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A Spiritual Development: Islam, Volunteerism and
International Development in the Hunza Valley, Northern Pakistan

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

by

Katherine Joanne Ledbetter Miller

Committee in charge:

Professor Rupert Stasch, Chair
Professor Joel Robbins, Co-Chair
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Professor Richard Biernacki
Professor Kathryn Woolard

2015

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Co-Chair

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2015

DEDICATION

For my father and mother.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKCSP	Aga Khan Cultural Services, Pakistan
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKES	Aga Khan Education Services
AKESP	Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan
AKHS	Aga Khan Health Services
AKTC	Aga Khan Trust for Culture
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
ATMS	Altit Town Management Society
DJ	Diamond Jubilee
FMU	Field Management Unit
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technology for Development
ITREB	Isma'ili Tariqah and Religious Education Board
KADO	Karakoram Area Development Organization
KKH	Karakoram Highway
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
PPI	Productive Physical Infrastructure
TMS	Town Management Society
VO	Village Organization
WASEP	Water and Sanitation Extension Programme
WO	Women's Organization

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NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Words in languages other than English appearing in this text are primarily in Burushaski (Bu.) or Urdu (U.). Terms of religious (either specifically Isma'ili or generally Islamic) significance also appear throughout the text; these words and phrases are of Arabic and/or Persian origin and are commonly used in both Burushaski and Urdu speech. I have left them unattributed.

For Burushaski terms, I have followed the orthography used by Stephen Willson in *Basic Burushaski Vocabulary* (1999) with very few exceptions.

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A version of the material in Chapter Five will appear as “Schooling Virtue: Education for ‘Spiritual Development’ in Northern Pakistan,” in the forthcoming volume *Religion and Modernity in the Himalaya*, Megan Adamson Sijapati and Jessica Vantine Berkenholtz, eds., Routledge, 2015. The dissertation author was the primary researcher and author of this paper.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Spiritual Development: Islam, Volunteerism and
International Development in the Hunza Valley, Northern Pakistan

by

Katherine Joanne Ledbetter Miller

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, San Diego, 2015

Professor Rupert Stasch, Chair
Professor Joel Robbins, Co-Chair

In this dissertation I approach international development ethnographically as an ongoing fact of life for its subjects in the Hunza Valley of Northern Pakistan. Development in this context is not only a top-down project or set of institutions but as an arena for individual and collective critical and ethical engagement with a set of material possibilities and moral ideals. Through ethnographic examinations of particular ethical practices of giving or sharing labor in the context of the village, neighborhood and religious community; seeking education; and producing locality in the context of material heritage, I explore the ongoing, active negotiation of diverse temporalities, agencies, demands and possibilities associated with development. These practices offer sites to address questions central to the anthropology of ethics, including questions of freedom and reproduction; ethical subjects and their relations

with others; and the temporality of ethical orientations. Seeing development as a structure of interaction between agencies (NGOs, governments, donors) and subjects. Such a perspective allows development to be seen as multiple projects rather than one and opens up the space to see what happens ‘in the meantime’ of development; to see it as a lived and changing set of relations between diverse external and internal agencies.

Introduction

Development is Our Jihad

In the summer of 2008, I sat surrounded by heaps of carpets, sipping a cup of delicate green tea in a well-appointed tourist shop in the village of Karimabad in the Hunza Valley of Pakistan's mountainous Gilgit-Baltistan region. My two interlocutors were the shop's owner, Danesh, a businessman closely involved with local development organizations and initiatives, and his cousin, Haider who had emigrated to Australia from Hunza a decade earlier and was back visiting relatives. The topic of conversation was the unique character of international development in Hunza. The three of us affirmed a point of view that amounts to a cliché in the valley: that people in Hunza engaged in development with a degree of optimism, a sense of collective responsibility and an enthusiasm bordering on fervor that set them apart from other groups in the northern regions and in the country as a whole. Danesh contrasted widespread local participation in projects initiated by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Hunza with the relative lack of enthusiasm or cooperation these organizations were met with in the neighboring district of Nager. He mused that while people in Nager might be willing to work for an AKDN project for the money, or because they saw some future benefit to themselves as a result of it, in Hunza people looked upon such participation as "a kind of religious duty." It's as if, Danesh said, in Hunza, "development is our jihad."

The phrase presents a startling juxtaposition of development, with its connotations of technico-bureaucratic rationality, of careful planning and gradual

progress, as against the self-sacrificial religious fervor conjured by the term *jihad* a contrast, made all the more pointed by references earlier in the conversation to the situations in Jammu and Kashmir and in the predominantly Pashtun Tribal Areas along the border with Afghanistan. All three of us, including Danesh, acknowledged with appreciative laughter the absurdity of the image, but also its more layered wit. Far more than a simple claim about the intensity of local people's engagements with development, Danesh's aphorism condensed a wealth of allusions: most obviously, it highlights the intertwined relationship of development and religion in Hunza, where the primary development organizations, the NGOs of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), are affiliated with the Nizari Isma'ili Shi'i branch of Islam to which most Hunzakuts profess allegiance. The phrase also gestures toward the history by which this configuration of development and religion came about and to the prominent role of the Aga Khan in particular. The Aga Khan is the spiritual head of the transnational Isma'ili community and the founder of the above-mentioned AKDN and for many Isma'ilis in Hunza these institutions embody his guidance, charisma and presence as much as his *firman*s (authoritative pronouncements) on more evidently religious matters. Danesh's comment also encompasses a general sense among Hunzakuts of a future ripe with potential for moral as well as material progress; a sense of optimism and agency pervades much, though certainly not all, local development discourse. It captures a pervasive sense that development is a project that engages Hunza's people not only as individual but also as a community; a collective subject with a shared responsibility to engage in its own improvement. Embedded within a larger conversation full of comparisons to surrounding regions known both to

Hunzakuts and to the wider world as bastions of Islamic fundamentalism of various stripes, Danesh's reference to jihad situates Hunza in relation to other places, both near neighbors like Nager and more far-flung localities marked as symbolic sites of either achieved modernity or of religious strife and "backwardness." Finally, given the twofold nature of jihad in Islamic theology—as both the "greater jihad," an internal struggle against one's own propensities to wrongdoing, and the "lesser jihad," an external conflict against enemies of the faith (Devji 2005:33)—evokes a sense of embodied striving toward transcendent moral ends. The image of development as jihad thus resonates with local discourses in which the material stakes of the struggle for development are understood to be inseparably entwined with spiritual and moral aspirations, as captured by frequent references to "spiritual and material development" and to faith as a reconciliation of *din aur dunya*; religion and the world.

This morally-charged and symbolically layered understanding of development fits uneasily alongside the bulk of the contemporary anthropological literature on development. At least since the wave of critiques inspired by Michel Foucault, Edward Said, and postcolonial studies in the early nineties, anthropological studies of development within the academy (as distinct from those produced by anthropologists working within development institutions) have tended to focus on problems of domination, exploitation and ongoing inequalities that are produced or reproduced through its projects and discourses (see Escobar 1995; Gardner 2012; Fergusson 1994, 1999; Li 2007; Karim 2011). Within this predominantly critical strand of the literature, development has been treated as a new phase in the ongoing imperial domination of the world by the industrialized nations of the West; as a technique for the ever-deeper

penetration of capitalism and the creation of new markets; and, most prominently, in scholarship of the past decade, as a form of governmentality by which state control is simultaneously expanded and rendered unremarkable through the constitution of self-governing, self-disciplining subjects in the name of poverty alleviation, education, democratization, etc. I take these critiques as an essential starting point for my approach, but I am concerned that this perspective does not allow us to make sense of—or even truly to see as real and important—many of the aspects of development in Hunza alluded to by Danesh and lived out in the words and actions of many of my interlocutors.

Against this overwhelming current in the literature, what can we make of subjects who embrace development as a path toward achieving ends that are meaningful and valued in local terms? How should we understand those aspects of the discourses and practices by which they engage in development—such as the emphasis on collective responsibility or the insistence on “material and spiritual progress”—that do not resemble classical development ideologies, neoliberal or otherwise? How do we take full account of impassioned and engaged local critiques of development that start from very different premises than our own and cannot easily be reduced to straightforward “resistance” against the development machine?

Several features of development in Hunza require a closer attention for the way they cut across theoretical or critical perspectives on development. The explicitly religious character of development institutions, for instance, runs counter to the prevailing view of development as a force for secularization. While the AKDN is avowedly nondenominational, serving and employing Isma'ilis and non-Isma'ilis alike

in its project areas, its own sense of mission is infused with Isma'ili and generally Islamic concepts, such as the value of worldly service as a “human moral responsibility to the Divine” (Isma'ili Institute n. d.). Those inside and outside the organizations alike acknowledge the special relationship between Isma'ilis and the AKDN as well as the real and potential exclusions this creates (Steinberg 2011). In concert with some other recent work on religiously- affiliated development and humanitarian institutions (Bornstein 2003; Pandian 2009; Scherz 2014), I argue that these organizations make explicit the underlying moral logics of all such interventions. Local subjects of development in Hunza strongly emphasize the idea of development as a project of moral transformation in both hopeful and critical modes of engagement, though their perspectives and evaluations often differ from those of the NGOs. As others have argued (Pandian 2008), I suggest that development’s beneficiaries may in general be likely to apprehend its promise and its perils in moral terms even where development is couched, as is more common, in neutral, technical language (Fergusson 1994; Li 2007). A sense of local autonomy and agency in development is enabled in Hunza in part by the predominance of the AKDN and its special relationship to Isma'ili communities, and also by the relative absence of the state as a major player in development; the Gilgit-Baltistan region is only partially incorporated within the nation-state of Pakistan.

Discourses that place the moral firmly within the ambit of development and that assert local control over its processes have the additional effect of complicate the progressive, linear temporal structure often attributed to development (Fergusson 1999). Development can be figured as a future state of material and spiritual

perfection, but also as a site of ongoing ethical work in the present and, in some instances, as a return to the values of the past. The particular history of encounters between specific development agencies, such as the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, and local people is significant to the production of a local development discourse. In Hunza, practices of collective labor that existed under the former princely state were transfigured as a means to secure participation in development; in the process, the ethical character of both the practices themselves and of development writ large have both been transformed.

In this dissertation I do not primarily consider development as a set of institutions, or project or a set of one-way processes of transformation. I do treat it as a discursive formation in Foucault's sense, but in exploring this formation I emphasize the uniqueness of any given conjuncture of specific development institutions and projects with local agencies, values and practices. I analyze the space of interaction and exchange; development "establishes an ideological encounter in which universalist notions of progress and modernity meet locally grounded social visions" (Pigg 1992:492). I stress, however, that the agencies and interests involved in this encounter are multiple and complex, and that while notions of progress and modernity may be "universalist" in aspiration they are not universal in their forms and logics, a point illustrated by the transnational Isma'ili institutions. What emerges through this encounter is what Appadurai calls the "production of locality" (Appadurai 2003), a work of imagination but also, I emphasize, of embodied physical and social labor. It is these labors that form the ethnographic substance of the dissertation.

Without in any way intending to supplant or diminish the importance of the critical literature on development, I seek to demonstrate the importance of attending to the specific values, relations and practices by which the people variously called ‘targets,’ ‘beneficiaries’ or ‘subjects’ engage with development. I see the value of this approach as being twofold. First, I hope to produce an account that begins from and remains true to the perspectives and experiences of my interlocutors in Hunza as they related them to me. Writing in 1999 about the aftermath of the collapse of the copper-mining industry that had been supporting rapid modernization in Zambia, James Ferguson notes that the mood of anxious nostalgia that characterized the accounts his informants gave him of their lives was not what he had set out to study but, citing Mauss’s (2000) likening of doing ethnography to casting a fishing net, he found himself nonetheless confronted with and obliged to deal with it both methodologically and theoretically. Initially stymied by the difficulties of representing or responding ethically to the problems his informants were facing, Ferguson found that he could “proceed... only after arriving at the realization that decline, confusion, fear and suffering were central subjects of the book, and not mere background to it” (1999:18). Fifteen years later, after a decade and a half in which fear, confusion and suffering have become common, if not expected subjects of anthropological accounts (Robbins 2013), I am in the position of struggling to find intellectually rigorous, honest and ethical ways to represent and grapple theoretically with such subjects as hope, possibility and moral optimism that my own ethnographic casting has netted. I take it as my task to give an account of the pervasiveness and the tangible effects of these sentiments in everyday discourses of development in Hunza without either reducing

them to hegemonic mystifications or falling into a naïve liberalism that presumes that the right attitude guarantees that things will always get better.

In this capacity, Ferguson's account serves as a cautionary reminder that such sentiments are not timeless cultural facts but arise at particular moments in time in response to specific conditions of possibility, and are thus vulnerable and subject to change. My own fieldwork in Hunza spanned a period of eight years, beginning with a two month period of research as an undergraduate in 2000. My dissertation research was carried out between December 2006 and March 2008, and between June and August 2008. The temporal span of my engagement with Hunza suggests the mood of hope and optimism that forms the subject of this dissertation was not a fleeting product of a single moment in time. The shifts that did occur between my first and second visits to Hunza, however, also reveal the kinds of shifting conditions and relationships that might lead—in fact, might already have led—to a the curdling of this optimism or its transformation into quite a different mood with different implications.

This leads me to the second reason, this one less ethical than theoretical, why it matters that we take seriously the forms of imagination and moral optimism I have described as characteristic of Hunzakuts' engagements with development: that is, that they have concrete affects in terms of the way that people behave and thus on the 'outcomes' of development. I am not specifically interested in the success or failure of development projects according to the metrics of their own predetermined criteria, for example raising of household incomes, reducing illiteracy or improving hygiene. Such changes may occur as the result of development projects, or they may not. But as

Ferguson notes, even when they “fail,” development projects and discourses *do* things—they produce definite, if unintended, effects—and the task of anthropologists is to document these affects and analyze the broader patterns that arise from them (Ferguson 1990:20-21).

Finally, to the extent that development does or is intended to produce tangible social and cultural change, its study will be enhanced by theoretical work on how such change occurs from within anthropology (e.g. Faubion 2002; Robbins 2004; 2005; 2007; Sahlins 1992). An account of development as a process of transformation needs to attend to the ways in which development interacts with the systems of meaning and value held by its subjects as much as to the meanings and values that it brings with it. This approach highlights the precise mechanisms by which people come to reconfigure their values in line with those development imposes.

The goal of this dissertation, then, is to give a fuller account of the complexity of development as experienced by its subjects and, in the process, to situate development fully within their social, cultural and moral lives. While Hunza makes a particularly rich site for such a project, I see the material presented here as supporting the broader claim that development calls people to engage in projects of cultural and moral (rather than strictly economic and political) transformation. Furthermore, I argue, it does so in ways that its subjects themselves do not always or exclusively experience as coercive or undesirable. Rather, the discourses, institutions and forms of practice associated with development become part of the everyday lives of their ‘beneficiaries’ and thus part of their ethical lives.

