ideas, adopted by liberal Christians, it should mean that the Christian group combined should show a higher degree of anti-authoritarianism than the non-Christian Koreans.

Missiological Orientation

The two main branches of Protestantism naturally have different missiological orientations and we shall briefly examine two different models of mission proposed by Korean scholars.¹²² A model of missiology or “theology of religions” is important because it establishes Christians’ relationships to people of other faiths and is furthermore a concern about self-identity.¹²³

The Sowing Model

To Park Hyung-Nong (1897-1978), one of the leading conservative Protestant theologians in Korea during the 20th century, the parable of sower in Mk 4:1-32 exemplifies and defines mission.¹²⁴ The parable pays specific attention to the absolute stance of the life-giving power of the seed. The soil in which the seed is sowed is neutral or even a dead entity, but in order to make a good harvest thorns and thistles must be pulled out and removed

In other words, this conservative and fundamentalist missiological standpoint views Shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism as manmade moral system and heresies, that are nothing more than thistles that needs to be wiped out by the Christian gospel. The only way to salvation is through the Lord Jesus Christ. According to Kim Kyoung-Jae, this makes it impossible to imagine the gospel viewed in the eyes of a Korean traditional perspective. Such a standpoint does not allow any interfaith dialogue or even cooperation with other religions. Still, the sowing model did not prevent Christianity to grow in the number of adherents and it probably appealed to many people of the masses.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Park Chung-Shin, 2003, 89.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 91.

¹²¹ Ibid, 198.

¹²² Kim Kyoung-Jae additionally describes two other missiological models – a converging and a grafting model. I choose to present only the sowing and the yeast model because I believe that these two models represent the main lines of Korean Christianity.

¹²³ van Lin, 1995, 177.

¹²⁴ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 120.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 121.

The dilemma of the sowing model is that it becomes impossible for the Korean Protestant Church to penetrate deep into the Korean soil and soul. Without any change, the Protestant Church will forever be looked upon as a foreign element in clash with traditional culture and values and Christianity will never be able to understand the Korean traditional religion.¹²⁶

However, the above analysis presents a paradox. Clearly the missiological model opposes syncretism and religious dialogue, however this conservative ideology also proved attractive in that it accentuates several fundamental Confucianism traits (as filial piety and loyalty). Thus, conservative Christianity might become a “Confucianized Christianity”. Yet, conservative Christians themselves do not share this kind of view and consider filial piety and loyalty as Christian features, not Confucian.

The Yeast Model

This model suggested by Kim Chai-Choon (1901-1987) is based on the parable of the yeast and the dough¹²⁷, and proposes an opposite view.¹²⁸ This analogy shows that the gospel is like the yeast, which penetrates inside the dough, and the dough is the life-situation of the cultural and social entity.¹²⁹ The gospel strongly influences and transforms the dough as culture. This model affirms that God has been at work in the faith of Korean religions before Christianity and the previous religions are not product of the Devil, nor are they merely human constructs, but express – at least in part – the presence and action of God.

The yeast model is supported by inclusive liberal ecumenical Churches and acknowledges that the gospel should both be embodied in the Korean culture and transcend it. On the other hand, the problem with the yeast model is the risk of syncretism and loss of Christian values. A tolerant and open approach is also likely to be more vulnerable to outer influences. Like all the other previous religious encounters in Korea, some kind of fusion will occur where elements from previous traditions will be blended with new ones. Protestantism is no exception and is, in one way or another, interpreted by the Korean cultural-religious heritage.¹³⁰

Still, it seems from my point of view, that despite being more tolerant towards other religions, the risk of syncretism is actually smaller for liberal Christianity in South Korea. The strong conservative traits of Korean culture are not attractive for the adherents. However, liberal Christians are more likely to identify themselves as a part of Korean culture, since they do not reject Korean traditions.

3.5 Christianity’s Influence on Trust in Korea

At this point, we have become accustomed to the religious background in South Korea. We are also familiar with the social development and the level of trust from a comparative perspective. The next part of the thesis is devoted to a discussion about how different religious traditions influence trust in the Korean context.

Due to the difficulties in separating one Asian religion from another, I choose to compare the traditional religions of Korea (Shamanism, Confucianism and Buddhism) interchangeably against Christianity. The Korean mindset is undoubtedly a mixture of these ideas without strict boundaries between them.

Some things must be noted though before continuing. We must be humble and admit that a comparison is not easy to achieve. It is a delicate task to compare Christianity with East Asian traditions and perhaps every one of following analyses requires entire essay.

¹²⁶ Kim Kyoung-Jae, interview.

¹²⁷ Mt 13:33, Lk 13:20-21.

¹²⁸ Kim Kyoung-Jae, 1994, 126.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 126.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 120.

Therefore, due to the complexity, our aim is to provide a theoretical discussion, so that we are able to state a reasonable hypothesis and interpret the statistical results.

Comparing the Influence on Through Religious Beliefs

As previously mentioned, religious belief shapes what an individual knows about the world and the religious belief influences in several aspects may contribute to the perception of trust.

The World-View.

Did Christianity provide a more optimistic or more pessimistic world-view than the one already established? We concluded earlier that one of the main sources of trust is the world-view. Since the world-view is a reflection of the religious belief, we should be able to analyze different types of belief systems and compare their respective outlook on the world. In short, is the world-view optimistic or pessimistic? And is the human nature good or bad?

Firstly, the perception of the human nature in the Protestant Christianity that missionaries brought to Korea is that humans are weak and sinful thanks to original sin and they cannot escape from this situation unaided. Humans are merely humans, and they need their creator in order to be saved. Still, man is responsible for the Fall and there exists a basic distrust in humans and their capabilities. The outlook takes a rather pessimistic standpoint.¹³¹

In contrast, we have the East Asian traditions of Confucianism, Taoism and to some extent Buddhism. These have a more positive view that affirms the basic goodness of humans and the world. Humans are free and capable of self-transformation and are able to create their own future. These ideas have a fundamental belief in the capacity of man.¹³² However, for instance Confucius was not blind to reality. In a sarcastic tone, Confucius says in Analects 4.6, “I for my part have never yet seen one who really cared for Goodness¹³³, nor one who really abhorred wickedness.” Even though humans are good, they still may be victims of desire and egoism. Mahayana Buddhism in China essentially shares this view on human nature, stressing that man’s heart is pure and that everyone can reach enlightenment, but that desire deceives him. The reason is ignorance, but if following Buddha’s teachings man can be free from the world.

