

Social Capital in Thailand: Unraveling the Myths of Rural-Urban Divide

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I . Introduction

Although the concept of social capital has been firmly established in the international academic community for about two decades since the seminal work of Robert Putnam, its importation onto Thai soil is relatively new and happened under quite peculiar circumstances. Ironically, the key actors who helped make this concept popular were not academic scholars but practitioners from the World Bank in collaboration with the Thai government that sought support from international actors to help rescue its bankrupt economy as a result of the 1997 financial crisis (Jumnianpol, 2007). Since then, the concept has taken firm root in Thai development policy circles and has been subject to a process of localization into a Thai context. It has been deployed along with the dominant local development discourses, especially the sufficiency economy, in the 9th and 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan. The official endorsement, in turn, affects the fortune of social capital studies in Thailand in that it sets the tone of the so-called orthodox study of social capital. Most studies in this tradition are policy-oriented seeking to explore the benign effects and benefits of social capital to socio-economic and political development such as crime prevention, resources management, public health, community strengthening and democratic culture.

The discourse of social capital has not only been promoted by international actors together with government agencies, but has also resonated with NGOs who have a romantic vision of the past rural community in harmony and seek to rebuild and strengthen community ties that have been steadily eroded as a result of the modernization process (Srisupan, 2007). Even

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though these actors seem to focus on different aspects of social capital that consequently led to a polarized utility of the concept (Iinuma, 2010), they still share a common orientation in emphasizing the benefits of social capital to development. Apart from orthodox study, recent years have seen a growing numbers of revisionist scholars who aim to study social capital from different angles such as power relations, interaction between existing and newly promoted social capital, and social capital at time of crisis.

This article shares the spirit of revisionists and aims to unravel some myths associated with social capital and rural-urban divide by using the 2013 social capital survey data which covers two provinces, namely Chonburi and Nonthaburi. Such a geographical imaginary has arguably been a hidden assumption of modernity. It has long been argued that the modernization process is urban-based and discriminates against rural areas (Lipton, 1977; Glassman, 2010). As we will show in the first part of the paper, the myth of the rural-urban dichotomy has extensive implications not just in the field of development studies or geography but also in other fields or sub-fields such as democratization studies and social capital studies. After examining conventional myths and claims regarding rural-urban divide and social capital, the second section offers a cursory overview of the present study area and survey methodology. Then, in section 3, we present the results of our empirical data followed by reflections and implications of the findings on the myths. Finally, the paper suggests some theoretical and empirical implications for a future research agenda on social capital studies.

II . Conventional myths of rural-urban divide and social capital

The conventional myths of rural-urban divide are deeply rooted and can be traced back to the earliest works of classical sociologists. In order to explain the changing social fabric in Western societies as a result of the modernization process, many classical sociologists systematically attempted to make binary oppositions between primitive or traditional and modern society, such as Tonnies' concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, and Durkheim's distinction between mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. Although such a twofold ideal type methodology does not directly lead to myth-building, it underlies the basic or hidden assumptions behind works of the post-war development theorists that subsequently became a development policy guideline for the developing world where the course of modernization was mechanically set into a sequence of stages (traditional, transitional and modern). In order to climb up the development ladder, governments in developing countries were guided to adopt unbalanced growth strategies in which scarce resources were diverted from the traditional sector - which is characterized by low skills and low productivity and predominantly in rural area - into the modern sectors of urban centers - which is more commercialized, and technologically and structurally developed. The traditional/modern dichotomy was not limited only to development studies; it also expanded into other areas of social sciences, such as political and social development. Economic development of the urban centers was thought to stimulate social

mobilization (transforming rural farmers into urban workers or middle class), and structural differentiation of social life that in turn gave rise to the final stage of political development, namely democracy (Martinelli, 2005).