Although this dissertation responds and attempts to contribute to the extensive and long-standing anthropological study of development, the perspective I bring to the topic owes as much to the newer anthropological literature on ethics and morality as it does to the literature on development in any of its descriptive, applied or critical modes. To study the way people in Hunza understand and take up (or refuse) the project of development is to attend to the way they construct the good both in their own lives and in the shared life and possible future of their community.

Development in Anthropology

In the following section, I will review some of the relevant strands of the anthropological literature on development in greater detail, both to frame my project and to identify specific points at which the questions and approaches that define the anthropological study of development can be fruitfully supplemented by concepts from the anthropology of ethics. Anthropologists have been studying development for as long as it has existed as a clearly articulated project, either as observers of the social worlds into which it intruded or as part of the development apparatus.¹ For purposes of the present argument, I begin with the series of highly critical works published in the 1990s and influenced by postcolonial, deconstructionist and Foucauldian currents that emerged in the 1980s.

Among the first and most influential of these presentations was James Ferguson's *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1990). Positioning himself against both

¹ See Ferguson (1999) for an account of some of the complexities of the positioning of anthropologists affiliated with the Rhodes-Livingston Institute in Zambia vis-à-vis colonial and postcolonial improvement schemes.

broadly pro-development liberal perspectives and Marxist and other critical perspectives, including those inspired by dependency theory, Ferguson argued the outcomes of development that anthropologists should attend to are not necessarily those that bear on the success or failure of projects in their own terms, but rather the “side effects” and unintended consequences that attend the implementation of these projects even or perhaps especially when they “fail.” The most consistent and far-reaching effects of development, he argues, are the expansion of state power and the concurrent erasure of that expansion via the technical, apolitical framing of the state and its interventions as instruments of poverty reduction, health care provision and so forth. The project he studied did not yield the intended improvements to local agricultural outputs, but, in the process of failing to do so, it resulted in the construction of new infrastructure and the strengthening of local governing bodies, both of which brought this rural region more securely under state control. What development *does*, in other words, need not align with its stated aims or even with the evident interests of the elites who control the state and development apparatus.

Ferguson’s skepticism toward the notion of a single group whose interests are directly reflected in the actions of the state or in development’s outcomes is echoed in the work of many of his colleagues and collaborators, including that of Akhil Gupta (1998), who asks why, after decades of concerted effort on the part of the Indian state to end poverty, poverty, hunger and extreme inequality nonetheless persist. In recent work (2012) he finds the answer in the fragmentary nature of the state itself. Tania Li similarly gives credence to the stated intentions of state and other “trustees” of development: “I take seriously the proposition that the will to improve can be taken at

its word” (2007:9). No single hidden agenda or cohesive set of interests need be presumed to account for the failures of development; rather, these failures can be attributed to a lack of cohesion, a diversity of interests, intentions, models and practices in tension with one another that make up the state and the developmental apparatus (2007:18-19).²

A view of development as expansion of state power is particularly tricky to apply directly to Hunza, where the state’s presence is felt relatively lightly in everyday life and the primary trustees of development are the local NGOS of the AKDN, which has a complicated relationship with the Pakistani state. Ever since Hunza and the administrative region of Gilgit-Baltistan, of which it is a part, acceded to Pakistan shortly after independence in 1947, the state has maintained a distant and somewhat ambiguous relationship to the region. This may be due, in part, to the state’s reluctance to accept the status quo on Kashmir.³ Even after successive series of political-administrative reforms – including one in the mid 1970s abolishing the local princely states and another in 2008 reorganizing the local administration and slightly expanding the number of local government posts subject to popular election – the region remains outside of Pakistan’s four-province parliamentary system. Its inhabitants do not elect

² These works, which share a concern for effects of development projects that fall outside the framework of success or failure and a Foucauldian understanding of power as decentralized and agentless, have been extremely influential. In spite of their protestations, however, it is easy to read the persistence of the ills that are development’s *raison d’etre* as the consequence of concerted and intentional action on the part of some entity or interest group into such accounts. This is in part because in such accounts the significant effects of development always turn out to be the extension of state control into ever more remote regions and ever more intimate domains of life. Alternatively, the effects of development may be couched in terms of resistance to the state, but, here too, the state is central.

³ Bangash found no evidence that the Pakistani state ever formally accepted the accession of the former Gilgit Agency (which includes Hunza and Nager as well as well as Gilgit itself and several smaller districts to the south and southwest) (Bangash 2010: 138-139).

regional representatives to national government or pay taxes, and they receive minimal services or investment from the state. Since the early 1980s, the primary agents of development in the region have been NGOs, most prominently those of the AKDN, with funding largely drawn from international agencies, foreign governments and the wealth of the Isma‘ili Imamate. All the same, it would be a mistake to assume that the prominence of international NGOs in Hunza’s development is indicative of the absence of the state or its power.

Nonetheless, I think that the relative distance of the state from the provision of services in Hunza and the correspondingly significant role of the AKDN NGOS is not irrelevant to the specific character of development in Hunza. I would like to suggest that it leaves open a space of interaction in which the “trustees” and “beneficiaries” of development respond to and shape one another through both discourse and everyday practice. The two parties are hardly on equal footing in terms of their access to resources, authoritative “expert” knowledge or prestige (in terms of foreignness, wealth and/or religious charisma), and yet the history and the everyday work of development in Hunza seem to play out as a complex and two-way negotiation between the two.

As Ferguson, Gupta and Li all suggest with respect to the state, it is of course an oversimplification to speak of two sides or parties to development in Hunza. The heterogeneity of organizations, groups and interests that make up the two sides, together with a number of key institutions (and even individuals) that mediate between them, also help maintain the openness of this space of negotiation. Danesh, whose words open this chapter, is one such figure, as is a local NGO called Karakoram Area

Development Organization (KADO), which was founded with the explicit aim of devolving responsibility for generating development knowledge, goals and project ideas locally (in theory, organizations like KADO are eventually intended to take over the role of the international NGOs entirely). As Li notes, the existence of such diverse and uncoordinated assemblages of development ‘stakeholders,’ all proposing models and implementing projects at cross-purposes with one another, is part of how the development apparatus generates its own deficiencies and failures, such that “the limits of each governmental intervention shape its successor” (2007:19). Furthermore, Li notes, “being ‘irreducibly utopian,’ governmental interventions can never achieve all they seek” (2007:18). Development is, by its nature, a permanent work in progress.

It is not only the diversity of agencies involved but also the very processes by which expert knowledge and ideas are produced within pre-given criteria of relevance and usefulness that contribute to the ongoing cycle of new interventions born from prior failures. Drawing on Ferguson’s characterization of development as crucially ‘apolitical’ or ‘anti-political’ in its self-representation, Li expands on the importance of development as a mode of governmentality -- of “rendering technical” the problems of a fundamentally political nature, including the specific relations of dominance and exploitation through which the very problems that development seeks to solve are produced and reproduced. This is accomplished in two ways: first, by “translating” problems of domination into seemingly neutral or agentless problems of geography, for example, or of the capacities of the poor and, second, by leaving political dimensions of the problem—such as class inequality, political parties, or even the state itself—outside the frame altogether. Only through the erasure of the political can the

problems of poverty, inequality and want be made to appear amenable to the only kinds of solutions on offer: the highly standardized form of the neutral, technical development intervention (Ferguson 1990:69) guided by experts adept at performing these sorts of intellectual operations (see also Mitchell 2002).

Rather than attending only to the ways in which development experts achieve “closure” in their representations of the problems to be solved, thus rendering governmental interventions complete before they even begin (a common failing in certain applications of Foucauldian power-knowledge paradigm, or what Faubion calls “ossified governmentality” [Faubion 2001:99]), Li argues that the process of “rendering technical” problems of a political and moral nature should, however, “be seen as a project, not a secure accomplishment” (2007:10). Li is interested in “moments when expert knowledge is punctuated by a challenge it cannot contain; moments when the targets of expert schemes reveal, in word or deed, their own critical analysis of the problems that confront them” (2007:11).

It is my contention that in Hunza, and perhaps in many parts of the developing world, this kind of critical awareness and analysis occurs not in isolated moments that “punctuate” the normal, ongoing operations of governmental power. Instead, this kind of reflexivity occurs continuously, ubiquitously, in a tremendous variety of contexts (including many which do not at first glance appear to have much to do with development at all), encompassing a wide array of perspectives, stances and interests. When I speak of “development discourse” in Hunza, then, I refer to a discursive field that is multi-directional, extending far beyond the limited spheres assigned to it by most analysts. This thoughtful and creative reckoning with development on the part of

ordinary Hunzakuts extends beyond analyses of the problems that development promises to solve to the nature of possible solutions—to hand or imagined—and into sociological, religious and philosophical domains of speculation about the nature of the agents involved. Thus, the questions in Hunza become: who is the ‘we’ that is subject of and subject to development and how can we reconcile personal advancement with the progress of the community. The relationship between the material world and the “world of faith” (the problem of “*din aur dunya*”) is central and the questions asked have to do with what it means to serve both God and one’s community. Where Li identifies a “practice of politics,” which she sees as distinct from—and opposed to—a “practice of government,” I see in Hunza a “practice of ethics” in which people adopt a variety of complex and usually multi-layered stances toward development: criticism and commitment; contestation and devotion; hope, despair, exasperation and ongoing openness.

As should be clear, the local development discourse in Hunza does not primarily take the form of “resistance” but is more often a creative, constructive engagement. To look at what happens in Hunza as resistance would be to miss the tone and content of the discourse there.

The shift to ethics opens up possibilities for understanding the relationship between development discourses and their subjects beyond the reductive binary of power/resistance, opening up other logics than that of provocation and response. Faubion notes, “all that transpires elsewhere, in other situations [than the ethical], may well have to be deemed what many sociocultural diagnostics would have them be: reproduction or disruption; coercion or the feckless spontaneity of “resistance.” For

the later Foucault, at least, resistance is one thing; the ethical field and the cultural innovation it allows is another, not to be reduced to mere contrariness”(Faubion 2001:99). As I will discuss later in this dissertation, I have reservations about the enthusiasm for “innovation,” newness and creativity as against “reproduction” and cognate concepts within much of the anthropology of ethics. However, it is precisely the possibilities afforded within the relationship between normative moral orders and the ethical stances people take up in relation to them that help move us beyond the limitations of the power-resistance model.

The question of whether people in Hunza reproduce or resist hegemonic development discourses or, instead, take them up, criticize and refashion them in a mode of ethical freedom is somewhat complicated by the fact, as I note earlier, that the NGOs of the AKDN are themselves explicit in their ethical commitments. In contrast to the carefully instrumental neutrality that characterizes development discourse in Ferguson’s and Li’s accounts, the rhetorics and interventions of the AKDN engage in complex, alternating—and sometimes simultaneous—practices of rendering technical and “rendering ethical” both development problems and solutions. To be sure, Ferguson’s points about the necessity for any developmental apparatus of bracketing the political conditions that give rise to poverty in favor of attending to more apparently fixable concerns remains relevant. As institutional appendages of a minority religious community long subject to suspicion and persecution by states and groups belonging to the religious majority, the AKDN is even less than most development agencies in a position to ground their interventions in a broad critique of the state or its constituent power relations.

Many of my informants in Hunza explicitly credited the Aga Khan and his institutions for all of the benefits of development that they receive or anticipate, and especially for the strongly ethical character of that development. And yet, it will be a primary task of this dissertation to demonstrate that the ways in which people in Hunza engage in development do not simply reproduce the ethical discourse of these NGOs (or other institutional agencies, such as the Imamate institutions or the state) either in their words, their actions or their subjectivities. Rather, “directions of social and self-reform are negotiated among the moralizing forces of contrary cultural formations” (Pandian 2008:163), including those rooted in the social life and everyday labors of Hunzakuts themselves.

In short, I have argued in response to the heavy emphasis on top-down interventions and their effects in the development literature, that development must also be understood, at least in some contexts, as a “terrain of ethics,” delimited by a “moral horizon,” a space in which multiple competing demands, promises and moral appeals are engaged via specific practices by particular people with their own complex subjectivities and modes of moral reasoning and experience (Pandian 2008). Space for the practice of ethics to predominate is left open (Faunion 2002:88) in Hunza, perhaps more than other places, by a particular conjunction of factors: the relative “absence” of the state; the particular commitments and entanglements of the AKDN; the ‘religious space’ of the *jama‘at* and its institutions; and the ongoing, if not yet foregone, “failure” of development to radically transform the material bases of life. That development exists more as a promise than achieved transformation, at least in certain crucial respects, is an important aspect of the situation. For many ethnographers of the

condition of underdevelopment or of modernity outside the metropolitan West, this is, of course, an important focus of critique; it consigns people identified as not yet modern or developed to “the waiting room of history” (Chakrabarty 2000; Escobar 1995). The argument follows that in becoming subjects of development, people must “recognize themselves as ... underdeveloped” (Escobar 1995:10) or, more pointedly, must “submit themselves to a regime of power that identifies their own nature as a problem” (Pandian 2008:160).

Against the background of these critiques, the prevailing attitude in Hunza, marked by the apparent absence of a discernable sense of failure, lack or stigma associated with the condition or activity of developing, was striking. In its place, I found a sense of optimism or, in less future-oriented modalities, a day-to-day sense of “keeping going;” a sense of pride of place in relation to regional, national and international others; and a sense of collective agency rather than helplessness with respect to the process of development (all of which, in varying intensities and subject to complex shifts in stance and degrees of certainty, can be discerned in the conversation with Danesh from which the opening excerpt was taken). The presence of such an attitude does not obviate the existence of a structural position of underdevelopment (or, possibly, mitigate its effects), but it does raise questions. What historical, political and cultural conditions make it possible for people to recognize themselves as developing without being humiliated by that recognition (see Robbins 2005; Sahlins 1992)? How should we understand such an experience, if not as a kind of false consciousness or hegemonic mystification? And, finally, what might the

implications of such a sense be for the ‘outcomes,’ beyond success or failure, of the processes of development and the changes, economic, social or cultural, that result?

A series of problems or areas of investigation and argument within the recently revitalized anthropological study of ethics and morality offer a useful set of concepts, questions and approaches to address these questions of experience. While I will explore each of these problems at length and in dialogue with my ethnographic material throughout the chapters that follow, I will briefly mention here some of the contours and key concepts from the literature and suggest what I think each has to contribute to an understanding of the particularities of development in Hunza and to the anthropology of development at large.