Following the above, East Asian traditions have a more optimistic view on the human nature, even though they are realistic and to some extent acknowledge the weaknesses of man.

Secondly, there is different side of the story. Despite being sinful and weak according to Christianity, Man is from a Christian perspective an image God, created, and thereby essentially good. Following Paul Tillich, “the great Christian assertion, *qua esse bonum est*, is the conceptualization of the Genesis story in which God sees everything he has created ‘and behold, it was very good.’”¹³⁴ The world is good and life itself is good.

Buddhism’s view on the world is different. It has a negative valuation of existence, where the world is viewed as an illusion and Nirvana, or nothingness, is the true reality. It is impossible for man to imagine beyond the finite and humans are finite creatures bound to the wheel of life with suffering. Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, sickness is suffering and death is suffering. According to Tillich, “In Buddhism, the fact that there is a world is the result of an ontological Fall into finitude.”¹³⁵ Man cannot imagine beyond the finite.

¹³¹ Amaladoss, 2001, 21.

¹³² Ibid, 21f.

¹³³ Actually humanness (*ren*), translated as love and kindness. The source of all virtues.

¹³⁴ Tillich, 2007-05-16, <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1557&C=1391>.

¹³⁵ Tillich, 2005-05-16, <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1557&C=1391>.

I believe that the differences of optimism between the religions and traditions are small. Moreover, the question about optimism and pessimism is perhaps raised from typically Western perspective. Some Buddhists would even have difficulties in answering that question, since optimism and pessimism from a Buddhist perspective only are two sides of the same coin. What is, only really is. However, it is reasonable to assume that it is easier to send a gospel carrying a sense of optimism than a negative one and Christianity was evidently well accepted in Korea. As already discussed, Christianity was a key to a new social order and it attracted the shamanistic mind of the Korean people, who identified the Church as a new arena for receiving blessings and promises of a good future. “We can do everything with having positive thinking” became the trademark for many pastors, especially among the Pentecostals, were this shamanized Christianity flourished.

Therefore, I would conclude by saying that Christianity did in fact bring a sense of optimism to Korea, because even though the difference by just looking at the doctrines is small, many perceived Christianity as a positive way of thinking. Yet, having this said, we must be aware of the existence of other factors contributing in the shaping of trust.

Ethics of Reciprocity

The Golden Rule is equally important in Buddhism (“Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”¹³⁶) as in Christianity (“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”¹³⁷) and there is no reason to believe that adherents of one specific religion should be more “good-hearted” than other ones.

Materialism

Did Christian belief bring a new perspective on materialism to Korea? The pursuit for material wealth and possession is negative according to both Christian and Buddhist values. Jesus himself was a role model living in poverty, two of the Ten Commandments address greed and Mammon is a false God. In Buddhism, one must overcome the desire for material things to end the state of samsara – the wheel of life and suffering. In addition, Confucianism advises to stay away from pursuing wealth in life, though wealth is not negative per se.

We must consider other aspects of the issue though. To many, Protestantism promotes materialism, due to its relationship with capitalism. Max Weber addresses this in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.¹³⁸ By valuing work itself, (that is work for its own sake, rather than the outcome), as a sign of personal salvation, one is more likely to accumulate wealth. Hence, the by-product of the Protestant work ethic is, according to Weber, worldly accumulation and commerce. Thus, the old Catholic tradition that one would one only acquire so much wealth as needed to live well was not valid anymore. This leads the wrong conclusion that Protestants are more materialistic.

This conclusion is incorrect, since the Puritan thinking considers luxuries and other items intended to make life more pleasurable sinful. Work is a spiritual work, and the objective is not to gain wealth. On the contrary, the Protestant work ethic actually led to Christians expanding their social network outside the kinship. The Confucian environment was actually hostile to capitalist development as it emphasized the kinship as the primary source of relatedness and thereby promoted economically inefficient nepotism.¹³⁹

Furthermore, Korean culture is influenced by Shamanistic ideas, where it is perfectly acceptable to seek secular prosperity and fulfill material wishes. Even today, people sometimes visit the mudang to solve concrete issues in life; issues that might be considered materialistic. As we know, Koreans are eclectic in their religious life and

¹³⁶ Udana-Varga 5:18.

¹³⁷ Luk 6:31.

¹³⁸ Weber, 2001.

¹³⁹ Culture and Economic Development, in Smelser and Baltes.

many Christians are influenced by shamanism and consider Christianity as a path to material prosperity.¹⁴⁰ This is quite common, especially among Pentecostal congregations.

Nevertheless, since this philosophy is deeply rooted into Korean culture, the same is also true for Korean Buddhists. A Buddhist could visit the temple one day, and yet visit a mudang for material purposes the next. In addition, we know that Buddhist monks in a historical perspective often followed the shamanistic tradition with providing religious services for lay people's personal well-being.¹⁴¹

It is impossible in this brief analysis to find a definitive answer whether Christianity brought a new perspective on materialism to Korea, but we know that anti-materialistic belief existed prior to the arrival of Christianity, although influenced by folk belief. One hypothesis could be that even though Christianity did not bring a unique idea about post-materialism, Christianity perhaps revived post-materialistic thinking and spiritualism among certain groups as a result of increased religiosity. If this were to be the case, then this should influence trust among Christians in a positive direction.

Luckily, we are able to examine some statistics from the World Values Survey. Table V shows us that East Asian nations have a lower level of post-materialism than countries having strong Protestantism. There are a number of reasons for this, but let us keep the analysis simple and suggest that religion is one of the many reasons. In addition, Buddhists in South Korea show a lower degree of post-materialistic attitudes than Protestants. This implies that Protestants in South Korea are more post-materialistic than Korean Buddhists.

Table V Percentage Responding “Less emphasis on money and material possessions is a good thing”

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| South Korea | Japan | China | Taiwan (1996) | Singapore | Korea Buddhists |
| 52.8 % | 39.0 % | 46.9 % | 52.3 % | 37.9 % | 47.6 % |
| Sweden | Great Britain | Denmark | Netherlands | Switzerland (1996) | Korean Protestants |
| 77.3 % | 65.7 % | 70.0 % | 60.8 % | 69.3 % | 58.7 % |

Source: World Values Survey, 1999, 2000, 2001.

Education.