In the case of postwar Thailand, the idea of developmentalism has been and perhaps still is the dominant ideology among policymakers, technocrats and academics. It is evident that the idea was translated into development policies that consequently led to widened spatial inequalities between urban and rural area (Dixon, 1999; Glassman, 2010). It also generates many popular tales about the divide and differences between these two areas. One of classic stories is probably "a tale of two democracies" narrated by a prominent Thai political scientist, Anek Laothamatas (1996). In Anek's story line, Thailand's two democracies are composed of two social classes with conflicting perceptions of democracy: the Bangkok or urban middle-class, influenced by Western thought, view democracy as a form of legitimate rule by knowledgeable and public-regarding people; while the rural people value democracy not as an ideal but a mechanism to draw parochial and personal benefits (Laothamatas, 1996). Apart from the mainstream imaginary that held an apparently urban bias, there was an attempt to develop a counter discourse to challenge the traditional claim by depicting rural village as sources of positive social values that were being eroded in the governments' endeavor to become modernized (see for example Nartsupha, 1999). Despite the emergence of the counter claim to challenge the myth of urban bias, both claims were still trapped in the rural-urban dichotomy logic.

The logic of binary opposition also exists in the literature of social capital, and surprisingly it also fits in to the distinction between rural and urban. Even though there are various twofold typologies of social capital, for instances thick vs. thin, inward-looking vs. outward-looking, and formal vs. informal (Putnam and Goss, 2002), the most common and popular among them seems to be concepts of bonding and bridging social capital. The former is associated with a homogeneous social network of people with the same backgrounds (ethnicity, social class, age and so on), whereas the latter is a network of people with different backgrounds crosscutting social class or cleavages. The two concepts differ not only in the form and structure of networks; the argument has also been further made that they generate different outcomes. While bonding social capital is often thought to entail particularized trust and specific norms of reciprocity that may possibly lead to negative consequences of social capital (e.g., corruption, clientelism, or organized crime), bridging social capital engenders social trust and generalized norms of reciprocity which is expected to have positive externalities (e.g., higher growth, safer communities, or better governing performance) (Putnam, 2000; van Deth and Zmerli, 2010).

In connection with the rural-urban distinction, the difference between these two areas regarding the nature of interpersonal relationship and social networks, which are key elements of social capital, have long been debated. In rural areas, relationships are said to be predominantly embedded in networks of binding ties, whereas those of urban areas are thought to become more impersonal and transitory (See Hofferth and Iceland, 1998). According to

Georg Simmel (1903 cited in Lewandowski and Streich, 2012), the force of modernization opens opportunities for individuals to unchain from primary binding ties and seek instead the secondary networks of relation to other people from different backgrounds. As urban areas are more susceptible to the force of modernization than rural areas, it appears that *rural people may have higher levels of bonding social capital than that of urban people while urban people may have denser bridging social capital than that of rural people and therefore have higher levels of social trust.*

In essence, it appears that the longstanding geographical imaginary of rural-urban divide correspondingly matches up with the conventional distinction between bonding-bridging social capital. Taken together, the new combination of binary opposition is composed of a higher degree of bonding social capital in rural areas that may be associated with the dark side of social capital on the one side, and rich bridging social capital in urban areas which is often depicted as the bright side of social capital on the other side. The recent study by William Callahan (2005) about social capital and corruption in Thailand presents apparent evidence that illustrates the bias of urban elites to networks of social capital in rural areas that was thought to be a major source of rampant vote buying and corruption.

III. The present study

The present study is based on surveys conducted during January-February 2013 in Panusnikom, Chonburi (N=400) and Bangkruai, Nonthaburi (N=400) by researchers from Burapha University and Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute respectively. Panusnikom district has a population of 120,683 (2011) and is divided into one municipality and nineteen local administrative organizations. Although Panusnikom is situated as a part of the Eastern Seaboard Industrial area, the district is composed of different geographical landscapes from agricultural, peri-urban to commercial and industrial areas. With a wide variation in socio-economic landscape, inhabitants in the district included local residents (Thai, Chinese-Thai and Lao-Thai ethnics) and economic immigrants who come to work in the industrial estate.