Time, the Subject and Freedom

One area of investigation in the anthropological literature on ethics has to do with the temporalities of moral experience, and specifically with hope, desire, and aspiration (Mattingly 2010; Crapanzano 2003; Miyazaki 2004; Zigon 2009; Karlstrom 2004; Joseph 2005; Appadurai 2003, 2004). Interestingly, James Ferguson was one of the first anthropologists of development to turn from logics of power to questions of experience, and his book *Expectations of Modernity* (1999) was explicitly concerned with its temporal dimensions. For Ferguson, of course, hope appears, paradoxically, as an object of nostalgia: his informants on the Zambian Copperbelt were, in the 1990s, in mourning for a time when the promise of development was on the cusp of being

realized yet modernity's linear, teleological temporal structure collapsed on itself, and the foreclosure of its promise left suffering and confusion in its wake.⁴

While Ferguson's account provides a cautionary tale about the dark side of the hope for development, the small anthropological literature on the topic has been less a celebration of hope's exuberance than a series of investigations into the way people orient themselves to the future in a mode of endurance or of keeping going (Mattingly 2010; Han 2012; Miyazaki 2004). Mattingly's (2010) informants experienced hope as an "imperative" and as a "resource" in the context of caring for chronically or terminally ill children; for them it was not a matter of calculating the odds but an ethical stance toward the present moment. For Vincent Crapanzano, central questions about hope include its relationship to action and to other agencies: hope risks "paralysis," becoming stuck in the "waiting time" of hope, or even the possibility of "swing[ing] back with deforming force on [the] hearts and minds," of its bearers (as in Ferguson's account of the post-boom Copperbelt) (2003:18, 16). This is because hope—as distinct from desire—depends for its fulfillment on the agency of another, or at least it exceeds the power of the subject of hope to bring it about. But hope also contains within it possibilities for action in the present; potentially, hope "couples a realism... with a sense of the future" (Crapanzano 2003:7). The way hope binds its subject to one another and to possibilities for action in time account for its strongly ethical implications and the interest this topic has generated from some

⁴ Escobar's language is similarly suggestive of the experiential and emotional trauma of this loss of hope: "This book tells the story of this dream and how it progressively turned into a nightmare" and "This book can be read as the history of the loss of an illusion" (1995:4).

anthropologists of ethics. Crapanzano, for example, describes being “caught” in the sense of ‘caught up’ in hope.

There is a clear relationship between hope and development: development, too, is an orientation toward the future, and one structured around the assumption its “targets” cannot develop themselves without outside intervention. The concept of hope helps answer two of the questions Pandian suggests we should ask about development: “In relation to what ideals and expectations do subjects of development imagine themselves as underdeveloped. ... with what agency do they entrust the ability to bring about such maturation?” (2008: 164). As should already be clear, nuanced ethnographic explorations of hope and other ethical-temporal orientations trouble the neatly unilinear structure of developmental progress that Ferguson and others have described, and not only by demonstrating its falseness. In the last chapter of my dissertation, however, I draw on Crapanzano and others to address the complex temporalities by which people orient themselves simultaneously toward development and tradition; toward this world and the world of religion; toward possibilities for collective and individual transformation; and toward notions of identity that inhabit particular social and material configurations.

The second area of investigation, through which I address my questions about the nature of development in Hunza, is that of the subject and the processes of subjectivation by which people fashion themselves in accordance with one or another historically and culturally situated model, ideal or project. Here there seems, at least potentially, to be a ready-made bridge between the anthropological literatures on ethics and development via the work of Foucault, which has been central to both.

Practices and pedagogies of subject-formation have been important sites of research for a strand of the development literature influenced by the Foucauldian concept of governmentality taken up by Ferguson and Escobar, and particularly for those interested in institutions and practices of a specifically neoliberal character (e.g., Bhan 2014; Gardner 2013; Lazar 2004; Karim 2011). Opening up a dialogue between this work, which emphasizes the coercive overtones of subject formation under governmental modes of power, and thinking inspired by Foucault's later concern with subjectivation as a form of ethics and a "practice of freedom," seems like a natural move to make. However, as far as I know, this ethical turn has not been embraced by scholars of development. Given the critical stance entailed in most of this work, it is not surprising that the possibility has not been widely taken up, as it courts precisely the kind of depoliticizing move that scholars like Ferguson and Li so pointedly identify in both policy and engaged-anthropological framings of development. James Faubion (2001) ties questions of ethics and subject formation to processes of historical or cultural change via Foucault's language of problematization. My work in Hunza, by contrast, leads me to ask about the role of social relations and collectivities in such processes. Development work and volunteerism, I propose, are forms of ethical work that takes the community as their object. As such they beg questions about the subjects and objects of this work to which a Foucauldian perspective does not provide answers.

I believe that the turn toward ethics has advantages for the study of development. For one thing, there are resources within the ethics-development relationship for thinking about the dynamics of historical and cultural change, which

development ostensibly is (though its proponents and critics offer differing analyses of what changes, how and by what agencies or causal forces). In order to see the processes of change -- for which development can be thought of as either a covering label or an instigator -- as at least potentially something other than an inexorable tightening of the grip of regulatory control, a nuanced understanding of how people come to view particular aspects of their reality as a problem (in the Foucauldian sense of ‘problematization’ [1984]) and how they come to embrace particular solutions to that problem are, for certain theorists of ethics, cultural change and development alike, central concerns (Escobar 1995; Faubion 2001; Robbins 2005; Sahlins 1992). I will return to the question of change in greater detail later in this introduction.

At the same time, the question of how people become not only willing subjects of development but also active, creative and critical agents within it calls out for analysis for the simple reason that this is how some people, some of the time, see themselves. In order to attend properly to the ways in which both the “promises and exclusions” of development are “negotiated in the present,” we need a way to think about the complex subjectivities that are formed and fashioned within the horizon of development beyond lamenting their subjection to foreign powers or seeking and celebrating signs of resistance. In turn, however, I argue that the collective project of development, particularly as it is taken up in Hunza, is a useful site at which to address certain limits or weaknesses in the subjectivation paradigm that has become so central to many recent theoretical accounts of ethical life. Discourses of development highlight the collective stakes of individual self-making as well as framing collectivities—be they nation, village, or ‘target population’—as important conditions

for individual advancement (often as a barrier, but sometimes as a resource or essential ground for it). The salience of various forms and scales of community within local discourses of development in Hunza leads me to ask about the significance of social relations and collectivities as objects of development work and about the potentially collective nature of the ‘subjects’ who do that work. Participation in development projects and volunteerism are forms of ethical work that take the community as their object, and, simultaneously, beg the question of the nature of the agent or agents who carry out this work. In spite of Faubion’s gestures toward the possibility that Foucault’s (1997) notion of ethical substance (that ground or material upon which the practices of subjectivation are carried out) may apply not only to aspects of what are conceived of as an individual’s ‘self’ but also to supra-individual or intersubjective orders, such as “the social relations that any particular individual establishes and maintains with others” (Faubion 2001:90), I do not find the notion of subjectivation adequate to account for all forms of ethical work, or even for application to all projects in which selves are at stake. Through my ethnographic accounts of practices of sharing labor, giving service, and obtaining education in the central chapters of the dissertation, I attempt to move toward concepts of ethical work beyond subjectivation

A barrier to this endeavor, which I share with a small number of others working in the anthropology of ethics that has, as yet, found little purchase, is the very longstanding problem in the social sciences of the relationship between individual and society. In the anthropology of ethics, particularly in its more Foucault- inspired iterations, this question is posed as a relationship between ‘freedom’ and ‘power,’ or,

alternatively, 'reproduction.' Accounts of the relationship between individual ethical subjects and the relations or collectivities in which they are embedded have often gotten tangled up in a reductive binarism that pits the social as a source of constraint upon the subject's freedom to fashion itself, sometimes in spite of the author's stated intentions (e.g., Mahmood 2005; Laidlaw 2002; Anderson 2011).

The formation and self-fashioning of subjects of development and the choice one makes in one's analysis to foreground one or the other moment is, thus, from the beginning, closely tied to questions of freedom and the various determinisms that signal its absence (whether the opposite term is figured as reproduction, morality [as opposed to ethics] or power/domination/coercion), which have been central to the anthropology of ethics (Laidlaw 2002; Robbins 2007; Mahmood 2005). Questions of freedom are also, of course, implicitly or explicitly embedded in critical perspectives on development: do people have a choice to engage in development or not, to imagine a future in their own terms, or to act as they see fit to bring it about, And how are the desires and aspirations of developing subjects themselves produced? There has been some explicit attention to freedom within more applied or policy-related discourses on development, too: Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* (2000), for example, is an ambitious and laudable attempt to re-conceptualize problems of poverty as problems of unfreedom and to reframe solutions accordingly. Sen's argument, however, fails to even consider the question of what we mean by freedom, either philosophically or

anthropologically, and, thus, fails to shift the popular and policy conversations around development toward a substantive and critical engagement with the problem.⁵

Arguments about freedom within the anthropology of ethics address substantive questions about when people might be most likely to obey moral rules and reproduce existing structures and when they might be more likely to engage in a morality of freedom, adopting critical stances toward existing norms and acting in ethically creative ways (Robbins 2007). The best of this work allows us to see a complex relationship between the two, even if it sometimes inappropriately privileges the latter (e.g., Mattingly 2010:46), mistakes resistance for freedom (Mahmood 2005) or conflates freedom with agency (Laidlaw 2002; 2010). In spite of these flaws, however, ethnographers working in this vein reveal the resources for a critical stance situated within the everyday, in the transcendence of ordinary social relations (Lambek 2010; Rasanayagam 2010). Among other sources, this work has drawn upon the anthropology of exchange, within which questions of obligation versus voluntarism or generosity in giving have been explored at length. In the dissertation, I likewise draw on concepts of exchange, gift and reciprocity through accounts of a variety of practices of labor embedded in social ties that range and shift over time along a spectrum from obligatory to voluntary.

Development as Moral Labor

⁵ The deficiencies in Sen's proposal perfectly illustrate Fergusson's arguments about the limitations imposed on expert discourse by the highly conventional nature of the only available solutions and by the careful separation of 'development' from the realm of 'politics' (Ferguson 1990: see esp. 68-69).

Labor is important to my account of Hunzakut perspectives on development in part because it is one of the primary forms of activity by which people engage in development projects. In fact, due to the particular strategies pursued by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (the first AKDN NGO to begin work in the valley) for securing ‘participation’ in its projects from the village communities and to continuities between these strategies and longer-standing regimes of labor mobilization under the Hunza state, practices of organizing and sharing labor have been central to the experience and meanings of development since the beginning. At the same time, and likely because of this history, the ethical and moral significance of labor is closely tied to that of development. Drawing on the anthropological literature on exchange, I argue that the giving and sharing of labor are among the most important ways of making and maintaining social relations in Hunza. Gifts of labor in various forms mediate relations among individuals and households, kin, neighbors and strangers, as well as between individuals and their communities, and, in the case of religious service, between individuals, the community and God (Gregory 1980).

In the era of development and increasing engagement with national and transnational forms of community, belonging and identity, labor has been used as both a tool and a moral template to use in creating and extending relational networks and new forms of civic participation. As a strongly moralized domain in Hunza, labor carries these relational possibilities and meanings into the domain of development, making them available as ways of understanding, valuing and criticizing development from an ethical standpoint. At the same time, the moral meanings and possibilities of

labor have been continuously transformed in response to its changing social forms and context.

Notably, other anthropologists for whom labor is a category of analysis, whether in the context of development (Pandian 2008) or not (Mayblin 2010a & 2010b), have made the experience of suffering and the moral and religious values assigned to that suffering central to their analyses of labor's ethical productivity. The conceptualization of labor as toil is linked to Christian notions of sacrificial virtue and to images of physical labor, particularly agricultural labor, as repetitive and unrelenting tedium. Walter Pater, said of hope, "We need some imaginative stimulus, some not impossible ideal, to carry us year after year, without disgust, through the routine work which is so large a part of life" (as cited in Crapanzano 2003:6). Similarly, Hannah Arendt associated labor with the everyday, cyclical and uncreative tasks of reproducing material existence and assigned it to the lowest rung in her ranking of human activity, beneath 'work' and 'action' (1958). Like Mayblin and Pandian, I take labor as an important site of ethical as well as physical production and reproduction, but, in contrast, I link this productivity to more positive evaluations of its possibilities. Adopting at times an approach inspired by phenomenological anthropology, I argue that labor is imagined and experienced in Hunza in ways other than suffering or tedium, including, surprisingly, as a potential site of pleasure and fun.

In this way, I conceive of my project as participating in what Joel Robbins calls the anthropology of the good (2013). Like Robbins, I have sometimes found it difficult to articulate an interpretation of the moral projects in which Hunzakuts are

engaged in terms that do not caricature them either as suffering subjects or as (merely) subject to external domination (Robbins 2013:453). Robbins, responded to these temptations by arguing, in his research that the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea were not so much suffering as they were struggling with unresolvable but not devastating moral paradoxes (see Mayblin 2010a). In writing about Hunza, I face the slightly different challenge of doing justice both descriptively and theoretically to a situation in which people – while they do undoubtedly struggle, resist, contest and, not infrequently, suffer – largely conceive of themselves as doing pretty well, as making at least satisfactory progress toward their collective goals. For reasons of both political positioning (outlined earlier) and the disciplinary biases discussed by Robbins (2013), this represents difficult problems of both representation and analysis. It is deeply ingrained in our intellectual practice to find sites of conflict, tension or resistance and begin our analyses from there.⁶ It is difficult, I have found, to get analytical purchase on the ways in which people go about doing and being good in their daily lives except by reference to the ways in which they fail, fall short, or, at best, achieve only partial and temporary success in the face of insurmountable obstacles. Even theorists who are explicitly interested in the ways in which people do keep going, make do and work for the good in their lives seem to feel obliged to situate these investigations amidst severely constrained circumstances, in situations of abject poverty or violently oppressive forces (Han 2012; Jackson 2011; Mattingly 2010). People in Hunza face

⁶ There are a number of disparate works in the anthropology of ethics that explicitly rely on moments of rupture, value conflict or paradox in order to develop an understanding of moral rules and norms or of processes of ethical reasoning (e.g., Zigon 2007; Robbins 2004)

poverty, isolation, an alternately neglectful and abusive state, and uneven and increasingly neoliberal processes of development that create and exacerbate divisions among them, but I am wary of emphasizing these factors in a way that obscures the considerable cultural, political and personal resources they bring to bear in the ongoing constructing and debating of their own versions of the good life. I am equally wary of participating in a long and heavily orientalist tradition of romanticizing the valley and its inhabitants as peaceful, healthy and contented (see Banik and Taylor 1960, Taylor 1978 and Hamid 1979 for a small sampling), an image of themselves Hunzakuts are well aware of and not at all above repurposing for their own ends. I have tried to find a respectful balance between the two positions.