Education plays an important role in Confucian societies and Presbyterians consider education as a mean to put one's faith into practice. I assume that Christianity did not change the focus on the importance of education. It is fair to note, however, that Christian missions widened education to include girls/women and people from lower social classes.

Individualism, Egalitarianism and Authoritarianism

We know from previously, that Christianity obviously provided the Koreans with a new mind-set regarding social equality. Confucianism stresses hierarchy within social relations and this creates barriers between social groups. Needless to say, such barriers do not promote trust and in collectivist societies, people get by with relying upon their peer groups.¹⁴² On the other hand, we have the Protestant ethic. This is an individualistic creed and in order to succeed (as mentioned previously) there is a need to rely upon people and expand the social network. One of the key elements in trust is non-hierarchical relations.

Moreover, we are all sinners and share the same fate. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”¹⁴³ The view that all men are the same and share the same reality is

¹⁴⁰ Kim Kyoung-Jae, interview.

¹⁴¹ Yun Won-Cheol, 47.

¹⁴² Uslaner, 2002, Chapter 8-6.

¹⁴³ Gal 3:28.

fundamental in creating generalized trust and through egalitarianism Christian belief should have a positive influence on trust.

As mentioned earlier, liberal Christians in Korea not only discuss this from a theoretical point-of-view, but also takes it to a practical level. Human autonomy as a God-given right and the authority that deprives humans of their basic right is in defiance of God's will¹⁴⁴; Christ's church must oppose the secular authoritarian power that violates human rights. Christianity has a revolutionary character embedded in the symbol of Kingdom of God, which is directed towards a radical transformation of society.¹⁴⁵ However, according to Tillich, the basis attitude in Buddhism is not the transformation of reality but salvation from reality.¹⁴⁶ Note that this does not imply that social movements within Buddhism are non-existent.

Is this applicable for the entire church in South Korea? No, we should suspect that the above is primarily valid for liberal Churches. Conservatives consider themselves apolitical and state that the Church should not interfere in secular issues. As a result, they defended the authoritarian regimes. They also defend the hierarchal relationships and adopt Christian elements that correspond with Confucian ideals, for instance the Pauline view of marital relationships, where the wife should obey the husband.¹⁴⁷

We can conclude with saying that Christianity has brought several new notions about human rights and egalitarianism to Korea and even though many Christians belongs to a conservative wing, Christians as one group should have a higher degree of individualism, egalitarianism and anti-authoritarianism than non-Christians.

Comparing the Religious Rituals

Religious rituals enact what is explained through belief and create a sense of unity and identification.¹⁴⁸ It is hard to say whether religious rituals will influence trust or not, but what we do know is that groups focusing on tightening their bonds are more likely to be particularized trusters, since participation in religious rituals may help building group solidarity.¹⁴⁹

As mentioned, Protestantism in Korea is dominated by Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists and they are in several aspects heavily influenced by their American "mother churches". To many conservatives American churches are seen as models to follow and this has initiated a discussion about the identity of the Korean Church. As an example, African-American hymns have contributed significantly to the development of church music, but in Korea there is a lack of traditional Korean melodies and lyrics.¹⁵⁰ There is also a frequent use of English speaking Worship Services.

By saying this, it is not implied that the church has distanced itself completely from Korean culture. Many churches have often adopted Korean indigenous traditions into their rituals, for example, worship services with a lot of singing and lot of passion.¹⁵¹ One of the apparent examples of shamanized Christianity is for example the Pentecostal Yoido Full Gospel Church. It also usual for Christians to use features of Confucian worship in memorial rituals, to bow to the picture of the deceased, burn candles and put them in front of the grave.

Overall, it is reasonable to believe that the religious ritual does not affect trust among Korean Christians in any particular direction.

¹⁴⁴ Park Chung-Shin, 2003, 90.

¹⁴⁵ Tillich, 2005-05-16, <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1557&C=1391>.

¹⁴⁶ Tillich, 2005-05-16, <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1557&C=1391>.

¹⁴⁷ Eph 5:22-23.

¹⁴⁸ McGuire, 2002, 17.

¹⁴⁹ Sosis, 2005.

¹⁵⁰ Yu Chai-Shin, 1996, 190.

¹⁵¹ Kim Kyoung-Jae, interview.

Comparing the Religious Experiences

Before diving into the next difficult topic, the reader should recall that the motive is not to provide a definite answer, but the intention is to discuss these matters so that we are able to interpret later results. Nevertheless, the next topic aims at comparing religious experiences in different religions.

Sense of Security and Sense of Control

Generally, religions provide comfort and a sense of security. In Christianity, especially in the Calvinistic traditions widespread in Korea, humans must put their complete trust and faith in the mercy of God. The Ultimate is a personal category and someone to trust. Humans must rely on God and God only and even if doing good deeds or living a God-fearing life one is at the mercy of God. A person can never claim a place in paradise. Still, God loves man and this personal love brings forward an optimistic outlook. Even if failing in life, even if doing wrong, God always loves you and there is the chance of salvation if you put all your faith in Jesus. There is always hope, someone will provide for you and love you. “God is love”¹⁵² and experiencing this surely brings forward optimism and a sense of security.

Buddhism instead refers to transpersonal categories of “absolute non-being”. This means, Man has a personal responsibility for his salvation. You as a person are in control of your destiny, and though Buddha never paid much attention to describing the after-life, this is optimistic. The responsibility may also be intimidating and considered an obstacle to great to overcome. If you fail, the wheel of life continues.

Another aspect of religious experience is that it in many cases does not allow believers to watch idly as poor and powerless suffers. This is true for several religions. However, in the Korean case, it is the emergence of authoritarian regimes violating human rights, which made liberal Christians act.

Comparing the Religious Communities

Christianity broadened role for laity (including women) in worship, evangelism and teaching. Congregants could take on more responsibility and power within the Church than previously. As we know, horizontal and individualistic organizations promote trust, and compared to the previous religions in Korea Protestantism was both more horizontal and more individualistic.

In addition, Christian communities in Korea are relatively extrovert, due to the importance of carrying out the mission. Protestant churches in Korea are today highly active in sending out missionaries throughout the world, but one must not forget some fundamentalist conservative branches of the Church, who regard non-Christians with suspicion.

3.6 Stating the Hypotheses

Based on the previous discussions and arguments the following hypothesis is proposed:

Protestants have a higher level of generalized trust than non-Christian Koreans do.