Bangkruai district is a part of the Bangkok Extended Metropolitan Region (Bangkok EMR) covering an area of 57 sq.km, with a population of 112,408 in 2011. It consists of two municipalities and seven local administrative organizations. The first image of Bangkruai district is that of an urbanized wave of modern infrastructure and housing development projects infiltrating or creeping into green areas of paddy fields and tropical fruit gardens. As a district adjacent to Bangkok, a number of people, including new inhabitants, decide to live in a relatively tranquil area of Bangkruai and work in the busy metropolis. It should be noted that almost all areas of Bangkruai experienced grave damage from the great flood during the last quarter of 2011. During the disaster, this area was also flooded with volunteer activities and donations from all over Thailand, especially those who were not ravaged by flood.

Four hundred rural households from outside municipalities and four hundred urban

households from within municipal areas were selected from Panusnikom and Bangkruai by using proportion technique. About 60 percent of the respondents from both rural and urban area are females. The mean age of respondents is 45.6 years. Most of them have 4 family members (around 85 percent) and about the same proportion having two or three generations in a family. The vast majority of respondent lives in their own house (78.4 percent in rural area; 62.7 percent in urban area) and stay in community for quite a long time (on average 30 years). All categories of respondents have an annual income level above the national average (\$10,474 for urban, \$8,201 for rural, \$10,320 for Bangkruai, \$7,596 for Panusnikom and about \$5,000 for national GDP per capita). A large number of respondents have their own business (about 40 percent for rural and 27 percent for urban), while a relatively small number work in the agricultural sector (15 percent for rural and 4 percent for urban). Regarding educational background, around 90 percent of respondents completed at least primary level, while one quarter of all respondents have undergraduate or post-graduate level education (27 percent for urban and 15 percent for rural).

Essentially, the socio-economic background of the cases reveals both similarities and differences between rural and urban areas that in turn upholds as well as upends some aspects of the myth of the divide. With regard to level of income and education in which the differences between the two areas are most noticeable, the gaps between the two areas are not as extensive as previously imagined. Another striking finding is the major occupations of the respondents. What is intriguing in this regard is not the difference between rural and urban, but the dynamism of the rural landscape. Quite the contrary to the so-called 'agrarian myth' that views rural communities in a romantic way as consisting of small scale subsistence farming (See Dayley, 2011), this preliminary finding supports the 'agrarian transformation' thesis of change in patterns of land use, employment and labor practices (See Rigg, Salamanca and Parnwell, 2012). All of these seem to suggest that the socio-economic condition of the divide between rural and urban has been narrowed and complicated. The standard criteria in classifying rural and urban such as basic infrastructure, living condition or even the possession of symbolic goods such as car, mobile phone, personal computer etc. are seemingly obsolete and no longer applicable to the contemporary rural social landscape.

With regard to measurement, nine indicators of social capital are categorized around three concepts: bonding social capital; bridging social capital; and social trust. For bonding social capital, four indicators are used, in which three focus on the individual's informal networks with relatives, friends and neighbors (network 1, network 2 and network 3 respectively) and another one on help received from relatives, friends and neighbors. As for proxies to measure bridging social capital, there are four indicators: one focusing on participation in voluntary organizations (social 1), two on perceptions about voluntary activities in communities (social 2, social 3), and one on the likelihood to join voluntary activities in the future (social 4). The last indicator is social trust (trust 1) where respondents were asked "Generally, how many people can be trusted?" with the options of answers: 1) most people 2) a lot of people 3) some people 4) a few people 5) no one. Note that most indicators are five-point response options without a "don't know"

choice. Quantitative data from surveys are supplemented with qualitative techniques of focus group and in-depth interviews.

Because of the limitation in sampling and design, it must be accepted that the present study could not claim to provide definite findings. It is, however, probably fair to say that empirical data from this study is still beneficial in examining conventional myths and claims on rural-urban divide and social capital in Thailand.