Development is a fact of the contemporary world, and while it has been the pretext for untold dislocations and deprivations, it has also been for others a source of livelihood and aspiration, a vantage point for critique and leverage for change toward “traditional” injustices. And, as I argue here, development can also be a space of for everyday creativity in articulating and striving toward the good. Whether ‘we’ who take up the study of development like it or not, development remains central for many people in the world today, including many of my friends and informants in Hunza. If my work has anything to add to the political and moral stance so powerfully articulated by these theorists, it is not to undermine the thrust of their message in the larger picture, but to caution against the assumption that we know what development will look like everywhere and how it will be experienced by all its subjects. Against the still-prevalent (if often disguised) assumption that globalizing forces will tend to produce the same results everywhere, Appadurai argues that “the kinds of causalities

that underlie unidirectional Marxist thinking about the relations among, for example, technology, production, and ideology not only have to be reconsidered but have to be reconsidered in an ad hoc manner depending on the situation” (2003:45). The same might be said, I think, for relations between configurations of power, systems of knowledge and the forms of subjectivity (Escobar 1995:10). We should, therefore, attend not only to the patterns but to the particularities of the relations people have to development in each place and time, even within the frame of a single project, whether these relations take the form of acquiescence, resistance, or something more complicated. Rather than adopting the perspective of ‘trustees’ ourselves, presuming to know what the good is for others, we should try to discover the conditions, however fleeting and precarious, within which people make the good for themselves.

Outline of the Chapters

The chapters of the dissertation are organized around what I have identified as three important problems or areas of exploration and debate in the anthropology of ethics. At the same time, I present my ethnographic material in a way that tracks back and forth between institutional and discursive contexts readily identifiable as ‘development’ and those that are less immediately recognizable as having to do with development. This back-and-forth movement is central to my argument that the ethos of development in Hunza arises from a complex interaction between moral values situated within domains of embodied practices and the ‘imported’ discourses and institutions of NGOs, the Isma'ili Imamate, the Pakistani State, and other foreign actors.

Immediately following the Introduction is a brief chapter in which I describe some of the relevant features of Hunza's geography, ethno-linguistic and political divisions, and religious landscape. I also provide a brief overview of its history up to the late 1970s, when a period of significant political change begins that also marks the arrival of the AKDN organizations. Finally, I situate my fieldwork within this landscape.

Chapters Two and Three together form a kind of dialogue that aims to make a contribution to the discussion of what Robbins has called moralities of reproduction and freedom, or a distinction made by several anthropologists between morality and ethics (Laidlaw 2002; Zigon 2008). In Chapter One I discuss the central role of particular practices of collective labor for the way that development is understood and carried out in Hunza. This category of labor has been transformed over the course of the late twentieth century, a transformation I relate to the history of the Aga Khan Rural Support program, the first of the AKDN organizations to begin work in Hunza in the early 1980s. This history is narrated as a movement from "darkness to light" in terms that closely conform to the unilinear, teleological structure of progressive time upon which liberal conceptions of development rely (Ferguson 1999). This narrative has a strong moral dimension: freedom of the present, exemplified in the voluntary gift of labor toward development projects, is contrasted with the coercive and violent character of collective labor in the past. Practices of collective labor central to AKRSP's model of participatory development, however, situate exercise of this freedom within webs of obligation, responsibility and care.

In Chapter Three, I situate collective labor within domains of kinship, neighborliness and village politics and alongside other practices by which labor is given and shared in ways that illustrate the complexity of moral meanings, obligations and sentiments bound up with everyday acts of laboring for and with others. The chapter takes up everyday practices of labor centered on the household and primarily shared among kin and neighbors. Labor in this domain might be expected to conform closely to Arendt's discussion of labor as reproductive and unreflective (1958) and to fall within what Robbins calls the morality of reproduction (2004). Turning to a more phenomenologically informed account of labor as moral experience, however, I argue that a complex and multivalent set of values around labor, exchange and collective endeavors deeply informs the way that people understand and engage with development and, at the same time, complicates the progressive temporality of the 'darkness to light' development narrative.

Chapters Four and Five interrogate the concept of subjectivation and its use in the anthropology of ethics by exploring two domains of practice in which Hunzakuts are fashioned, and fashion themselves, as ethical subjects, as religious subjects and as subjects of development. Subjectivation is an important concept in the ethics literature precisely because it allows us to shift our focus from the formation of subjects with or without their participation or consent at the hands of governmental and other forms of power and toward the ways in which people take up or respond to invitations or pressures to perform ethical work upon themselves, while keeping questions of power within the frame of analysis. In exploring these processes of subject formation in Hunza, however, I am led to ask whether thinking of ethical work primarily through

the theoretical lens of subjectivation is adequate to address questions of the social and the collective dimensions of ethical life and the relationship between the individual and the social.

Chapter Four is concerned with the practice of *khidmat* the religious duty of service to the community. Service or ‘volunteerism’ is ethical practice incumbent upon individual believers that has the community as a whole as its object; I call it ethical “work upon the community.” At the same time, I explore how the presence of God as the third party in this exchange—as the ultimate recipient of the gift of service—complicates and expands the relationship between the individual and the social. In Chapter Five, I turn to discourses around education and school-choice to demonstrate how, even within a domain as important to liberal conceptions of individual progress and development as education, the fashioning of individual subjects and the making of community are bound up together in complex ways. The question of what the community is and where its boundaries are looms large—does education make a person a better member of their own local community, of the transnational Isma'ili *jama'at*, or of the still broader imagined community of humanity as a whole? These chapters allow me to further parse the distinctions and interconnections between the multiple moral demands or horizons within which Hunza people orient themselves through their own ethical practice.

The final chapter centers on the work of two groups working to preserve or revitalize “traditional culture” in Hunza: the renovation of the historic core of Altit village by Aga Khan Cultural Services, Pakistan (AKCSP). Here I am interested in the ethical temporalities entailed in the projects and, in the former case, the values they

hold for their targets. The result suggests the presence of multiple temporal orientations and trajectories, some of which run counter to the familiar unilinear time of development. Following from the discussion in the previous chapter of multiple horizons of community and of linkages across space, this chapter explores the moral dimensions of the 'spacetime' (Munn 1992) of development in Hunza, drawing from anthropological work on hope, aspiration, desire, change and the future to describe the way that even enthusiastic 'subjects of development' can live and work toward the good within multiple temporal orientations at once.

I conclude with some thoughts about events in Hunza since my fieldwork ended in 2008, and return to questions about the stability or precarity of the structures that enable the hopeful, agentive and deeply moral character of development in Hunza and about the possibilities for both wanted and unwanted cultural change.

Chapter One. Research Context

The steep-sided Hunza Valley lies in the Gilgit-Baltistan region. The valley follows the course of the River Hunza, a tributary of the Indus, from the town of Gilgit, at the southern end of the valley, north to the Khunjerab Pass on the border between Pakistan and China. The primary villages of central Hunza are situated around 2,500 meters above sea level, but from their streets and rooftops several peaks above 7,000 meters are visible, including Rakaposhi (7,788 m), Pasu Sar (7,476 m) and Ultar Sar (7,388 m). Hunza is both the name of the valley and of the former princely state that occupies one side of the valley, opposite its former rival state of Nager. A combined population of 112,450 for Hunza and Nager is given by some sources based on the last census in 1998 (the difficulty of obtaining more recent or precise information is linked to the political situation, described below). Though small, Hunza itself is not homogenous; it is divided into three ethnolinguistically and, to some extent, geographically distinct subdivisions.

The southern part of Hunza Valley is called Lower Hunza, and the majority of the people are speakers of the Dardic Indo-Aryan Shina language and identify themselves as Shin (Bu.: *shinaki*). Shina-speakers are also a majority in Gilgit, the administrative capital of the Gilgit division of Gilgit-Baltistan, which lies to the south of the valley. However, members of all regional ethnolinguistic groups and all sectarian divisions of Islam and people hailing from all of the surrounding valleys (including Ghizer, Yasin, Ishkoman and Astore) also live in Gilgit (pop. est. 56,000 in 1998 [Kreutzmann 2006:267]), as do many *Hunzakuts* (people from Hunza).

The northern part of the valley is known as Upper Hunza or Gojal, and was settled by permission of the rulers of the princely state of Hunza around the turn of the 19th century by Wakhi-speaking people from the Wakhan valley in present-day Afghanistan.⁷

Central Hunza, where I lived and carried out my ethnographic research, is inhabited primarily by speakers of Burushaski, who call themselves Burusho. Burushaski is spoken, with slight variations, by an estimated 90,000 people from Hunza, Nager and Yasin, a valley south of Gilgit (Kreutzmann 2006:267). Several theories have been proposed as to the origins and proper linguistic categorization of Burushaski, but it is presently considered an isolate.⁸ The one non-Burushaski-speaking village in central Hunza is Mominabad, which is home to an ethnically distinct and in some respects caste-like group called the Dom or Berisho. The Dom speak their own language, and they were, until recently, relegated to the stigmatized occupations of musicianship and metalworking.⁹

On the opposite side of the river in the southern and central portions of the valley lies the former princely state of Nager, the historical antagonist of the Hunza state and present-day foil for a Hunzakut identity. The inhabitants of Nager are

⁷ Most Gojalis are Wakhi, although several villages were established by Burusho during the 20th century period of population growth and internal settlement expansion. The settlement of Gojal has been attributed to the desire of the Hunza Mirs (princely rulers) to assert control over an area that had been used primarily by nomadic Kyrgyz pastoralists (Stellrecht 2006).

⁸ A tradition of local history-writing, much of which is engaged with earlier colonial-era scholarship on the region, includes speculations about the origins of the Burusho and their language—a theory I heard in several versions links ‘Hunza’ etymologically to ‘Hun’ and the Burusho to *Burum Hun* or “White Huns,” nomadic warriors of the Central Asian steppes who supposedly settled in Hunza.

⁹ Bilingualism is more the rule than the exception in Hunza. However, Wakhi speakers are more likely to know Burushaski than Burusho are to learn Wakhi; conversely those Burusho who live, have family, or do business in Gilgit have more need to learn Shina than most Shin have to understand Burushaski.

primarily Burushaski-speakers, and the majority are *Ithna'ashari* (Twelver) Shi'i Muslims.

Central Hunza is the historic core of the former princely state¹⁰. Until around 1800 the three primary settlements were the villages of Altit, Baltit (renamed Karimabad in 1983) and Ganish. Much of the historical work on Hunza has centered on the princely state and its development (Holzwarth 2006; Sidky 1996 & 1997; Stellrecht 2006). The ruling Mirs (Bu.: *tham*) seem to have arrived in both Hunza and Nager as cadet branches of the more established kingdom of Gilgit.¹¹ Local versions of this history emphasize the foreign origins of the state as well as the familial rivalry between Hunza and Nager; in some versions the two brothers who founded the dynasties are descendants of *pari* (fairy), who become human by killing and eating a cow, and one designation for the ruling family is *Ayásho* (Bu.) “people of heaven” (Holzwarth 2006).

For purposes of this dissertation, a relevant question that arises from these diverse historical accounts of the state and its origins concerns the relationship between the state and the socio-political structures of the villages. As will be discussed in the chapter that follows, the consolidation of the state was bound up with the extraction of taxes in grain and corvée labor (Bu.: *rajaáki*), which enabled the expansion of the system of irrigation channels on which settled agriculture in the area

¹⁰ According to some of my informants, the Burusho continue to be both culturally central and politically dominant, to the extent that for some people the term Hunzakuts (people of Hunza) and Burusho are synonymous. One Wakhi informant sometimes spoke about particular aspects of development and local politics (as will be demonstrated, the two are closely linked) as “Burusho imperialism.”

¹¹ Stellrecht (2006:192) dates this to the 15th or 16th century.

depends.¹² Some historians of the local states use terms like “hereditary nobles” and “noble classes,” but, while the state clearly maintained its power by conferring privileges on particular individuals and families (royal fosterage, for example, was an established practice), below the level of the *diramiting/wazirkuts* (the lineage and sub-lineage from which the officials of the state were drawn), the *roms* (lineages) that are the primary socio-political groupings are not ranked. At the time of my fieldwork, strong norms of (relative) economic and political egalitarianism and local autonomy (see Chapter Two) were invoked by my informants in speaking about the system of local governance, common resource management and dispute resolution through the *roms*. The most recent and rigorous historical work (Holzwarth 2006; Stellrecht 2006) is in line with these views, suggesting that the power of the Mirs to command taxes and services was extremely limited until around 1800, and that prior to this the lineage heads preserved considerable autonomy in matters of irrigation, land rights and dispute mediation (Stellrecht 2006:192).¹³

The state, then, was neither static nor particularly old. As I argue in Chapter Six of this dissertation, in spite of its salience as a signifier for Hunza history and identity, the princely state as a political and historical framework needs to be carefully examined in thinking about contemporary life and politics in Hunza. It is worth mentioning that an important alternative theme in both scholarly histories and popular

¹² The climate in Hunza is extremely dry, and there is very little natural vegetation at the lower elevations. All settlements are situated high above the river for protection against attack and flooding; water available for irrigation comes down from above via glacier-fed *nallahs* (streams) and is captured and directed to the agricultural terraces built on flatter and more stable areas by the system of channels (Bu.: *kuhl*).

¹³ Stellrecht (2006) also suggests that the dense concentration of the population in fortified village cores (see Chapter Six) dates from this period.

imaginings of the region is that of routes and trade, an image crystalized in the Silk Road (Stellrecht 2006). Hunza was at one time part of a major route network between South and Central Asia, but in more recent history it was less central to these networks (Neelis 2006).

In the colonial era, the whole of the region now called Gilgit-Baltistan was preserved as a buffer zone between Russia and India until being eventually brought under British control in the late 19th century. Hunza and Nager were conquered in 1891, and, subsequently, all of Gilgit-Baltistan was administered through the Dogra rulers of Kashmir. This left local political structures largely untouched, if not strengthened.¹⁴ At Independence, a group of military and paramilitary officers stationed at Gilgit, including one British officer, declared independence from Kashmir (which was soon to accede to India) and shortly thereafter formally requested accession to the newly created state of Pakistan (Sökefeld 1997; Bangash 2010). Pakistan, however, was slow to act on this petition, and Bangash (2010) could find no evidence that the accession was ever formally acknowledged by the state. Nevertheless, the region eventually came to be partially incorporated into the state as the Federally Administered Northern Areas.

After Independence and the incomplete accession of the Northern Areas to Pakistan, the Mir of Hunza, along with the rulers of neighboring principalities, were left in charge of the internal affairs of their respective domains. Both local

¹⁴ Kashmir was one of several powers with whom local rulers had established tributary relationships at this time; the very multiplicity of these relationships seems to have fitted into an overall strategy to resist incorporation and external control, but the British interpreted the relationship as one of sovereignty.

recollections and a number of historical sources suggest that during the 1950s and 1960s the level of control exercised by the Mirs over their people was not greatly reduced and may even have been strengthened in some respects.¹⁵ My informants in 2000 remembered this period as one of intense surveillance and harsh crackdowns on people's attempts to leave the valley. These draconian measures, however, should be seen as attempts to stem the tide of increasing mobility and opportunity, rather than as achieved results.¹⁶ The government and the religious leadership of the Isma'ili population had established schools in each of the valley states beginning in the 1940s, though very few attended at first and permission from the princely rulers was required to attend college in Gilgit (Susumu 2001).