The considerations on which this hypothesis is based are that individualistic, egalitarian and anti-authoritarian values are embodied in Protestant Christianity. Even though Korean Protestantism exists in multiple denominational forms, the basic values of Protestantism are shared across the denominations.

However, other motives also propose higher trust among Christians, such as optimism, in respect of both beliefs and experiences, and a higher level of post-materialistic ideas.

¹⁵² 1 John 4:8.

Chapter IV

METHOD

4.1 Setting up the Model

Measuring Trust

Generalized trust is encapsulated in the World Values Survey question “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?”¹⁵³ One can of course discuss whether one question really captures trust. For one single individual the answer is no. An individual’s answer could for instance depend on the daily mood or other factors, but on an aggregate level a pattern will occur which enables a comparison to be made of the level of trust. Studies have shown that the answer to this question is quite stable over time, suggesting that the question is in fact a valid measurement of generalized trust.¹⁵⁴

In addition, several previous studies have utilized this question in their research trying to elicit trust and examine its foundations.¹⁵⁵ According to the decisions made in previous research, it should be feasible to use the generalized trust question as valid measurement of the level of trust.

Measuring Religion and Religiosity

The first notion is that religious affiliation can be measured very easily. At least the question of religious belonging is, from a Western point of view, rather straightforward. For most of the cases, either you belong to a religion or you do not. Still, the previous discussion about religion in different cultural contexts acknowledged that assessing religious belonging actually is more complicated. However, an empirical survey has certain restrictions that forces pragmatic decisions to be made and religious denomination is simply measured by the question ‘What religious denomination do You belong to?’

Does this question correctly assess religious affiliation? As pointed out earlier, Koreans are more eclectic than exclusive in their religious loyalty. Among the Christian groups the differences between adherents and non-adherents are generally distinct, but otherwise it is not unusual for many Koreans to display some kind of allegiance to more than one religion. There is nothing contradictory with one person visiting and praying at Buddhist temples, participating in Confucian ancestor rites and even consulting a shaman and this means that there is no exclusive factor by which Buddhists are identified. Does this propose a problem to our study? No, the reason it that this thesis wishes to compare Christians with non-Christians. When using Buddhist affiliation as a benchmark we are applying it to the typical non-Christian Korean.

¹⁵³ An almost identical question is utilized in the General Social Survey carried out in the USA 1972 and forward.

¹⁵⁴ Uslander 2002, Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁵ E.g. Knack and Keefer, 1997; Alesini and La Ferrara 2002; Zak and Knack, 2001; Gächter, et al, 2004.

Another concern is the discrepancy between religious belonging and actual faith in a religion. This raises the issue of the consequences of a possible correlation between religious belonging and different levels of religiosity. If a correlation exists, what then could be measured is the relationship between religiosity and trust – not religious affiliation and trust. For instance, it is feasible that two religiously devoted persons belonging to different religions have more in common than two individuals belonging to the same religion but are not sharing the same devotion.

How should religiosity be measured? Religion is multi-faceted, telling us that a person can be highly religious in one dimension and still be considered non-religious according to other dimensions. In this case, the specific context severely restricts us. The vast cultural difference between Buddhism and Christianity should require the use of rather universal measurements of religiosity; nonetheless, the data material itself gives the greatest limitation. Only a few variables of religiosity are recorded in the WVS, moreover they are not the ideal choice. The choice of using these variables in the statistical model, can therefore rightfully be discussed. Still, it is preferable to incorporate some kind of religiosity in the model, than to have no measurement at all.

Three variables of religiosity are selected from the WVS.¹⁵⁶ The first one measures the religious service attendancy. The second variable identifies whether the respondent believes that reality consists of clear guidelines about what is good and evil. Finally, less emphasis on money and material possessions may perhaps be regarded as some kind of spirituality.

Other Variables of Interest

Except the variables of trust and religion/religiosity, a proper analysis should include other variables that may interact with trust. Once again, the questions in the WVS dataset constrain our model. We can use some basic socio-economical variables, such as the respondent's sex, education and financial situation.

Furthermore, the question about satisfaction in life can be considered a measurement of optimism. Political activity should theoretically affect trust as it measures the sense of control and the belief that changes can be made. Anti-authoritarian attitudes are captured by asking whether there should be greater respect for authorities or not. Prejudices are measured through a question about different kinds of neighbors. Finally, questions about confidence in different institutions and organizations can be used to measure trust in government.

It is obvious that we lack variables (for instance, age is not recorded for every time period in data material), but the data is hopefully sufficient enough in answering the hypothesis.

4.2 Data

The study uses data from three waves of the World Values Survey conducted in South Korea 1982, 1990 and 2001. A fourth wave, carried out in 1996, also exists but is omitted since several variables of importance are missing in that specific wave. All the waves were carried out by Ewha University using personal face to face interviews. The sampling procedure differs from wave to wave, but are all probability based providing an unbiased representative sample.¹⁵⁷

The final sample data includes 1 509 respondents – 823 Buddhists and 686 Protestants, excluding respondents of all other denominations.

There is of course a question about the validity of the answers – do the questionnaires actually measure the relationship between trust and religion? Other background factors than religion may influence the level trust and even though statistical methods are capable

¹⁵⁶ A closer description of every variable is presented in the Appendix.

¹⁵⁷ A more detailed description of the sampling techniques used can be found at www.worldvaluessurvey.org.

of identifying influencing factors in a data set, every religious context must be considered unique. If a certain relationship is detected in one religious setting the results could vary and even be of the opposite in another setting, despite studying identical religions. This is making trust a contextual concern and as a consequence we are perhaps not able to directly generalize the results into involving religion as whole. Despite some problems, a quantitative approach is still the only method to actually measure a relationship between different properties in a population.

4.3 Interviews and Observations

The purpose of the interviews was not primarily to answer the aim of the study, but to increase the knowledge of various topics relevant for the thesis. Hence, the interviews can be described as being explorative.¹⁵⁸ Three scholars were interviewed: professor Kim Kyoung-Jae at Hanshin University, professor Yu Chai-Shin at Korea University and bhiksuni Yeo Kwang Sunim at Unmunsa. All three were chosen because their backgrounds, being experts in Korean Buddhism, Korean Christianity and to some extent inter-religious dialogue. They were furthermore skilled in English, excluding the need of a translator.