IV. Unraveling Myths: The Empirics

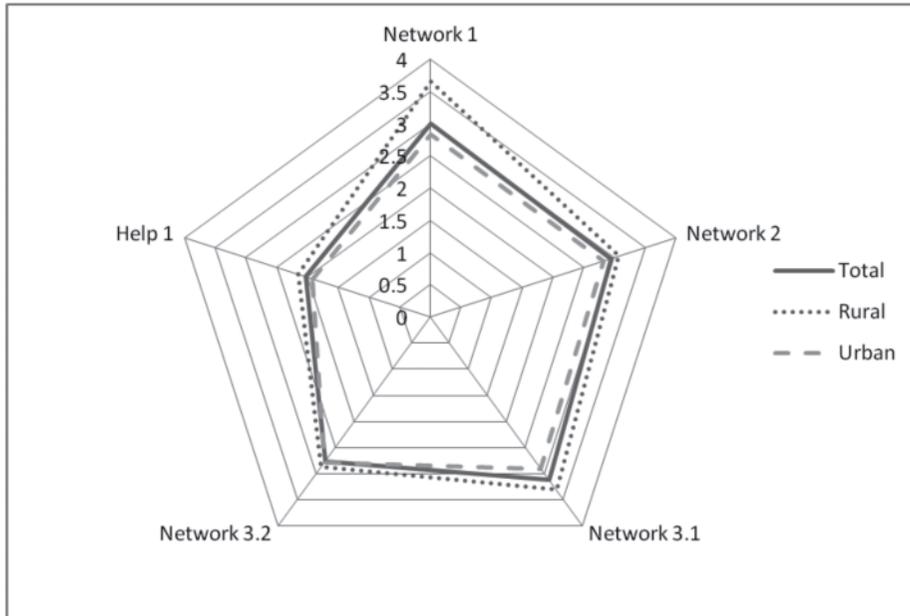
4.1 Bonding social capital

Bonding social capital is measured according to the four indicators previously stated. The first three indicators reveal the degree of network density, one of the key structural aspects of bonding social capital. Respondents were asked how frequently they meet or have relations with relatives (network 1), friends and acquaintances (network 2) and neighbors (network 3). As for relationship with neighbors, a supplement indicator of depth of relationship is added. The final indicators in this table - help received from relatives, friends and neighbors (help 1) - is aimed to show the individual feature of social capital. The survey shows the substantial differences between the two areas (see Table 1 and Figure 1). The rural area has higher mean scores in all indicators. In some indicators, such as frequency of meeting with relatives and neighbors, the gap is significantly palpable. Judged from these indicators, it can be read that rural areas have denser primary networks than urban areas and these networks have proved to be reliable sources of return from social capital. By and large, the findings seem to uphold the conventional myth that *rural people have higher levels of bonding social capital than urban people*.

Table 1 Bonding social capital indicators (mean)

	Variables	Total	Rural	Urban
Network 1	Frequency of meeting with relatives	3.00	3.66	2.84
Network 2	Frequency of meeting with friends and acquaintances	2.94	3.06	2.82
Network 3.1	Relationship with neighborhood	3.12	3.32	2.91
Network 3.2	Depth of relationship with neighborhood	2.77	2.88	2.78
Help 1	Received help from relatives, friends and neighbors	2.03	2.15	1.92