In the 1960s, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto began a series of reforms that abolished the princely states and instituted a system of direct administrative rule from Islamabad, with limited local representation by elected officials. In 1974, Hunza state was the last to be dissolved, though for most of the following two decades the son of the last ruling Mir, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, was elected to the representative council. A more recent set of reforms in 2009, which instituted local elections and renamed the region Gilgit-Baltistan, was touted as a first step toward full incorporation, but

¹⁵ One way in which this occurred was through growing contact between the Isma'ili Muslims of Northern Pakistan and their religious leadership, which was itself undertaking a process of consolidation and reform (see Chapter Four). This led to a loss of authority on the part of the Pirs, local religious leaders who functioned as intermediaries with the Imam but had their own authority rooted in their ancestry and religious learning. For a time before the implementation of the new bureaucratic system of community governance, the Mir of Hunza, the only Isma'ili ruler in the region, became the acknowledged representative of and intermediary to the Imams, giving them another hold over their people (Susumu 2001).

¹⁶ Susumu provides evidence that regional rulers understood the danger posed by increasing availability of education to their control, quoting the Mehtar of Chitral as saying "I am installing a bomb in my own castle," in his speech at the opening of the first boys' middle school (Susumu 2001:10).

residents do not elect national representatives or pay taxes, and state investment in the region remains minimal.

The end of the Mirs' state left what is repeatedly referred to in the development literature as a "leadership vacuum" (Wood 2006:41; Khan and Khan 1992:5), though little seems to have changed in the day-to-day life of Hunzakuts right away. Indeed, while the rule of the Mirs is generally spoken of by Hunzakuts as the primary source of the ills of the past, it is not the end of their reign but a series of subsequent events that are credited as the beginnings of substantive change. In the mid-seventies, construction began on the Karakoram Highway (or KKH, as it is generally called), an 810-mile road linking the historic trading hub of Kashgar in China with the town of Abbotabad in Pakistan. Opened in 1978, the highway runs the length of the Hunza Valley, passing directly through or alongside most of the villages in Central Hunza and Gojal. Built as a conduit for Chinese commodities to the Indian Ocean port of Karachi, the KKH has radically transformed the material culture of Hunza, such that metal objects (tools and cookware) and electronics, previously almost unknown in the valley, are now ubiquitous features of almost every household. The highway has also meant greater contact with Pakistan, enabling a transition to cash-cropping that has also entailed reliance on imported food (particularly wheat, but also luxuries like salt, sugar and spices); more frequent travel and out-migration (permanent, short-term and seasonal) to Gilgit and the 'downcountry' cities of Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad for work and education; and, more gradually, greater integration into the political and cultural life of Pakistan.

The third major event of this transformative period was the beginning of sustained international development efforts in the region, most significantly in the form of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), which was founded in 1982, whose legacy in local development discourse and practice I explore in Chapter Two.

I discuss the linkages between development and the Isma'ili religious leadership (the Imamate) in Chapter Two and discuss in detail the history of this relationship in Chapter Four, but for the moment it is important to note that the majority of Hunzakuts of all three ethnolinguistic groups—around 85 percent—are Nizari Isma'ili (or Imami) Shi'i Muslims. The remaining 15 percent are almost entirely *Ithna'ashari* (“Twelver”) Shi'is.¹⁷ Nizari Isma'ili Islam, also called Imami Shi'ism, is an offshoot of the Shi'i branch of Islam. Isma'ilis share with the majority *Ithna'ashari* Shi'i sect the belief that the Muslim *ummah* (community of believers) should ideally be guided in spiritual matters by an Imam (a concept that has very different meanings for Shi'i and Sunni Muslims) descended from the Prophet Muhammad's nephew and son-in-law Ali. The Isma'ili reckoning of the order of succession of the 'Alid Imams diverges from that of Twelver Shi'is, but, more importantly, Isma'ilis trace the line of succession into the present.¹⁸

¹⁷ There is a strong spatial segregation, with the majority of *Ithna'ashari* Shi'is living in the central villages of Ganesh and Dorkhan.

¹⁸ *Ithna'ashari* (Twelver) Shi'is do not follow a present, living Imam but understand the Imam to be in a state of occlusion, awaiting eventual return.

The present, 49th Isma'ili Imam is Shah Karim al-Husseini, also known as the Aga Khan.¹⁹ July 11, 2007, was his Golden Jubilee, the 50th anniversary of his Imamate, and the whole year was marked by celebrations in Hunza and in Isma'ili communities elsewhere.²⁰ He succeeded his grandfather in 1957; these two Imams presided over the full period of decolonization and postcolonial nation-building, a time of tremendous transformation for the regions of South and Central Asia, the Middle East and East Africa where the majority of Isma'ilis live. Both the present and previous Imams have articulated a vision of modernity at once deeply informed by Western liberalism and profoundly specific to their community. Beginning in the early 20th century, they formalized and bureaucratized the structures of religious leadership, the Imamate, creating institutions to cover nearly every aspect of the social and religious life of the community (see Chapter Four).

The present Imam founded the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a body of interconnected NGOs responsible for various aspects of development, including the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES), the Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS), the Aga Khan

¹⁹ This title was conferred on the first Aga Khan by the Qajar ruler of Iran in the first half of the 19th century; it was recognized by the British crown when the Aga Khan moved from Iran to India and has been re-affirmed for each of the last four Imams (van Grondelle 2009).

²⁰ Many Hunzakut scholars date the arrival of Isma'ilism in Hunza to at least 400 years ago, if not significantly longer. Recent scholarship by Western historians, however, argues that conversion occurred much later, around 1800; Stellrecht (2006) attributes the transition to the conversion from Twelver Shi'ism of Mir Silum Khan, who came to power around 1800, while Holzwarth (2006) traces the paths of Isma'ili Pirs (wandering religious teachers) from Badakhshan (a region to the northwest of Hunza, overlapping what is now Tajikistan and the Wakhan in Afghanistan) into the valley around the same time.

Trust for Culture (AKTC),²¹ and others. The particular vision of development and modernity articulated by the contemporary Imamate and institutionalized in the AKDN and religious (or '*jama'ati*') institutions are a central aspect of the context of the present study.

During my first research trip to Hunza in June-August 2000, I was affiliated with the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and lived in the village of Aliabad in the organization's hostel. I travelled often with the staff of AKRSP's Hunza Field Management Unit (FMU) and received considerable logistical support in carrying out interviews on the impact of the Karakoram Highway. My doctoral research was carried out over 17 months (December 2006-February 2008; June-August 2008), during which I lived in the village of Altit. I had no formal institutional affiliation, although my work was enhanced with the help and support of many members of the staff of Aga Khan Cultural Services, Pakistan (see Chapter Six).

²¹ Aga Khan Cultural Service, Pakistan (AKCSP), whose work is the focus of Chapter 6, falls under the umbrella of AKTC.

Chapter Two. Histories of Labor

I had been in Hunza for many months when I first heard the term *rajaáki* (Bu.) used to refer to a contemporary rather than a historical practice. It was in the office of the Altit Town Management Society (ATMS), a village-level body formed to function as a liaison between the various constituencies that make up Altit village and any development organizations carrying out projects there. Specifically, the ATMS was founded at the instigation of Aga Khan Cultural Services, Pakistan, an NGO tasked with material and cultural heritage management and preservation under the umbrella of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The TMS organizations²² thus occupy a space on a continuum between international NGOs and donors, on the one hand, and relatively local bodies established to represent village and other constituencies, on the other. This intermediate space has grown tremendously since the current era of development began in 1982, with the formation of such organizations speaking to the complex interlocking of development and local governance.

I was preparing to interview Rumana, the ATMS Secretary, when Ghulam Uddin, an elder of the Hakalkutz *rom* (lineage) and Principal of the Moray School, entered and began an extended discussion with Rumana about how to mobilize the necessary labor for the completion of a project then in progress. The aim of this project was to convert an old building that housed what had been the (rather moribund, usually padlocked) village library into a multi-use structure that would include a

²² At the time of my fieldwork both Karimabad and Ganesh also had TMS organizations; these are the three historic villages of Central Hunza, all of which possess architectural heritage deemed significant by AKCSP.

“ladies’ shop” for local women and a *ticket-ghar* (ticket booth) for tourists.²³ The structure formed part of the fabric of Altit *khun* the dense, formerly fortified core of the original settlement composed of stone and adobe dwellings, most of which share exterior walls. The old building had already been demolished but then the work had slowed, leaving a pile of debris partly spilling into the street that had been there for several days. Ghulam Uddin had attempted to get the village Boy Scouts to finish clearing the rubble, but the two teenagers in Scouts uniforms hanging sheepishly behind him as he spoke averred that they had an important cricket match (part of a series organized in honor of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations²⁴) that day and could not attend to the rubble until the following day. After some further instructions to Rumana on drawing up a new contract to formalize the division of responsibilities pertaining to the project among the interested parties (ATMS, Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP) and Water and Sanitation Extension Programme (WASE)) on the model of the contracts used in previous projects, Ghulam Uddin departed. Wrinkling her nose over his interference, Rumana explained to me that the real issue impeding the clearance of the site was the absence of a wheelbarrow. There was sufficient labor available through *rajaáki* (obligatory collective labor), but, having sent all the village-owned wheelbarrows to Aliabad for repair, they had no way to haul away the dirt and rubble. The next day the wheelbarrows were returned and the rubble was cleared.

²³ At the time, AKCSP employed one man as a guide for the village but there was no infrastructure for tourists and at best a haphazard procedure for collecting fees.

²⁴ A yearlong series of celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the fourth Aga Khan’s succession to the Imamate, which occurred in 2007. For more on the historical significance of the Jubilees, see Chapter Five.

This interaction was exemplary of the ordinary village politics in which aspirations toward development and the everyday mobilization of labor played out over the complex topography of the social and material landscape of Altit. Even the reason given by the Scouts for their non-compliance with Ghulam Uddin's demands for their time—the Diamond Jubilee cricket match—gestures toward the religious forms of authority, temporality and value that are always at least potentially available as frames for activity in the present. What interested me in the exchange was Rumana's use of the term *rajaáki*. I had only ever heard this word used in reference to the past—specifically to the era of the Hunza state—not to voluntary acts of labor in the here-and-now. Associated as it had always been with the evils of that past, its casual use in the context of a quotidian bureaucratic snafu in the course of village-level development work brought what I was accustomed to thinking of as multiple distinct eras or histories of the present into sudden conjuncture with one another.

Rajaáki and the Hunza State

I first encountered the term *rajaáki* while doing library research in preparation for my initial brief period of undergraduate work in Hunza in the summer of 2000. The term was typically glossed as 'corvée labor' (Sidky 1997:1004). It referred to the category of labor—primarily agricultural work but also water channel construction and maintenance, portage and other duties—exactd as a form of taxation by the ruling *mirs* of Hunza, alongside taxes levied in grain and gold dust, on all but the most

privileged households.²⁵ During the interviews I conducted that summer, I asked about the differences in daily life before and after the turbulent period of transformation between the mid-1970s and the early 80s. My informants often responded with accounts of the heavy and wearisome duties imposed on them by the Mir: winding strips of cloth around their bellies to dull the pain of hunger while working in early spring, and being forced to neglect their own fields in order to tend to the Mir's. In written histories, many of which link the consolidation and expansion of the Hunza state to the necessity of extensive irrigation infrastructure for settled agriculture, *rajaáki* appears as either the means or the end, the *raison d'être*, of state power, if not both (Sidky 1996; Stellrecht 2006).²⁶

In written sources as well as in my 2001 interviews, I had seen the term *rajaáki* used exclusively to denote this category of forced labor under the now-extinct princely state. It formed part of a public and highly standardized discourse about the difficulties of the past and, in particular, the cruelties of the Mir's regime. In this narrative the transition from the oppression and constriction of the past to a present of comparative abundance and a future bright with the promise of development was regularly figured as a transformation "from darkness to light." The same basic structure informed the stories told in interview after interview, often rich with embodied details about the nearness of starvation and the watchtowers from which the Mir's guards spied on the people and prevented them from shirking their duties or from leaving the valley.

²⁵ Exemption from this requirement, as well as from certain taxes and other obligations, was one of the marks of 'noble' status accorded to the *nambardars* (lineage heads) and other favored persons; both the status and the exemption could be revoked by the Mir, sometimes resulting in the flight of individuals or entire sub-lineages from the region (Löhr 1997:112).

²⁶ See also Schmidt 2004 for a consideration of the actual management of these systems in the region.

Almost all households in Hunza derive at least part of their income and subsistence from agriculture. Because of this the necessity of laboring to maintain and repair the irrigation channels against the forces of entropy—geological, hydrological, meteorological, and, occasionally, supernatural—is ongoing, as continuous a fact of life in Hunza today as it was in the past. As such it marks a point of both continuity and rupture with the past. On the one hand, maintenance of the channels and other collective infrastructure is now as it was then a simple prerequisite of human existence in its present form,²⁷ the basis of social life and political order. Water from *nallahs*, glacier-fed streams, is directed via long channels (*kuhl*), which must be maintained against entropy, where it flows through smaller capillary channels between fields and orchards (*bagh*). The water, however, is not allowed to flow freely but is apportioned in units of time to each *rom* (lineage) and within the *rom* to each family's plots; decisions about distribution of both water and of collective labor obligations are made by the *nambardars* (Bu.: *trangfa*; the *rom* [lineage] heads of each village) under the *ala nambardar* (the *nambardar* of the village).

On the other hand, between the past of the princely state and the 'present' of my fieldwork in the early twenty-first century, the context in which people recognize and respond to the obligation to participate in collective labor had changed significantly. Where once it was the Mir (or his officials) who decided what work was to be done and conveyed his requirements through the lineage heads, now the decisions, like the work, are a collective responsibility. No one is forced to work; the

²⁷ That is to say, in the form of settled agriculture (Allan 1990; Schmidt 2004).

lineage heads may levy fines against households that consistently fail to contribute, but no physical punishments are meted out to shirkers as in the old days. One's obligation is not to the Mir, nor even to the *nambardars* of one's *rom*, but to the community at large.

These radical changes in the socio-political context, together with the way people spoke about and experienced practices of collective labor, led me to associate the term *rajaáki* with the past. In contrast, I emphasized in my own interpretations, as my informants often did in theirs, the voluntary character of village-level collective labor, such as work on the channels in the present. Following the sharp dichotomy that my early informants drew between the present and the past, I overlooked the web of ethical obligations that continue to draw people into practices of collective labor in the absence of top-down coercion backed by the threat of violence.