The interviews followed a semi-structural approach, in the sense that four questions that perhaps more properly are described as topics, were asked in each interview without a strict path in the interview. The questions asked where:

- 1. What are the characteristics of Korean Buddhism and Korean Christianity?*
- 2. How do Buddhists and Christians look upon each other?*
- 3. Are there any socio-economical or political differences between Buddhists and Christians?*
- 4. Do you think that there is any difference between Buddhists and Christians regarding trust, for example how individuals trust other people, trust the society or the view on trust in general?*

Each interview took about 30-40 minutes to complete and notes were taken during the interviews. The interviews are not subjects to a comprehensive analysis, instead they are used as a source when discussing the religious context of Korea.

In addition to the interviews, several Presbyterian worship services were attended and several Buddhist temples visited. Several informal conversations took place, for instance with theology students at both Hanshin University and Korea University and in my opinion, I feel that the four weeks stay in Korea gave me a good opportunity to get a glimpse of Korean traditions.

¹⁵⁸ Kvale, 1997, 94.

Chapter V

RESULTS

5.1 Results

In Chapter III, we proposed the hypothesis that Protestants in Korea should display a higher level of trust than non-Protestants. This means in statistical terms, that what we actually want to do is to test the following hypotheses:

H_0 : Protestants have the same level of generalized trust as Buddhists.

H_1 : Protestants have a different level of generalized trust than Buddhists do.¹⁵⁹

To test the null hypothesis, H_0 , stating that the level of trust among Protestants is equal to the level of trust among Buddhists, a simple Chi-square test is performed. According to the results, Protestants do for the entire period have a higher level of trust compared to Buddhists. 36 % of the Protestants answered ‘Most people can be trusted’, while only 30 % of the Buddhists answered the same ($p = 0.021$).¹⁶⁰ This result indicates that we should reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Protestants have a higher level of trust than non-Protestants in South Korea.

However, as we will come to realize, this conclusion is *not* accurate. When assessing the three survey waves (1982, 1990 and 2001) separately it appears that a decline in the generalized trust among Protestants has occurred (as illustrated in Figure II on the following page).

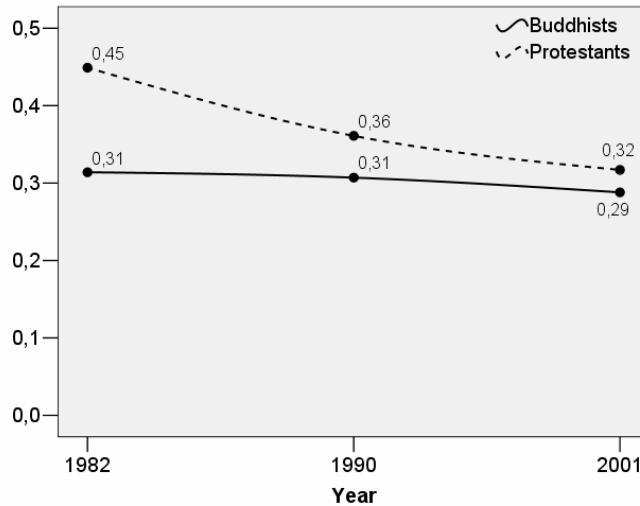
In 1982, 45 % of the Protestants believed that ‘Most people can be trusted’, compared to only 32 % in 2001. Looking at the percentage rates, Protestants have actually approached the Buddhists level of trust, which has remained more or less unchanged (≈ 30 % answering ‘Most people can be trusted’). In fact, the differences in generalized trust between Buddhists and Protestants in 1990 and 2001 are too small to be statistically significant ($p = 0.175$ and $p = 0.469$). Still, in 1982, a difference exists ($p = 0.008$). Altogether, this means that for 1982, we reject the null hypothesis, but for 1990 and 2001, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

A brief analysis would perhaps settle with this and conclude that even though religious affiliation did have an affect on trust, this is not the case anymore. However, the above analysis is far from being complete, since it does not consider other potential influencing factors. Neither does it provide an answer to the evident decline in trust.

¹⁵⁹ The actual test is two-sided because we cannot completely rely on the theoretical arguments.

¹⁶⁰ The Chi-square tests are presented in the Appendix. The p-value is the probability of observing a test statistic equal to or exceeding the value actually observed, assuming that the null hypothesis, H_0 , is true. In other words, if the null hypothesis is true the p-value is the probability against the null hypothesis. The importance of the p-value lies in that it measures how much evidence you have against the null hypothesis, where a small p-value indicates high evidence against H_0 . Normally, the levels of probability used are: $P < 0.01$ very strong evidence against H_0 , $0.01 < P < 0.05$ moderate evidence against H_0 , $0.05 < P < 0.10$ suggestive evidence against H_0 .

Figure II Proportion responding “Most people can be trusted”



Source: World Values Survey 1982, 1990, 2001.

To continue the assessment of data a logistic regression model is constructed with the ability of taking other variables into consideration.¹⁶¹ The trust question is our dependent variable and the other variables possibly affect trust in either direction, where the main results are presented as odds ratios.¹⁶² These ratios tell us how much and in which direction each variable affects trust, where a ratio below one indicates a negative impact on trust. Likewise, a ratio larger than one implies a positive influence.

An Overview of the Determinants of Generalized Trust

Before assessing the impact religious affiliation has on trust, we must examine how well the variables correspond with the earlier discussion on trust.¹⁶³ Since we are dealing with cross-sectional data from different periods, binary variables are added to control for year specific factors. Only significant results are analyzed. Table VI on the following page presents the results which are:

1. *University education* positively influences trust. The variable’s odds ratio 1.362 tells us that the probability of a person with a university education being a generalized truster compared to not being a truster is 36 % times larger than the probability of a person without a university education being a truster compared not being a truster. A more compact and informative way of denoting this is

$$1.362 = \frac{\frac{P_{university}(Trust)}{1 - P_{university}(Trust)}}{\frac{P_{no\ university}(Trust)}{1 - P_{no\ university}(Trust)}} .$$

¹⁶¹ See Agresti, 1997, for an introduction on logistic regression and categorical data analysis. A complete description of the variables included is presented in the Appendix.