Figure 1 Radius of bonding social capital



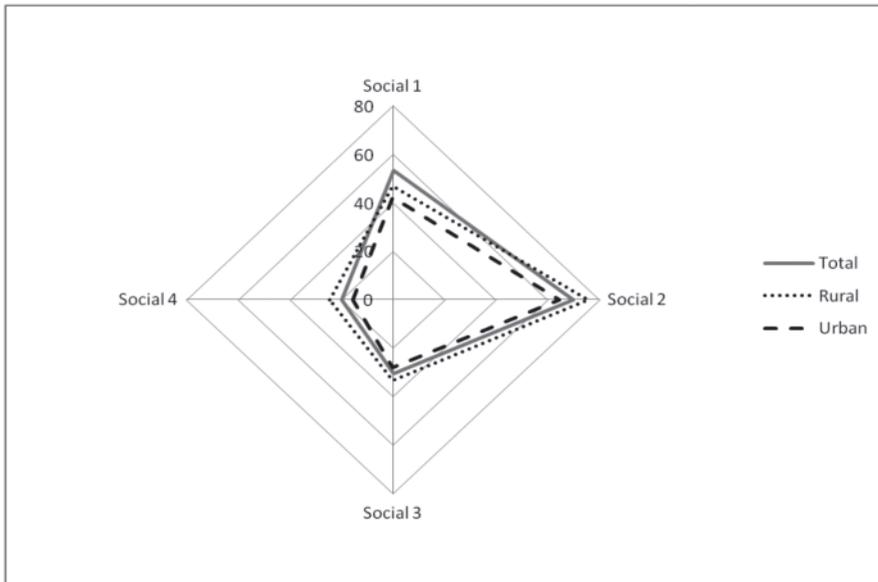
4.2 Bridging social capital

Although the finding from bonding social capital indicators does not bust the myth about rural-urban divide, the study of bridging social capital seems to spell the demise of the myth. Four components of bridging social capital are of special focus in this study: one on the actual participation in voluntary organization/activities, two on assessment of density and productivity of volunteer activities in communities, and a final one on the future likelihood to join volunteer activities (See Table 2). Apart from these four indicators, two additional indicators regarding types of voluntary organizations and types of volunteer activities are included (See Table 3).

Table 2 Bridging social capital indicators (percent)

	Variables	Total	Rural	Urban
Social 1	Participates in voluntary organization/activities	53.5	46.8	42.3
Social 2	Thinks that activities in community are very active or having some degree of activities	69.9	75.6	64.2
Social 3	Thinks that volunteer activities have been productive	30.6	33.2	28.0
Social 4	Would join volunteer activities in the future	20.0	24.5	15.5

Figure 2 Radius of bridging social capital



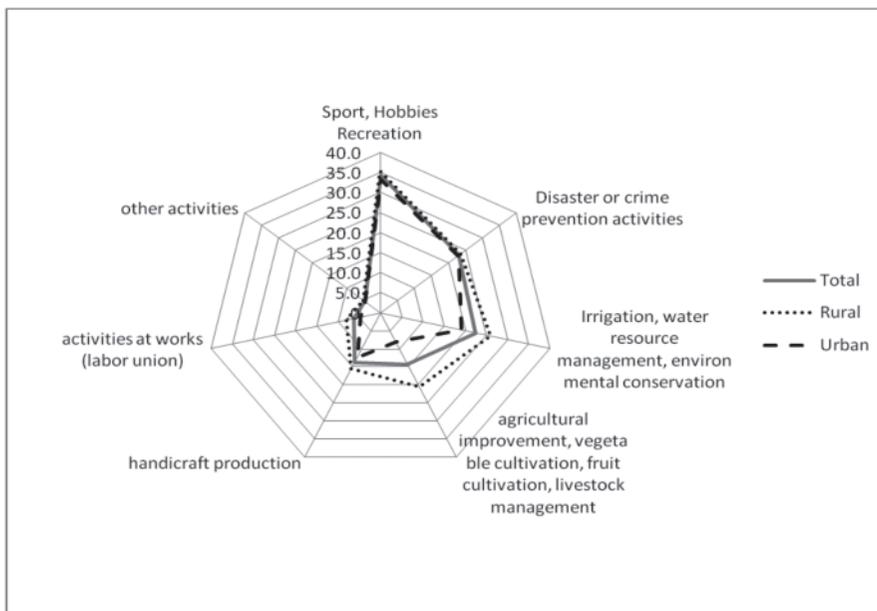
A number of interesting findings are revealed in the measurement of bridging social capital. First and foremost, the rural people fare better than urban people by all metrics: they participated more, they were more inclined to think that voluntary activities were active and productive, and more rural people would join those activities in the future than urban people. Secondly, in relation to the types of volunteer activities, people from the two areas participated in similar activities with only two striking differences, namely environmental/resources management and conservation, and agricultural related activities, in both of which rural people expressed stronger interests than urban people. Lastly, the highest percentage of volunteer activities that respondents chose to participate in is initiated by or closely linked with local administrative organizations. The implication of this finding will be further discussed in the next section.

In a nutshell, the findings in this part appear to indicate that *rural people have a higher degree of bridging social capital than urban people* and the myth has been busted as a consequence.