These transformations are, as I have suggested, spoken of by Hunzakuts themselves in terms of a dramatic break with the past, a transformation from “darkness to light.” As exemplified by shifts in the practice and meaning of *rajaáki*, this break is framed in political and moral terms as a move from an era of oppression and coercion to one of freedom and openness. Freedom has become a central concern for anthropologists of ethics in recent years (Laidlaw 2001; Robbins 2007). In a highly influential article that has inspired much of this renewed interest, James Laidlaw traces several lines of thinking on the topic in philosophy and the social sciences, arriving at a distinction between ‘ethics’ as a broad category encompassing “any way of answering the Socratic question ‘How ought one to live?’” (Laidlaw 2001:316) and ‘morality’ as “ethical systems where self-denying values inform law-like obligations”

(Laidlaw 2001:317). Ethics, then, is a question of freedom, albeit freedom within cultural and historical limits. From Foucault's late writings on ethics, Laidlaw draws two valuable lessons for anthropology: first, an attention to ethical freedom that "cannot be captured in a history of moral codes or social rules" (Laidlaw 2001:322). Secondly, in Foucault's formulation of the process of subjectivation, or the work of ethical self-fashioning, he finds "a way of studying ethical freedom ethnographically" (Laidlaw 2001:322). Both points address a need within the anthropology of ethics, but subsequent ethnographers building on Laidlaw's foundational work have sometimes taken it as license to ignore the obligatory or morally constrained dimensions of ethical action to focus on and even celebrate freedom and agency (Mattingly 2010). It has also, I argue, tended to foreclose the possibility of identifying other ways of locating freedom in the ethical practice of ethnographic subjects.

Joel Robbins (2007:295), in a response to Laidlaw, argues for the value of the longstanding interest in "unfreedom" in certain strands of anthropology and its effort to "denaturalize the role notions of individual freedom play in various western ideologies." His Dumontian model of value-spheres maintains a distinction between forms of activity that actors conceive of as "free" and those undertaken in response to specific obligations, but offers ways of understanding how the two kinds of value can organize ethical action differently within different domains of a single social world. In the terms of his model, the changes I have described in the meaning and practice of *rajaáki* could be understood in terms of a shift in from the morality of reproduction to the morality of freedom. This would in fact be a fairly accurate representation of the way people in Hunza understand their recent history. Not only *rajaáki* but, in certain

important ways, all forms of labor have undergone a significant transformation such that labor itself can be understood as a “terrain of ethics” (Mayblin 2010b) in which people in Hunza cultivate personal virtue and reputations as moral persons. To accept this narrative too readily, however, is to ignore the many ways in which people’s ethical projects remain complexly bound up with multiple obligations they both are bound and desire to fulfill. Furthermore, the Foucauldian model of ethical subjectivation fails to capture the many ways in which both morally valued ways of relating to others (Anderson; Robbins) and particular visions of moral and political collectivity (Mittermaier) are produced and reproduced through labor. In order to properly contextualize this argument, however, it will be necessary to give a more detailed account of the history of the past forty years, and particularly of the way this history has transformed both the political-economic organization and the moral meanings of labor.

The Era of Transformation, 1974-1982

As I discuss in Chapter One, life in Hunza did not seem to have changed significantly for some time after the events of 1947 that resulted in the accession of the Northern Areas to the newly independent nation of Pakistan. According to many informants, even the reforms that ended the princely state in 1974 did not significantly alter the lives of ordinary Hunzakuts; as some pointed out, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, the son of last Mir, was repeatedly elected to the Northern Areas Legislative Council in the decades that followed. This was the first of a series of changes that, by all accounts, combined to produce a rapid and dramatic transformation. The second was

the opening of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) in 1978, drastically easing travel to Gilgit and the cities of downcountry Pakistan.

The third and, for many, most important event of this momentous period was the founding of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Hunza in 1982. AKRSP is one among several NGOs grouped under the umbrella of the Aga Khan Development Network. Unlike its sister NGOs of the AKDN, AKRSP was founded specifically to help the especially poor and vulnerable mountain communities of Northern Pakistan, such that the beginning of its operations there marks its beginning as an organization (Wood 2006). Nonetheless AKRSP and the AKDN itself are embedded in a longer history that begins in the late 19th century, and it will be necessary to begin there in order to place this organization and its work in proper context.

The AKDN is among the most visible and characteristic manifestations of a process of consolidation and bureaucratization of the widely scattered transnational Isma'ili *jama`at* (the religious community) that can be said to have begun in the 1840s, when the first Aga Khan (the 46th Isma'ili Imam) settled in under British rule. From this position at the hub of the extensive trading networks of their Indian Khoja followers, the next three generations of Imams (each of whom subsequently bore the title Aga Khan) began a process of contacting the peripheral communities of Isma'ilis, including those of the Gilgit-Baltistan region. Concurrently, they undertook the consolidation and bureaucratization of the office of the Imamate itself. Aga Khan III who, became Imam in 1885 and died in 1957 laid the ideological and institutional foundations of this process. His contributions to the consolidation of the Isma'ili

community under the Imamate largely took the form of creating formal institutions of religious governance²⁸ and social welfare (beginning with schools and hospitals in East Africa and India). In his *firman*s (authoritative and binding pronouncements), he framed worldly (economic) success and modernization as religious duties incumbent upon all Isma'ilis (Clarke 1976:486). Aga Khan III was succeeded by his grandson, Prince Karim al-Husseini, Aga Khan IV in 1957. As *hazir Imam* (the present Imam), he has pursued the projects begun by his grandfather, pushing them to far greater degrees of institutional complexity and bureaucratization and with shifts in emphasis to align with broader political and development currents. From 'social welfare' within the Isma'ili community, he moved toward international development in an ostensibly secular mode, aimed at progress and improvement for all members of the societies in which Isma'ilis lived. In this spirit, the AKDN was founded in the late 1900s.

The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme began operations in the Gilgit-Baltistan region in Pakistan in 1982. It was born out of and took part in a number of currents and debates circulating in development discourse at the time, including trends toward serving the truly poor and marginal rather than independent landed farmers, and toward respecting and drawing on "indigenous knowledge" and securing "participation," from local communities (Wood 2006:4). AKRSP's approach to the competing imperatives to let local communities shape development while acting as a 'catalyst' for development informed by technical expertise and experience (Wood

²⁸ The institutions governing the religious and other 'internal' aspects of the Isma'ili community, sometimes distinguished from the institutions of social welfare as "jama'ati institutions" versus "imamate institutions" (Steinberg 2011), will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four. Their development and bureaucratization paralleled and was, in many respects, entangled with the processes I describe for the social welfare institutions.

2006) was the creation of Village Organizations (VO) and, shortly thereafter of Women's Organizations (WO), in each village they approached. The creation of these organizations on the part of the village communities themselves was a prerequisite for AKRSP assistance: in theory, communities were to include representatives from at least 75 percent of households in the village or other residential unit.²⁹ AKRSP would then help the VO in establishing a savings program, with AKRSP acting as banker. Members could take out small loans against their collective savings, which in the early days especially were often for purposes of household consumption and smoothing over still-frequent fluctuations in household resources and food supply. The pedagogical or, in the language of AKRSP, "capacity-building" functions of these savings programs were, however, a considerable part of their rationale. During my research in 2000, I accompanied the staff of the local field office of AKRSP for Hunza on numerous visits to VOs and WOs in the central valley and Gojal. An essential element in these somewhat ritualized visits was the display of the savings account ledger by the VO or WO secretary to the team, who were as likely to comment on the quality and neatness of the recordkeeping as they were on the contents of the village savings account or the rate of loan repayment. This was particularly true for the WOs.³⁰ Founded in response to a recognition that women's voices and needs were not being well represented by the VOs, the WOs were intended as a forum for women's concerns but had a particular emphasis on giving women the confidence and skills to

²⁹ The first head of AKRSP notes in his (co-authored) book on the organization, "the VO is not coterminous with the village because the village may not represent a socioeconomic compact with common needs and interests" (Khan & Khan 1992:45).

³⁰ See Scherz 2014 on regimes of audit in development.

participate more actively in village decision-making as well as entrepreneurial activities. As such, women's behavior in WO meetings, the initiative and leadership shown by particular women and the development of skills, such as accounting and recordkeeping, was subject to particular scrutiny and comment by the AKRSP staff.

In addition to the savings program, AKRSP's standard practice was to inaugurate its relationship with each new VO by providing monetary and technical support for a physical infrastructure project chosen by the VO. In the early days, these very often took the form of extending water channels to create more cultivable land) or building link roads and bridges to connect villages or neighborhoods (*mohallahs*) with the Karakoram Highway. Later the construction of micro-hydroelectric plants (or microhydels) joined the list of common infrastructure projects.

The savings programs and Productive Physical Infrastructure (PPI) projects continued to constitute the bulk of AKRSP's activities in Hunza when I was first there in 2000, along with technical support for agriculture (introducing new crop varieties, encouraging the cultivation of potatoes as a cash crop, and proposing alterations to systems of animal husbandry) and forestry.³¹ The staff of the Field Management Units (FMUs) was comprised of technical experts in each of these areas together with a Social Organizer, whose job was to liaise with the community to determine its needs while simultaneously helping to "build the capacity" of the VOs as cohesive, representative bodies capable of determining and expressing those needs. At the time

³¹ Hunza has no natural forests at the elevation of the central villages, and juniper stands at higher elevations were heavily depleted during the expansion of the Mir's state. The planting of trees for construction and fuel has radically changed the look of the cultivated areas and provided material for a significant boom in new house construction in the 1990s.

of my visit in 2000, the FMU Hunza office, located in the village of Aliabad, was staffed by a Social Organizer and five specialists in various technical fields, including economic development and forestry. On most days of the week, one or two of the office's Land Cruisers would ferry at least one but more often several members of the team to other villages, where they would meet with local VOs and WOs, sometimes several in a day. These visits regularly included inspecting savings accounts; soliciting requests for new projects or mediating discussions within the VO about what projects would be most needed or useful; and hearing accounts of in-progress PPIs, including grievances about either AKRSP's handling of the project or (more often, in my experience) about the way that conflicts or competing interests internal to the village or the VO were hampering these projects. While these discussions were often civil and focused on immediate activities and problems, larger political concerns were never entirely outside the frame. Accusations that particular families were benefiting more from projects than others or attempting to exercise control over the VO's relationship with AKRSP were common. The politics of intra-village inequality were especially sharp in the former capital of the Hunza state, Karimabad, where members of the former Wazirs' lineage and others who had been favored under the princely state were concentrated.³² Still larger questions also loomed. On one occasion when I accompanied the team to the remote village of Misgar, located in a side-valley at the northern edge of the settled territory of Hunza, a lengthy argument occurred over the

³² Other than the lineages elevated by the Mirs for their service, the *roms* are not ranked and differences in status between people below these 'noble' lineages are slight. New forms of inequality arising from market participation are changing this.

value of a possible future mining project then under consideration by AKRSP in partnership with the government. The highly animated discussion included accusations that the government's engineer had planted a *taweez* (amulet) in the mine in a cynical move to attribute the mine's unexpectedly low yield to black magic rather than his own poor predictions. Sometimes the visits included tours of the projects themselves, at which technical advice might be dispensed, but very often the primary substance and focus of evaluation on these visits was the day-to-day procedural activity of the VOs and WOs.

VOs as Village Democracy

The emphasis on capacity building and on the VOs and WOs as a mode of governance are closely linked to the frequent portrayal of the political situation in Hunza in the 1980s as a "leadership vacuum" (Wood 2006:41). The dissolution of the Mirdom in 1974, and the apparent lack of interest on the part of the Pakistani state in taking up a substantive role in regional governance, was understood to have left an open space in its wake, a gap in both inter- and intra-village political life. From its early days, AKRSP saw itself and its projects as filling a need not only for physical infrastructure, more efficient agricultural practices or income-generating opportunities, but also for leadership. The 'lack' that defined their target beneficiaries was, therefore, not only economic but also political; a perceived absence of village organization or structure was an implicit referent and target of such institutional priorities as 'capacity building.' Evidence for this lack was seen in the inefficiency of local agricultural practices and the deterioration of collective infrastructure, specifically the water

channels.³³ This language gives the perhaps inadvertent impression that even the coercive regime of the Mirs was better than this era of rudderless indeterminacy, in spite of the fact that the policies of the Mirs were, themselves, responsible for creating many of the inefficiencies identified by AKRSP.³⁴ At the same time, the discursive construction of a leadership vacuum overlooks the fact that, far from dissolving into chaos after the end of the princely state, the logics and mechanisms of inter-lineage political organization, allocation of labor and dispute resolution that constituted village social organization under the princely state continued—and continue—to function. Indeed, the success of the VO model and consequently of AKRSP is almost certainly dependent on the extent to which the model in general and each individual VO in its particularities built upon the principles of local autonomy, egalitarianism and consensus through discussion that underlie this system.

It will be necessary here to briefly describe the principles that underlie village political organization. Each village contains several named lineages (*roms*), each of which appoints a *nambardar* (lineage head) as its representative. These lineages, as will become significant later, are not spatially segregated; residences are distributed equally throughout the village, so that neighbors and close relatives (Bu.: *sukúyo*) are

³³ These channels function in the scholarly and development literature as icons of order in Hunza, but as such they can be read two ways: they can be read either as an image of centralization and authority or of the autonomy and village democracy of the *rom* system and the cooperative spirit of the people.

³⁴ Allan (1990) supports the idea that starvation during regular springtime famines was still a reality as late as the 1980s, making a case that the failure of Hunzakuts to use their land and resources to mitigate that danger (e.g., by planting vegetable gardens or shifting from wheat to potato cultivation) was a continuing direct result of the Mir's taxation policies, which required payment in grain and extracted surplus labor to such an extent that people had little ability to undertake innovative or more involved agricultural projects on their own behalf.

not significantly overlapping categories.³⁵ The village as a whole is represented by the *ala nambardar*. The *nambardars*, in consultation with the elders (Bu.: *uyunkosis*) of their *roms*, make decisions about matters of common property and resources (such as the water and water channels) and resolve internal disputes. From my observations, it appears that the political principle governing the exercise of power is that groups and constituencies convene around the solving of particular problems and that strong norms dictate that the parties taking part in discussions are limited to those directly involved in or relevant to the problem at hand. Thus, while clear socio-political groups—lineages, neighborhoods and villages—are relevant to political life and people’s identities, *qua* corporate groups they exist primarily in the sense that they may be convened to solve a particular problem of political life. As Strathern (1992:85) puts it, “groups exist in anticipation of action... expectant of the moment when they will act as one.”