¹⁶² Odds ratios may be difficult to understand, but consider this fictitious example: The probability of a Christian man having a divine experience during his life-time is P=0.6. The odds for this event is P(Having a divine experience)/(1-P(Having a divine experience)) → 0.6/(1-0.6) = 1.5. The probability for a Christian woman to have a divine experience is 0.2. Hence, the odds are 0.2/(1-0.2) = 0.25, thus making the odds ratio equal to 1.5/0.25 = 6. Therefore, the probability of a man having a divine experience compared to not having a divine experience is 6 times larger than the corresponding number for a woman. An odds ratio compares if the probability for a certain event is equal for two groups, where a ratio of one indicates that an event is equally likely to happen.

2. *Life Satisfaction* clearly has an effect on trust, although the impact is actually quite small with an odds-ratio of 1.101.
3. People reporting a high *Confidence* in the government and different institutions have more generalized trust, just as expected.
4. *Political Activity* has an expected positive influence on trust. This is according to our previous perception, telling us that a belief that we can make a change in life has a positive influence on trust.
5. A-priori, materialists are suspected to have less trust. The empirical model supports this, since *Post-materialists*, who puts less emphasis on money and material possession, are more likely to be generalized trusters.
6. The variable *Good and Evil* seems to promote generalized trust, but the outcome is somewhat difficult to explain. Fundamentalists, who clearly have a black and white world-view, should have a low level of generalized trust. However, according to our previous assumptions, religious experiences may help to create a sense of security and confidence in the future. That is, people of faith tend to be optimists and this characteristic possibly explains the value of the coefficient.
7. Our year variables indicate that 1982 has significantly higher trust, compared to 2001.

Altogether, it seems that our data works quite well with our theoretical perceptions of how trust functions.

Table VI Determinants of Generalized Trust

| | <i>B</i> | <i>(S.E.)</i> | Exp(B) |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|
| Female | .010 | (.124) | 1.010 |
| Financial Situation | .016 | (.033) | 1.016 |
| University | .309 | (.134) | 1.362* |
| Life Satisfaction | .096 | (.033) | 1.101** |
| Confidence Index | .306 | (.151) | 1.358* |
| Anti-authoritarian | .123 | (.136) | 1.130 |
| Political Activity Index | .266 | (.080) | 1.304** |
| Neighbor | .026 | (.037) | 1.026 |
| Post-materialist | .305 | (.129) | 1.357** |
| Good and Evil | .254 | (.132) | 1.290+ |
| Service Frequency | .084 | (.146) | 1.088 |
| 1982 | .532 | (.203) | 1.701** |
| 1990 | .129 | (.165) | 1.138 |
| Constant | -3.085 | (.455) | .046*** |
| Observations | 1 | 257 | |
| R ² | .065 | | |

Notes: The numbers are the variables' beta-coefficients, standard errors and Exp(B)-coefficients (odds ratios). R² is pseudo-R² (Nagelkerke). ***Significant at 0.1-per cent test level; ** Significant at 1-per cent test level; * Significant at 5-per cent test level; + Significant at 10-per cent test level.

Source: World Values Survey 1982, 1990, 2001.

A Comparison of Buddhist and Protestant Trust Patterns

We have statistically examined the influencing factors behind trust and the results seem sensible, when put side by side to our previous arguments. The next step is to analyze Buddhists and Protestants separately, so what we are able to identify possible differences in the patterns of trust and to discover variables of significance to focus on. Table VII shows the results from two separate regression models, one including only Protestants and one with only Buddhists.

**Table VII Determinants of Generalized Trust –
A Comparison of Protestants and Buddhists**

| | Protestants 1982-2001 | | | Buddhists 1982-2001 | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | <i>B</i> | <i>(S.E.)</i> | Exp(B) | <i>B</i> | <i>(S.E.)</i> | Exp(B) |
| Female | .089 | (.176) | 1.093 | -.056 | (.180) | .945 |
| Financial Situation | .010 | (.047) | 1.010 | .040 | (.048) | 1.041 |
| University | .297 | (.185) | 1.346+ | .146 | (.209) | 1.157 |
| Life Satisfaction | .110 | (.047) | 1.116* | .082 | (.047) | 1.086+ |
| Confidence Index | .068 | (.226) | 1.070 | .473 | (.209) | 1.605* |
| Anti-authoritarian | .294 | (.129) | 1.342 | -.061 | (.195) | .941 |
| Political Activity Index | .119 | (.109) | 1.126 | .453 | (.123) | 1.573*** |
| Neighbor | .000 | (.052) | 1.000 | .046 | (.054) | 1.047 |
| Post-materialist | .301 | (.189) | 1.351+ | .274 | (.183) | 1.315 |
| Good and Evil | .200 | (.184) | 1.221 | .248 | (.198) | 1.282 |
| Service Frequency | -.072 | (.278) | .930 | -.086 | (.213) | .917 |
| 1982 | .765 | (.292) | 2.150** | .273 | (.278) | 1.314 |
| 1990 | .099 | (.217) | 1.104 | .364 | (.297) | 1.439 |
| Constant | -2.329 | (.702) | .097*** | -3.488 | (.639) | .031*** |
| Observations | 601 | | | 656 | | |
| R ² | .07 | | | .074 | | |

Notes: The numbers are the variables' beta-coefficients, standard errors and Exp(B)-coefficients (odds ratios). R² is pseudo-R² (Nagelkerke). ***Significant at 0.1-per cent test level; ** Significant at 1-per cent test level; * Significant at 5-per cent test level; + Significant at 10-per cent test level.

Source: World Values Survey 1982, 1990, 2001.

We begin with the looking at the results from the regression including only Protestants.

1. The odds for a Protestant with *university education* having trust are 34 % higher than the odds for a Protestant without university education showing trust.
2. *Life satisfaction* is significant, but an odds ratio relatively close to one, indicates only a minor difference
3. The odds for a *post-materialistic* Protestant having trust are 35 % higher than the odds for materialistic Protestant having trust. Note, that the significance is weak, which increases the risk of rejecting a true null hypothesis stating that there in fact exists no difference (p = 0.098).
4. In addition, as we noticed before, the level of trust seems to be significantly higher in the year 1982.

The trust pattern for the Buddhists is somewhat different:

1. *Life satisfaction* is significant, also with an odds-ratio close to one.
2. Buddhists having high *confidence* in the government and different institutions have more generalized trust than Buddhists with low confidence.
3. To Buddhists, *Political Activity* has an expected positive influence on trust. This means that Buddhists involved in political activities have higher odds for having trust than Buddhists not involved in political actions.