Table 3 Percentage of volunteer activities (selected items)

Types of volunteer activities (multiple responses)	Percentage		
	Overall	Rural	Urban
- sport, hobbies, recreation	29.40	28.80	30.00
- disaster or crime prevention	16.00	16.00	16.00
- resources / environmental management and conservation	14.10	18.00	10.30
- agricultural improvements, livestock management			
- health voluntary improvement	8.25	13.80	2.80
- religious activities	1.80	1.80	1.80
- general community activities	0.10	0.30	0.00
- traditional activities	2.10	2.50	1.80
	3.80	2.80	4.80
Types of organization (that initiate volunteer activities)			
- local administrative organization	23.8	24.30	23.10
- community organization	7.20	6.30	8.00
- health organization	4.30	5.10	3.50
- religious organization	1.90	2.30	1.50
- agricultural agencies	0.40	0.80	0.00
- government agencies	0.90	1.00	0.80

Figure 3 Type of voluntary activities



4.3 Social trust

As noted earlier, social trust is gauged by a five-point response option. The upside of this style of questionnaire is that it can fill the gap of questionnaire options that are of too simple dichotomy (most people can be trusted / you can't be too careful in dealing with people) and it gives respondents more choices (See Norris, 2002). The possible downside of this, however, is that unmindful or busy respondents may simply opt for the 'middle option'.

The result of the survey possibly reflects the aforementioned observation. Approximately half of respondents (48.60% overall) chose the middle option of "some people can be trusted". And noticeably, this choice was the most different between rural (43.40%) and urban (53.90%). If we leave this 'middle option' aside and analyze along the dichotomy, the picture of social trust between the two areas markedly differs in contrast to simply looking at the mean scores. Seen from this perspective, rural people are situated at both ends of the social trust spectrum. They are inclined to trust most people and at the same time trust to no one to a higher degree than urban people. If one wants to proceed with further analysis, more information that allows a distinction among different groups of people such as relatives, friends, neighbors, strangers or even institutional actors (e.g., parliament, police, army or court) would be of necessary.

On the whole, data on the mean score of the level of trust suggest that *urban people (mean = 2.22) have slightly higher level of social trust than rural people (mean = 2.03)*.

Table 4 Level of social trust

	Overall	Rural	Urban	Bangkruai	Panusnikom
Most people can be trusted	10.7	12.3	9.0	14.3	7.0
A lot of people can be trusted	21.6	20.6	22.6	18.8	24.3
Some people can be trusted	48.6	43.4	53.9	55.9	41.4
A few people can be trusted	7.9	5.8	10.0	7.0	8.8
No one can be trusted	11.3	18.0	4.5	4.0	18.5
Mean	2.12	2.03	2.22	2.32	1.92

V. Unraveling myths: Reflections

The first reflection about the study is that these quantitative statistics hide as much as they reveal. On the revealing side, findings from statistics help us examine various myths. On the one hand, the finding on bonding social capital supports the traditional myth of rural-urban divide on the bonding ties of network density. On the other hand, the finding on bridging social capital turns the myth on its head. It reverses the claim that urban people have higher levels of bridging

social capital. Evidences show that it is the rural people that have higher volunteering spirits than urban people. Combining these two findings, *this article contends that the bonding and bridging are not mutually exclusive and not necessarily dichotomous*. People can and do invest in different kinds of social capital at the same time. Quite contrary to logic of economic capital, investing in one kind of social capital does not exhaust the peoples' capacity to invest in other forms of social capital.

On the hidden side, however, statistics engender a mysterious puzzle about the correlation between structural and cultural dimensions of social capital. While the former aspect is usually referred to as being a member within a social network, formal or informal, the latter is generally operationalized as social trust. It is almost axiomatic in social capital studies that different types of structural social capital are thought to associate with different types of social trust. As mentioned above, bonding social capital is expected to generate particularized trust and bridging social capital is linked with generalized trust. Extending this logic, rural people that have denser structural social capital in both its bonding and bridging forms should subsequently have more robust social trust. But this is not the case. It is the urban people that record higher social trust. This deviation deserves attention and further explanation.