There is thus a strong pressure or norm dictating that political action be kept as local as possible embedded in the group structures that make collective and cooperative action possible. This tendency is balanced, as I will try to show, by a countervailing interest in the moral possibilities in expanding the sphere of relatedness and mutual obligation. As I demonstrate in subsequent chapters, kinship and religious life are two areas where this expansive tendency is evident, but development too suggests spiritual as well as material rewards can come of making common cause with

³⁵ Stellrecht (2006:193) suggests that the dense concentration of the population in fortified village cores dates from the period of state consolidation starting around 1800, and that previously the lineages did occupy separate enclaves around the village land.

distant others. There are implications here for the questions of freedom I raise in this chapter: freedom from heavy-handed attempts at control, especially from those not immediately interested or rightfully involved is highly valued and tied to a general resistance to centralized or top-down planning. However, locally important models of freedom are also freedom *to*—freedom to make community, and to speak and be heard.

The ‘task-oriented’ nature of political action and the groups that coalesce around it is, I think, one reason why the VO model worked so well, particularly during the era in which AKRSP’s activity centered on the Productive Physical Infrastructure projects. Even at the time, VOs did not always coincide neatly with village boundaries—many consisted of neighborhoods (*mohallahs*)—and they did not all function equally well as political units. By many accounts, most VOs in Hunza today are defunct, and I did not see much evidence of their ongoing relevance during my later fieldwork. Somewhat paradoxically, then, AKRSP talks about the VOs, the central and unique features of its model of participatory development, as being alternatively an outgrowth of existing strengths present in the local communities—their cooperative, democratic and egalitarian character and institutions—and as a necessary intervention to teach villagers how to govern themselves.

This confusion may be linked to the competing demands on development policy-framing identified by Ferguson or more specifically to tensions between development philosophies within which, in an account by Wood, AKRSP first developed and articulated its approach (Ferguson 1990; Wood 2006). Wood argues that AKRSP’s founders were caught between impulses to frame their interventions as

responsive to and learning from the indigenous knowledge and traditional structures in the communities they served, on the one hand, and as a catalyst for development on the other (Wood 2006:8-10). The need to walk a careful line between these two framings is also tied to questions of replicability (a key evaluative criteria used by, among others, the World Bank (2002) in its evaluations of AKRSP): if the successes of AKRSP are too closely linked to the socio-cultural (or geographical or religious) specificities of the regional “laboratory” in which it first developed its ideas (World Bank 2002:17), in what sense could they be said to be replicable in radically different contexts (Settle 2011)? One way AKRSP has handled this has been to emphasize “learning by doing” as the real substance of its approach (Khan & Khan 1992:17).

As will become clear throughout this dissertation, however, this tension is echoed by a similar ambiguity in the development discourse of Hunzakuts themselves, in which they sometimes present themselves as having been always and essentially self-reliant, progressive and, above all, cooperative, and, thus, ideal subjects of development and sometimes as essentially lacking, dependent on outside agencies for their transformation.

A New Regime of Labor

In addition to the VOs, a second key component of AKRSP’s strategy that has had a deep and long-lasting impact on the way development has been understood and experienced in Hunza, is the practice of requiring communities to provide the non-technical labor for projects they undertake. Part of the task of the VOs was to mobilize this labor and to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of the responsibility for its provision from the village households. The agreement between the two parties as to

who would provide what took the form of an explicit contract, a form which, as we see in the story of Rumana and the library renovation project that opens the chapter, had by the 2000s become the standard way of inaugurating any development project or phase of a project jointly undertaken by any entity representing the local community (such as the Altit Town Management Society) and any AKDN organization (in that case, AKCSP).

In securing manual labor from the community in exchange for its technical and monetary assistance, AKRSP drew directly on the practices of utilizing and organizing collective labor that had underlain the Mir's state.³⁶ To some extent this was acknowledged by the organization and by sympathetic observers, such that Masood Khan, a senior AKCSP consultant in heritage preservation writing in a volume summarizing decades of change in the region and centering on the work of the AKDN, could use the term *rajaáki* to describe community contributions of labor toward architectural restoration projects in the 1990s, glossing it as “voluntary unskilled labour,” without further comment (Khan 2006:317). In general, however, continuities with the past are framed by the AKDN institutions in terms of a vague ‘tradition’ and to “local skills and knowledge” rather than with reference to the specific political and social arrangements under the Mir's state. (See Chapter Six for a discussion of how this occurs in the domain of heritage restoration and management.)

The use of labor from the village communities in its projects was not only an important cost-saving measure for AKRSP, but an essential component of its policy-

³⁶ And perhaps preceded it; see my discussion in Chapter One.

driven mandate to secure the participation of its constituent communities. “Participation” has been a key concept in development policy since the mid- to late-1980s (Mosse 2005), a trend of which AKRSP was an early adopter and, regionally at least, a widely-studied and emulated exemplar. Others (Mosse 2004; Li 2007) have described the way that participation confers legitimacy on development regimes by supporting their claims to be responsive to the interests and needs of target populations in a representative and democratic way as well as to advance their wellbeing. As the trend toward participation as a metric for development projects grew it was linked to other important concepts signifying the values of responsibility and self-governance central to neoliberal or ‘New Development Paradigm’ frameworks (Settle 2011). Development projects from this era onward have actively sought to render their targets “entrepreneurial, participatory, responsible and corruption-averse,” (Li 2007:16) with the ultimate end of transforming them from poor, underdeveloped dependents into responsible, self-governing, self-improving subjects. In development discourse at large, then, participation is not only a means of development, but it is also, in a sense, its end.

Labor and Spiritual Development

For AKRSP the level of participation secured through VOs, evidenced above all in the quantities of ‘unskilled labor’ performed toward development projects by their beneficiaries, was the defining feature of their model and the often-cited key to its success. Similarly, my informants in Hunza, for the most part, lauded this aspect of their interaction with AKRSP and took as given the fairness and efficacy of the exchange of labor for technical knowledge and money. The expectation of labor in

return for development was, crucially, always framed as voluntary on the part of communities, though both villagers and NGO staff did sometimes acknowledge that social pressures could be brought to bear within communities to ensure that everyone contributed their share. While I heard many criticisms of AKRSP and the VOs over time, I never heard it said that the organization was exploiting local labor or exacting labor as a fee for assistance that should have been free. On the contrary, voluntary participation through labor—and in other ways, such as education (see Chapter Five)—was held up by many of my informants as a sign of both the particular ‘traditional’ virtues of Hunza people and their special affinity for development.

These virtues were often asserted in explicit contrast to the development efforts of neighboring groups, with which many of my interlocutors had direct experience either through travel for work or education or through their employment with AKDN and other NGOs working in these regions. For example, in 2007, I met by chance a woman named Rubina whom I had known in 2000 through my close association with AKRSP. When I met her the second time, she was working for another NGO active in the region, but in the course of the ensuing conversation (we met at the bus depot in Gilgit and thus had the whole of the two-hour ride to central Hunza to talk) she told me about her experiences working for AKRSP in Pakistan-held Jammu and Kashmir in the aftermath of the devastating 2005 earthquake.³⁷ She had been struck by the slow pace of relief work—more than a year after the quake there were piles of uncleared

³⁷ The earthquake largely spared Hunza, causing not a single death in the valley. However the devastation it caused to the southeast had left a strong impression on many people I spoke with in 2006-08, particularly those like Rubina who had been involved in subsequent humanitarian and development efforts there, or who knew others who had.

rubble in the streets, she said, and life-sustaining projects like a new well had stalled—and by the conflicts of identity and interest that marred these projects. She said that people there expect that when “you” come in with a project, you will do everything. If you ask them to contribute labor, she said, “they just look at you.”

As such observations (and those of some outside observers (e.g. Settle 2011) reveal, and as I have mentioned, participation in development through labor has a very specific texture in Hunza, largely because of the dense overlapping of a set of historical practices, moral and specifically religious frameworks and ethical values concerning labor that is specific to the valley.³⁸ As will become clearer in subsequent chapters, the way the AKDN institutions serve as signs or vehicles for the Imam’s presence and guidance mean that these institutions, bureaucratic as they are, are not without a spiritual or charismatic element (see Poor 2014). The religious ethic of service (or *khidmat*), which echoes strongly in other practices construed as ‘volunteerism,’ also lends the practice of drawing on local labor a moral significance. Over the next two chapters I will focus on the ethics of sharing labor among kin and neighbors and the religious dimension of labor as ‘service,’ but even within the purview of development projects, physical labor is a terrain of ethics, a context in which moral ways of being and living are inculcated and nurtured (Mayblin 2010b:44), and a practice through which many of the virtues or moral qualities most important to Hunzakuts are both inculcated and recognized by others.

³⁸ For some observers, this is a key problem with AKRSP’s approach as it complicates the question of replicability in areas where the organization does not enjoy the level of religious prestige and loyalty that it does among Isma’ilis or the same singularity as both service provider and substitute for local government that it does through much of the Gilgit-Baltistan.

The morality of labor in Hunza hinges on two conditions: that it is voluntary, and that it is for others. The transformation of *rajaáki*, is less a change in the practice itself than in its context: while the physical tasks performed are in some cases the same (as in the ever-present channel work), they were formerly embedded in a coercive regime based on the extraction of all possible surplus labor. Now they are part of a socio-political arrangement marked by considerable scope for negotiation and choice, albeit not without social pressures and strong normative expectations. In Foucault's terms, from being embedded in a structure of domination, labor has become a field of power, and hence to a potential terrain of ethics. Not all labor is *rajaáki*, of course (though very many kinds of work can be framed as development, as will be clear in later chapters). *Rajaáki* in its new iteration as participation is also, importantly, a response to an obligation of which the community is both the subject and the ultimate beneficiary. Participation in development projects is, ideally at least, *for* others not in the one-to-one sense of charity (or as in practices of sharing labor discussed in the following chapter) but in the guise of the village community comprised of both kin and non-kin. In its contemporary form we might define *rajaáki* loosely as the labor given by individuals (on behalf of households) in fulfillment of collective responsibilities and for the ultimate benefit of the community.

The transformation of the conditions under which people labor has been experienced by many in Hunza as a transition from coercion to freedom and has thus been a powerful one. This experience of radical transformation, coupled with the particular history of development tied to the particularities of the interaction between AKRSP and village communities of Hunza has meant that everyday labor itself has

become a terrain of ethics or, as Robbins put it, to a domain in which the morality of freedom plays a significant role. Everyday labor has become a site where people reflect on and imagine the moral possibilities contained within the phrase “spiritual and material development.” These possibilities, however, are rooted in a strong sense of what people owe to one another and to their community. Obligation is not only a constraint on moral action and imagination, but a crucial site for its grounding. As Mayblin notes in another ethnography of ethical life grounded in labor, “morality, in this context, is perceived much like other human necessities... as both a requirement and a desire” (Mayblin 2010b:44). Both Robbins and Laidlaw acknowledge the entanglement of voluntarism and obligation in ethical action. Laidlaw (2001:323) cautions against conceiving of freedom narrowly as “the idea that freedom is only possible in the total absence of constraint or relations of power,” of “the idea that to act freely is to act in conformity with reason (or one’s ‘true’ interests...)” Laidlaw (2002:323) asks not what systems are defined by moral rules and which by ethical freedom, but “what is the relation between the active espousal of the self-denying systems of values we call morality, and the other ethical values with which they always coexist?”

Subsequent thinkers who draw on Laidlaw, however, have straightforwardly opposed ethics and morality as freedom to reproduction. Following Williams, on the other hand, Laidlaw makes morality a subset of ethics. Hence morality (in the sense of obligations and rules) is always in some sense subsumed within the ethical; morality is crucially a matter of freedom whether we see ourselves as ethically free or not. I argue, however, that the reverse is also true: ethics is not ethical in the absence of

specific notions of the good— norms, ideals, values, and even rules—and hence obligation is always part of ethical freedom. I propose that they are related in a kind of mutual encompassment. Further, I would say, in fact, that the defining feature of the forms of thought and action we call moral or ethical³⁹ is the attempt to wrestle with the implications of precisely this entanglement of obligation (as a catchall for the various constraints we acknowledge on our action) and freedom (as an essential and unavoidable condition of our being).

The transformation of *rajaáki* into ‘voluntary collective labor,’ a practice that combines valued forms of individual choice and freedom with equally valued forms of relating to others through mutual obligation, enables an expanded sense of what is possible. It also offers a powerful model for how this can be achieved through the everyday labor of ordinary people. It thus also brings development as a distant moral ideal into conjunction with the ongoing work of producing and reproducing social life. To anticipate an argument I make later in the dissertation, it enables a double temporality of development, a linking of the morality of freedom with that of reproduction, and with the ordinary ethics of the ongoing and everyday with the expansive possibilities of the imagined future.

The open-endedness of labor’s meaning and its function in relation to Hunza identity make it available for use in many political and moral projects, including the ideal of “spiritual and material development,” but also in Hunzakuts’ own projects of

³⁹ I have not always felt certain that a clear and categorical definition or distinction of the terms is possible or desirable as part of an anthropological project, but Zigon (2014) makes a good case for why the ongoing attempt, at least, is necessary.

exclusion and othering. It has also been available to AKRSP as a resource for its own project of securing participation and evidencing sustainability.

A cynical perspective on AKRSP's appropriation of *rajaáki* labor, born from a one-sidedly critical view of development at large, might point to the continuity of the term itself between the old regime of the princely state under the Mir and the new regime of development under AKRSP. Continuities in both the term and the forms of labor itself trouble the clean distinction between one era and the next implied in the "darkness to light" narrative described earlier in the chapter. The expansion of the water channels to bring new land under cultivation, so important to the consolidation of the power of the Hunza state, was touted by AKRSP among its highest early priorities and as one of its most successful types of PPI intervention. In the meantime, the necessity of ongoing labor to maintain the channels (along with other tasks pertaining to common property) remains an important focus of village-level socio-political organization, as it was throughout the period between 1974 and 1982. Such a perspective usefully troubles the overly stark binary between past and present as well as the suggestion that the present is unmarked by differences or relations of power. At the same time, it ignores the significance of the moral dimensions of labor, and of transformations in the way that such labor is valued and experienced by people in Hunza.

In the remaining part of this chapter, I turn to describe the landscape of development as I found it in 2006-08 and to questions about the temporality of developmental time raised by the ongoing changes in this landscape.

Transformations in the Landscape of Development

When I returned to Hunza in 2006, I went without seeking formal affiliation with any of the AKDN organizations, but I expected to establish friendly relations with the organization and local staff. In light of the ubiquity of the organization's projects and vehicles in 2000, I was surprised to find the organization's presence far less visible on the landscape half a decade later, even as other organizations—AKDN NGOs, other national and international organizations, and a much broader array of intermediate institutions (local NGOs, Town Management Societies, etc.) and private-sector service providers—had proliferated. To some extent my perception of AKRSP's circumscribed presence has to do with my own positioning. In 2000, I interned at the AKRSP field office in Aliabad, lived with the female staff in their hostel and often travelled with the field teams to conduct my interviews alongside their VO visits. The village of Aliabad itself was a commercial hub for the valley, its distinguishing feature the long row of shops, businesses and government and NGO offices fronting the Karakoram Highway, which splits the village in two. Altit, where I chose to settle in 2006, was, by contrast, a much older village (one of the three core settlements that existed prior to the 19th century expansion), removed from the highway and accessible by a feeder road that split from the main link road for Karimabad and was, during most of my fieldwork, unpaved. Though connected by regular *suzuki* (passenger minibus) service and within relatively easy walking distance of the administrative capital of Karimabad, Altit had the feeling of being somewhat removed from the traffic and commerce associated with the highway or the seasonal bustle of Karimabad, which was also the major tourist center.