A summary of the two models would be: *Life satisfaction* is a contributing factor to the level of trust for both Protestants and Buddhists. However, we observe that *university* education influences the level of trust only among Protestants, while the *political activity* and *confidence* in institutions and government shape trust only among Buddhists.

In addition, only among Protestants are *post-materialistic* ideas affecting trust positively.

The Determinants of Generalized Trust among Protestants 1982, 1990 and 2001

Now that we have identified a number of variables of interest in the Protestant sample, the next breakdown would be to analyze how trust has influenced Protestants over time. Consequently, we create three new regression models, one for each year. The results are presented in Table VIII. To make the results more comprehensible to watch, we employ a technique called Backward Conditional Elimination to eliminate insignificant variables.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, only significant results are presented.

Table VIII Determinants of Generalized Trust among Protestants 1982, 1990 and 2001 selected by Backward Conditional Elimination

| | 1982 | | | 1990 | | | 2001 | | |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|----------|---------------|----------------|----------|---------------|---------------|
| | <i>B</i> | <i>(S.E.)</i> | Exp(B) | <i>B</i> | <i>(S.E.)</i> | Exp(B) | <i>B</i> | <i>(S.E.)</i> | Exp(B) |
| Female | | | | | | | | | |
| Financial Situation | | | | | | | | | |
| University | 1.298 | (.412) | 3.664** | | | | | | |
| Life Satisfaction | | | | .132 | (.069) | 1.141* | .128 | (.060) | 1.137* |
| Confidence Index | | | | | | | | | |
| Anti-authoritarian | | | | .705 | (.318) | 2.023* | | | |
| Political Activity Index | | | | | | | | | |
| Neighbor | | | | .168 | (.079) | 1.181* | -.137 | (.077) | .872+ |
| Post-materialist | | | | | | | .496 | (.276) | 1.642+ |
| Dualist | | | | | | | | | |
| Service Frequency | | | | | | | | | |
| Constant | -.573 | (.267) | .564* | -2.376 | (.599) | .093*** | -1.423 | (.537) | .241** |
| Observations | 107 | | | 246 | | | 277 | | |
| R ² | .124 | | | .081 | | | .062 | | |

Notes: The numbers are the variables' beta-coefficients, standard errors and Exp(B)-coefficients (odds ratios). R² is pseudo-R² (Nagelkerke). ***Significant at 0.1-per cent test level; ** Significant at 1-per cent test level; * Significant at 5-per cent test level; + Significant at 10-per cent test level.

Source: World Values Survey 1982, 1990, 2001.

¹⁶⁴The probability for removal is set to 0.10.

Looking at Table VIII it is obvious that the results are not consistent.

To begin with, for 1982 we find that only *university education* is significant. The odds for a university educated Protestant having trust are 3.7 times greater than the odds for Protestant without university education reporting trust. Clearly, university education had a big influence on trust in 1982.

However, for 1990 the situation is different. We notice that *Life satisfaction* and *Anti-authoritarian attitudes* both have the anticipated positive influence on trust, but we can also observe that *neighbor intolerance* has a positive influence on trust, which is contrary to expected. I have no easy explanation for this. The theoretical argument itself could be wrong, or it could just be a matter of coincidence.

Finally, for 2001 we observe that *life satisfaction* still is significant and positive, but that the model does not include anti-authoritarian attitudes anymore. Instead, the model takes in *Post-materialism* as significant variable, with a positive influence on trust. *Neighbor intolerance* is still a part of the model, but now the sign has changed which means that intolerance has a negative impact on trust, which makes sense.

The problem with these results is that we are not able to identify any clear patterns. When we are breaking down the data set into smaller components, the number of observations decreases, which in turn is reflected in lower levels of significance – i.e. patterns gets harder to find the smaller the sample size.

But what can we actually say from this? Actually, nothing much about the decrease itself, but since we know that the largest decrease in trust took place between 1982 and 1990 it would be wise to concentrate on the data from those years. Especially the variable *university education* draws attention to itself, due to its magnitude. Therefore, we perform one final analysis.

Trust and University Education among Protestants and Buddhists 1982 and 1990

The last analysis is actually close to being exactly the same as the one performed in the first part of this chapter, when we began comparing the levels trust. The conclusion was that a difference in trust was present among Buddhists and Protestants in 1982, but not in 1990. But in this section, one important factor is added – we control for education. As we will realize, this highlights vital information. Once again, a logistic regression model is generated and now we include religious affiliation as a binary variable. As seen in Table IX, 1982 and 1990 are also analyzed separately.

Table IX **Determinants of Generalized Trust in 1982 and 1990**

| | 1982 | | | 1990 | | |
|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|
| | <i>B</i> | (<i>S.E.</i>) | Exp(B) | <i>B</i> | (<i>S.E.</i>) | Exp(B) |
| University | .759 | (.267) | 2.136** | .426 | (.182) | 1.531** |
| Protestant | .312 | (.235) | 1.366 | .193 | (.181) | 1.213 |
| Constant | -809 | (.144) | .445*** | -.978 | (.142) | .376*** |
| Observations | 372 | | | 572 | | |
| R ² | .048 | | | .019 | | |

Notes: The numbers are the variables' beta-coefficients, standard errors and Exp(B)-coefficients (odds ratios). R² is pseudo-R² (Nagelkerke). ***Significant at 0.1-per cent test level; ** Significant at 1-per cent test level; * Significant at 5-per cent test level; + Significant at 10-per cent test level.

Source: World Values Survey 1982, 1990.

First of all, higher education has a significant and positive impact on trust both in 1982 and 1990, but secondly and most important – when education is brought in as a factor into the model, the difference between Buddhists and Protestants in 1982 ceases to exist! That is, we can no longer reject the null hypothesis stating that 'Protestants have the same level trust as non-Christian Koreans'. From being a significant difference with a p-value of 0.008 (as was the result in the beginning of this chapter when performing the

univariate analysis), the difference (illustrated by the binary variable *Protestant*) now becomes insignificant ($p = 0.185$).

For all the three waves – 1982, 1990 and 2001 – the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, therefore we wrap up the discussion with saying that that Protestants and Buddhists essentially share the same level of trust.

That is, unless we believe that university education is a unique Protestant trait. When examining the levels of education in the 1982 sample, 38 % of the Protestants report higher education, compared to only 13 % of the Buddhists. However, it seems unlikely that 3 times as many Protestants than Buddhists have a higher education. Instead, what we suspect is a biased sample with too many educated Protestants, compared to the actual population. Naturally, such a bias will undoubtedly affect the results.