This insight leads to the second reflection that gaps in quantitative statistics can be partly filled by qualitative data. One possible gateway to the answer lies in the social context of the cases being studied. As indicated in the case study section, Bangkruai district is an area that experienced a 'double flood'; first by the great natural flood of 2011, and thereafter by the humane flood of volunteering activities. These events might have, more or less, boosted volunteering spirits and level of social trust in this area. In comparison, therefore, whilst the Panusnikom area (mean = 1.92) was safe from that natural disaster, the Bangkruai area was not and has a significantly higher degree of social trust (mean = 2.32). As such, Bangkruai area may be considered as a 'special', if not 'deviant,' case that may affect the overall score of social trust.

The other key to the answer resides in the source of social capital and the missing (link of) 'linking social capital'. In the Thai context, (bridging) social capital seems to be embedded in and closely linked to political institutions, instead of emerging solely from civil society (see the debate about sources of social capital in Stolle, 2003). Almost all voluntary organizations that respondents chose to participate in (See Table 3) are in some way linked with state organs. For instances, numerous health, women, elder and agricultural organizations were set up as a result of receiving financial support from public organizations or public funds such as the Health Promotion Organization, Women Empowerment Fund and Elder Development Fund. Among the voluntary organizations organized by local administrative organizations, some are not initiated by local initiatives. Instead, they were created by national governments that have pursued so-called "populist policies," such as the village fund and OTOP program (one sub-district, one product program).

In retrospect, according to Amara Pongsapich (1993), Thailand's nonprofit sector has long been under the influence of the state. From the earlier times, religious organizations were the

dominant form of non-profit sector. Entering the modern era, other forms of the non-profit sector arose such as ethnic minority associations and non-government organizations. During the cold war era, the Thai government viewed the rise of these new forms of non-profit sector with suspicion. In the post-cold war world, the state increasingly recognized the non-profit sector as a partner rather than a competitor for promoting rural development. Not only did the state try to cooperate with NGOs, but it also built civil society organizations itself by using state apparatus, such as the Ministry of Interior and the National Economic and Social Development Board (Jumnianpol, 2001). This state endeavour probably constituted the first phase of so-called state-directed social capital. In the wake of the 1997 economic crisis, Thai social capital seemingly entered a second phase of state-directed social capital. At this time, the Thai state had international partners, including the World Bank, UNDP and Japanese government, giving financial support for setting up a Social Investment Fund and creating a Community Empowerment for Response to Crisis Action Plan (CERCAP) (Jumnianpol, 2001; Kittiwat, 2007).

Looking back over a long history of Thai social capital, it seems not to be premature to conclude that social capital in Thailand has been and still is deeply embedded and closely linked with political institutions. It may be also worth noting that peoples participation in state-directed voluntary organizations are quite different from voluntary organizations in the West. A large number of people are mobilized to join activities or even to be members of these organizations. In certain types of organizations, such as religious organizations, people tend to participate voluntarily without membership. On this basis, the missing 'linking social capital' appears to be rediscovered and brought back into the analysis. The intersection between bonding, bridging and linking social capital in the Thai context thus may be attributable to a deviation from conventional theory of social capital and social trust. Indeed, state intervention to direct or support voluntary organizations can help build the direct channel linking civil society and political society if it creates inclusive organizations encompassing people across diverse social cleavages, and if it allows for a volunteering spirit and horizontal relationships to prosper. Yet, the structure and operation of state-directed voluntary organizations in Thailand are for most part identical to the bureaucratic system (Jumnianpol, 2001). They usually transplant administrative cultures, as well as hierarchical and patronage relations, into voluntary organizations. Quite often, the local voluntary organizations are captured by local elites who have strong bonding ties in the area and at the same time have linking access to larger networks outside the community (Beard and Phakphian, 2012). As a consequence, the connection between different types of social capital in Thailand often ends up with the reproduction of unequal power relation that becomes a source of citizens' dissatisfaction of state apparatus and lower levels of social trust.

It is important to note that the above discussion of the state's intervention into social capital institutions does not mean to negate or dismiss the argument of societal sources of social capital. This article recognizes that social capital primarily resides in the realm of community and civil society. Even amidst the challenges of modernization or state intervention that is

seemingly detrimental to stocks of social capital, social capital institutions have the capacity to withstand, learn and adapt. There is ample evidence from fieldwork studies by Michael Parnwell (2012) about the counter force of relocalisation in Thailand that helps reinvigorate once 'latent' social capital into 'renascent social capital'.

VI. Conclusion and Implications

This article began with various myths but ends up with a mysterious puzzle. In the process of unraveling myths, however, we can draw several interesting observations and theoretical implications for a future research agenda.

First, this study reveals several limitations of the dualism worldview. The binary distinctions of rural-urban and bonding-bridging social capital are the cases in point. As shown in this study, the rural-urban divide seems to be more apparent than real. The socio-economic landscape of these two areas is not as significantly different as previously thought. The rural economy is no longer predominantly agrarian or in a state of 'backwardness.' Rural people have multiple occupations and work on the farm not as subsistence farmers but as part-time farmers or even agricultural entrepreneurs. As the force of urbanization has increasingly infiltrated into rural settlements, the rural scenery has panoramically changed. Basically, the trend of rural transformation in our cases study points in the same direction as other studies in the Southeast Asian region (See also De Koninck, Rigg and Vandergeest, 2012). All of these seem to confirm Jonathan Rigg's previous observation that the divide between rural and urban is gradually disappearing (Rigg, 1997).

Although dualism may offer researchers an analytical convenience, it may cause distortions and value (mis)judgments. The longstanding myth of rural-urban divide with the urban bias state of mind in Thailand has been translated into unbalanced economic growth policies that thereby caused an unequal distribution of wealth and probably deepened feeling of relative deprivation among rural people. This may provide structural or psychological conditions for rural people to mobilize and gather into various waves of social and political movements from the Assembly of the Poor (See Missingham, 2002; Pintobtang, 1998) to the Red Shirt Movement (See for example Charoensin-o-larn, 2013; Pintobtang, 2011; Thabchumpon and McCargo, 2011). In addition, those who are still stuck into the rural-urban polarized imaginary, tend to view rural people in a romantic way as subsistence farmers, poor villagers and grass-root communities. This bi-polar worldview often camouflages the complex realities of the rural-urban relationship in a globalized world. New wave of scholars in development studies, geography and rural as well as urban sociology have proposed to transcend the rural-urban dichotomy by looking at the dynamic interaction between the two instead (See for example Agergaard, Fold and Gough, 2010; Lynch, 2005).

With regard to the binary opposition in social capital studies, where the myth of divide has been in a relatively formative stage, more empirical researches, be they qualitative,

quantitative or mixed methods, are needed to uncover the multi or complex dimensions of social capital, especially the interaction among different types of social capital (e.g., bonding, bridging and linking) and the effects thereof. The indefinite findings in this study that challenges the conventional claim about a correlation between density of (bonding or bridging) social capital and the level of social trust demonstrates that there is a lot more to discover.

Second, cross-disciplinary research on social capital is not only viable but can also provide powerful conceptual tools. Indeed, the invention and renaissance of the term and concept of 'social capital' aims at overcoming the artificial demarcation among disciplines in social sciences, especially between economics and non-economics (Fine, 2001). Current research trends in social capital have illustrated academic endeavors to reinvigorate the old spirit. The recent announcement of 'the troika of social capital' or the combination or at least coordination among disciplines of sociology, political science and economics in social capital studies (Svendsen and Svendsen, 2009) and the call for development of 'composite indicators of degree of civil society' that combines triple dimensions of politics, culture and economy (Harada, 2011) are among the examples.

Last, but not least, social capital studies do also need to transcend methodological dichotomies. Although each research methodology - qualitative and quantitative - do have distinct research cultures, they are not necessarily in conflict with each other and cross-cultural communication is feasible (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012). As we have shown in this article, qualitative methods can be aptly used to supplement the statistics data. The latter can provide the broader picture of the phenomena, while the former can help us look deeper beyond the surface.

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