As a concluding remark, our conclusion does not contradict the fact that a decline in the overall trust has taken place (as seen in Table III). As a matter of fact, we can suspect a minor decline in trust even in the Buddhist group (despite not being statistically significant) and when put together with all the other observations in the South Korean surveys, a total decline in trust will be visible.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

This thesis has concluded that there is no difference in the level of generalized trust when comparing Buddhists and Protestants. Even though our previously stated hypothesis suggested otherwise, the result still makes sense, since it was argued that not only is the Korean church a divided church, but the main branch of it shares many similar ideological traits with Confucian ideas.

During the course of history, several religions have been introduced to Korea, where they have fused with earlier traditions creating an almost inseparable blending. Christianity is not unique in this matter and despite being different on the surface and distinguishing itself from indigenous and other traditions, the message has been received and interpreted by the Korean people from a Korean cultural point-of-view. This is not necessarily an indication of syncretism; instead elements already existing within Christianity have been especially noticed and emphasized. For many Korean Christians, traits such as piety, loyalty and hard work are fundamental Christian values, but as we know, these traits are old Confucian ideas already deeply rooted into the Korean soil.

Buddhists and Protestants in Korea are perhaps more alike than anticipated. To be Korean is to be a part of minjok, the Korean ethnic group held together with a common language and culture. The introduction of Christianity did not change that fact and even though Christianity brought new ideas into Korea, the Korean mind remains Korean.

In the light of these findings, what might actually be suggested by the thesis is that Christianity in fact is an established part of Korean culture. Despite being regarded a foreign element in the Korean context, the result of this study seems to suggest that as Korean Protestantism has becoming increasingly integral part of Korean society and culture, Korean Protestants demonstrate similar attitudes to trust as do Korean Buddhists.

History has shown that Christianity is not a constant and completely rigid entity. Instead, what we have seen is that Christianity all over the world has been influenced by indigenous religions and cultures – a feature that does not promote the transplantation of fundamental moral values.

6.2 Concluding Remarks

To further establish the findings, a new assessment should be carried out when new data from the next Korean World Values Survey wave is available. I strongly believe that a scrutiny involving more data will straighten out any remaining question marks.

The thesis has also shown the importance of having a sound methodological approach. What at a first glance seemed to be an interesting finding proved false and if we had settled with the first step, a wrong conclusion would have resulted.

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APPENDIX

Chi-Square Test for Difference in Generalized Trust 1982-2001

Generally speaking, would you say
that most people can be trusted or that you need
to be very careful in dealing with people?

| Year | Religious denomination | Most people can be trusted | Need to be very careful | Total | Pearson χ^2 p-value |
|-------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1982 | Buddhists | 83 (31.4 %) | 181 (68.6 %) | 264 (100 %) | 0.008** |
| | Protestants | 75 (44.9 %) | 61 (55.1 %) | 136 (100 %) | |
| 1990 | Buddhists | 95 (30.7 %) | 214 (69.3 %) | 309 (100 %) | 0.175 |
| | Protestants | 96 (36.1 %) | 170 (63.9 %) | 266 (100 %) | |
| 2001 | Buddhists | 72 (28.8 %) | 178 (71.2 %) | 250 (100 %) | 0.469 |
| | Protestants | 90 (31.7 %) | 194 (68.3 %) | 284 (100 %) | |
| Total | Buddhists | 250 (30.4 %) | 573 (69.6 %) | 823 (100 %) | 0.021* |
| | Protestants | 247 (36.0 %) | 439 (64.0 %) | 686 (100 %) | |
| | Total | 497 (32.9 %) | 1012 (67.1 %) | 1509 (100 %) | |

Regression Variables

| Variable | Question | Code | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|------|------|
| Trust | Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people? | 1=Most people can be trusted 0=Need to be very careful | 0.33 | 0.47 |
| Female | Sex of respondent | 1=Female 0=Man | 0.54 | 0.50 |
| University education* | What is the highest educational level that you have attained? | 1=University 1=20 years and above* 0=Other | 0.35 | 0.48 |
| Satisfaction with financial situation | How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household? If "1" means you are completely dissatisfied on this scale, and "10" means you are completely satisfied, where would you put your satisfaction with your household's financial situation? | Integers 1-10 | 5.6 | 2.20 |
| Confidence Index | I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence (4), quite a lot of (3) confidence, not very much confidence (2) or none at all (1)? | Arithmetic mean of confidence in Churches (or Religious authorities), Armed forces, The Press, Labor Unions, The Police, Parliament, The Civil Services, Major Companies | 2.4 | 0.48 |
| Neighbor Index | On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbor | Sum of number of groups mentioned. (People with a criminal record, People of a different race, Heavy drinkers, Emotionally unstable people, Muslims, Immigrants/foreign workers) | 2.6 | 1.90 |
| Political Activity Index | Now I'd like you to look at this card. I'm going to read out some different forms of political action that people can take, and I'd like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never, under any circumstances, do it. | Sum of number of political activities done. (Signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful demonstrations occupying buildings or factories) | 0.56 | 0.77 |
| Post-materialist | I'm going to read out a list of various changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind? Less emphasis on money and material possessions | 1=Good thing 0=Other | 0.61 | 0.49 |
| Life Satisfaction | All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life these days as a whole? | Integers 1-10 0 = Dissatisfied and 10 = Satisfied | 6.34 | 2.35 |
| Anti-authoritarian attitudes | I'm going to read out a list of various changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind? Greater respect for authority. | 1= Bad thing 0 = Other | 0.64 | 0.48 |
| Good and evil | Here are two statements which people sometimes make when discussing good and evil. Which one comes closest to your own point of view? A. There are absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. These always apply to everyone, whatever the circumstances. B. There can never be absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. What is good and evil depends entirely upon the circumstances at the time. | 1=Agree with statement A 0=Agree with statement B or disagree with both | 0.36 | 0.48 |
| Attending services | Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days? | 1=Once a month or more 0=More seldom | 0.67 | 0.46 |
| Protestant | Do you belong to a religious denomination? Which one? | 1=Protestant 0=Buddhist | 0.45 | 0.50 |

*The 1982 had the following question regarding education: 'At what age did you (or will you) complete your full time education, either at school or at an institution of higher education?'. It is plausible that students that had completed education that are 20 years and above have attended university.