The most visible and often-discussed NGO activity in Altit was that of Aga Khan Cultural Services, Pakistan (AKCSP), which had recently completed a refurbishment of the village *khun* (the historic fortified core) and was launching its restoration of Altit Fort, a 1,000 year-old tower that loomed over the *khun* and had once served as the Mirs' residence). The day-to-day interactions between NGOs and the community to which I was most privy were thus those between Altit villagers and AKCSP, often mediated by the Altit Town Management Society, and the focus of my research shifted accordingly. Meanwhile, the Field Management Unit based in Aliabad with which I had worked earlier had closed, and projects in Hunza were run from the organization's Gilgit office. The model of mobilizing collective labor that AKRSP pioneered, however, was still in practice, used by AKCSP and many other organizations. The proliferation of task-specific local bodies like the Altit Town Management Society suggests that the VO model has left a legacy as well.

The closing of the Hunza FMU office and the decreased visibility of AKRSP's presence was in fact linked to a shift in the organization's policy and sense of mission. Malisse Ruthven writes that AKRSP was in 2000 "at a crossroads," particularly in terms of its financial relationship to the VOs. The decentralized system of VO savings accounts and lending practices supported the value of village autonomy, but a more formal and centralized banking operation would be more efficient and bring the intimate and informal world of the VOs into line with standard banking practice

(Ruthven 2011:203).⁴⁰ AKRSP's choice led to the establishment of the Islamabad-based First Microfinance Bank in 2002. Ruthven writes, "Any loss of village autonomy has been compensated for by the financial sustainability enjoyed by a larger operation including in the lowlands of Punjab and Karachi, as well as by the professionalization of the banking system and the flexibility given to managers in assessing projects and individuals for loans" (Ruthven 2011:203). Other changes accompanied this shift; with incomes already substantially raised (World Bank 2002) leading to less need for consumption loans to ameliorate seasonal shortages and lower yields on the PPIs in terms of economic benefit and goodwill after the initial round of much-needed improvements, the organization pulled back from its focus on infrastructure projects and turned its attention to "enterprise development" (Ruthven 2011:203; Settle 2012).

Even some of those associated with AKRSP express doubts at times about the realistic prospects and even the value of pursuing a "growth" model of development as opposed to one "sustainable" in a more reproductive sense (Wood 2006:15-16). As Wood's reflections suggest, the question of AKRSP's sustainability inevitably raises further questions about what it is, precisely, that might or should be sustained. In its original mission statement, the organization's goal was said to be to "work itself out of a job" by ending poverty, isolation and other sources of the need for its services. In its 2002 report, the World Bank notes that AKRSP, though it had met or exceeded many

⁴⁰ There is some reason to think that AKRSP was motivated by the relatively low rates of loan-recovery under the VO system noted and criticized by the World Bank in its review of the organization commissioned by AKRSP itself (Wood 2006; World Bank 2002).

of its other targets, such as doubling real incomes, had not accomplished this goal; immediately, however, the authors question the “realism” of this goal (World Bank 2002:8). This constitutes a tacit acknowledgement by the World Bank of the reality of development as an ongoing way of life rather than a singular moment of historical rupture or an intervention with clearly defined goals and a foreseeable endpoint. AKRSP’s own transformations can be taken as further evidence of this, as can the proliferation and pluralization of local and international NGOs, private and semi-private enterprises and intermediary organizations (what some observers have identified as institutions of civil society) that has coincided with AKRSP’s relatively less salient presence in the valley. Arguably, the effects of AKRSP’s work in its earlier phases closely resemble the clean arc of unilinear, teleological progress that characterized early development discourse (and which also both resembles and coincides with the “darkness to light” narrative so ubiquitous in my notebooks from 2000) (Settle 2011). The end of this era, however, was not marked by a strong sense of sadness, failure or loss, at least among the vast majority of those to whom I spoke. At most, an uneasy sense of uncertainty or lack of clarity or direction troubled those who had been most actively committed to projects of transformation over the previous few decades (this sense sometimes marked my conversations with Danesh and Rubina, mentioned earlier, for example).

The period of my 2006-08 fieldwork was marked not only by a visually and institutionally diversified landscape but also by a different temporality. It was as though both people and institutions had settled in for the long haul, accepting an identity as perpetually developing subjects, and evaluations of both individual people

and of organizations tended to hinge less on their efficacy at meeting defined targets and instituting tangible change than on the manner in which they pursued the goals of “spiritual and material development.” Perhaps not coincidentally, the language of sustainability had come to predominate in the discourse of the NGOs, both in Hunza and in the larger development sphere. Local discourse of development seemed to alternate between multiple temporalities. On the one hand, a familiar progressive, teleological sense of time focused on gradual but inevitable transformation was present—implicit, for example, in AKRSP’s original goal of working itself out of a job or in one older woman’s comment that Hunza would one day soon become “like Paris.” On the other hand, a more reproductive or ongoing temporal logic was also present in the way people spoke about and practiced development. An officer of the local NGO KADO, for example, told me that the goal of the organization was to take over responsibility for development from the international NGOs, including the AKDN, in part by building its own capacity to broker funds from foreign donor organizations and governments; this implies less an anticipation of becoming self-sufficient than a move toward acquiring local control over the ongoing process of development. This sense is also reflected in many of KADO’s projects, such as the development of local handicrafts and the creation of culturally appropriate, Burushaski-language programming for a local TV station. Even the goals of its Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) had as much to do with supporting and maintaining life in its present form as with transforming it; one service they anticipated offering at the local ICT4D office was the provision of up-to-date satellite weather information to help people plan their agricultural work. I

do not think this multiple temporality of development as lived experience is a unique feature of Hunza (see Pandian 2008 & 2009), but it does take on a particular moral valence in light of the particular relationship between worldly and spiritual concerns that characterizes development there.

In this context, I argue, the moral value of labor and its importance in relation to the larger project of development has also undergone a change. In the earlier moment *rajaáki* as voluntary, participatory labor had been valorized primarily as the mechanism by which the positive transformations associated with development had been and would be instituted. Indeed, the transformation of the category of *rajaáki* from ‘corvée labor’ to ‘voluntary unskilled labor’ was itself iconic of the transformation it was intended to effect, the transformation of an era of darkness and oppression to one of freedom and light. As I will attempt to show in the chapters that follow, at the time of my research in 2006-08 there was *also* a terrain of ethics whose moral power and value lay less in its outcomes than in the spirit with which it was carried out. The spirit with which people labored, for whom and with whom they worked and related questions about the context in which labor was given, shared and evaluated, took precedence.

This change is, I think, importantly linked to the transformation in development discourse from a mode of excited expectation of radical transformation to a mode of keeping on in daily life. There is potential, of course, for this transformation to be understood as a foreclosure of hoped-for futures, as a source of despair and, in Sahlins’ terms, of humiliation (1992). Indeed, the observation that development has failed to deliver on its most ambitious promises, that it has become,

in fact, a permanent way of life, is the source of many of the powerful critiques outlined in the introduction. Labor, and specifically its status as a terrain of ethical work and moral imagination, is one of the primary sites around which people in Hunza negotiated this potentially debilitating quandary. Maya Mayblin has similarly written about agrarian labor as a moral domain, describing the ways in which, through the “physical and metaphysical labor, they perform to feed, care for and educate their young” her informants, “confront a particular moral paradox, in a particular point in time.” Such paradoxes are “challenges to live in a certain way amidst competing pulls to achieve morally desired ends” rather than as problems “that doom believers to a certain degree of failure” (Mayblin 2010a:7). Similarly, I think, people in Hunza respond to the challenges posed by both developmental and religious injunctions to transform themselves while refusing the threat of humiliation, of seeing themselves as permanently underdeveloped due to defects in their own nature (Pandian 2008) by a careful and ongoing negotiation of differing meanings, moral frameworks, and temporalities of development.

As an ethical terrain, however, labor is far from undifferentiated. As the example of *rajaáki* demonstrates, the same physical tasks can have very different moral meanings when the social and political contexts in which they are embedded are transformed. In fact, there are a number of morally meaningful forms of labor present in Hunza today. In this dissertation, I am concerned with a particular subset of forms, a category that groups several kinds of labor embedded in quite different domains. *Rajaáki* in its contemporary sense has joined and, in some ways, become the prototypical example of a broader category of labor that is given or exchanged (a

service in Mauss's (1950) sense of 'gifts and services'); it is given by individuals, often as representatives of households, and the ultimate beneficiary is understood to be the community at large. The definition and boundaries of community as beneficiary of these gifts varies—it may be defined as an expanded sphere of kinship relations; as *jama`at* or the Isma'ili religious community; as 'Hunzakuts'; and even in the broadest sense of humanity. The degree of voluntarism and obligation varies among these forms of giving; the transformation of *rajaáki* spans the full range of this continuum. As we will see, however, a certain degree of voluntarism is necessary in order for a given act of labor to be conceived as a gift and, thus, as morally valued.

I call this category of given labor 'volunteerism,' reflecting a common usage of the term itself (in English) among people in Hunza. I will note briefly here, however, that the term has both this broader meaning and a more specifically religious one in the context of religious service or volunteering (see Chapter Four). I will use 'volunteerism' primarily in the former sense and attempt to clearly distinguish the latter when it arises. While the rest of this dissertation will be a sustained exploration of the distinctions between the specific forms of labor that fall under the umbrella of volunteerism, it is important to note the existence of this overarching category. A slippage or failure to observe sharp distinctions serves particular interests, as we have seen with AKRSP in its appropriation of *rajaáki*. The collapsing of sociological and moral distinctions into the umbrella category of volunteerism also serves the broader, utopian vision of development to which many Hunzakuts subscribe. It is also central to a strong sense of a Hunza identity, which is rooted largely in collective self-representations as a particularly "cooperative" people.

The specificities of the particular forms of labor that make up the category of volunteerism are important, however, as are the particular histories of their conjuncture (as in the transformation of *rajaáki*). Over the coming chapters I will attempt to trace these distinctions and their moral implications beginning with one of the most fundamental and intimate forms of labor in Hunza, the daily agricultural tasks shared by households and given among kin and neighbors.

Chapter 3. Sharing Shade: Labor, Embodiment, Reflexivity

Ghulam Hyder and Ali Mirza were having tea when I stopped in at the Aliabad offices of KADO (Karakoram Area Development Organization), a local NGO that works closely with the AKDN organizations but runs its own projects in handicraft development, a local television station (Hunza TV) and information technology service provision (both men occupied top positions in the organization). When I broached the topic of my research, Ali Mirza at once agreed with the proposition that development in Hunza has a strongly ethical dimension, perhaps more explicitly so than in other places. Ghulam Hyder was more equivocal, saying that ethics are essentially universal. His point was that all major religions have basically the same principles: be kind to your neighbor, give to the poor, help your community, and so on; therefore, what could be unique about Hunza? If anything, I should answer that question by saying “Islamic ethics.”

As the conversation moved on to the government and the “Taliban and Taliban-like people”—external forces that might threaten the capacity of Hunza people to decide their own fate and path to development—Ghulam Hyder’s position shifted. All ethics, he said, are rooted in the society from which they come. In Hunza, the whole system, including the ethics and the value of cooperation, was based in kinship. Each person has his family, his “tribe,”⁴¹ and the tribes have their leaders (and previously, above them, the “ultimate leader,” the Mir); the system encompasses all aspects of society from “courts and policing” to “social welfare.” It is the basis for

⁴¹ Hunzakuts typically translate the term *rom* into English as “tribe,” though, as noted earlier, I use the term lineage.

“culture and values.” Consequently, he argued, development organizations like his own must work through and recognize this system; they have taken over some of the functions of the *nambardars* (formally appointed lineage heads), but must learn to work with them rather than replacing them. KADO was founded with support from the ADKN as part of its mandate to devolve capacity and responsibility for directing and controlling development onto local bodies. The philosophy of working within the kinship system and its values, espoused by Ghulam Hyder, is, thus, in line with the organization’s self-described role as a mediator between Hunzakuts and outside agencies. He said the NGOs must learn to recognize each person who comes to them for “services” as a member of a *rom*, not only as an individual, and that the two systems should mesh. He used his hands to gesture the two sides meeting, the kinship system from below, the NGOs from above, his fingers intertwining. NGOs, however, should not work through particular families or *roms*, he clarified, but rather as “members of one family.”

We turned for a while to the topic of the state and to its relations with peripheral areas like Hunza and the Tribal Areas bordering Afghanistan; again, the Taliban were invoked as Hunza’s ‘other’ and the converse to its story of cooperation and successful development. As often happened when Hunzakuts’ natural affinity for development was asserted, the Hunza genius for “cooperation” was contrasted to a characterization of social relations in the rest of Pakistan as both tribal and atomized. The people of Chilas, a town in Indus Kohistan several hours’ drive south of Hunza’s southern extent, are said to be highly suspicious and disinclined to trust anyone outside of their families; indeed, they are hardly willing to trust the closest members of

their patrilineage enough to cooperate with them, according to some Hunzakuts. Ali Mirza said that in Pakistan generally people see themselves as belonging only to their own families. In Hunza, people have no difficulty envisioning themselves as members of a larger family, “because of the open marriage system,” referring to the absence of a strict rule of *rom* endogamy or exogamy.⁴² Encapsulating much of 20th century anthropological kinship theory, he noted that because people can marry between families, everyone is in one way or another related. A person can go to any village in Hunza and find his relatives. This is true both in the sense that people tend to travel (both within Hunza and outside it) along networks of kin and that people meeting each other for the first time will immediately set out to establish some link by which they can consider themselves related, sometimes creatively constructing grounds for a fictive tie if the motivation to create a relationship is strong enough. “And it keeps going,” Ali Mirza concluded, cupping his hands together and then pulling them apart to illustrate the open-ended expansion of kinship-based relatedness.

Both Ghulam Hyder and Ali Mirza, in slightly different ways, were expressing an ideal that, I argue in this chapter, is held by many Hunzakuts: that kinship serves as a foundation from which to build and imagine broader spheres of relatedness. Ali Mirza suggested that the NGOs accomplish development ethically through the kinship system precisely because Hunzakuts could imagine—or be made to imagine—themselves as one family, even as they are recognized as members of a particular

⁴² Some scholars claim that the *roms* were previously strictly exogamous. Others suggest that there was a prohibition on parallel cousin marriage, an aspect of tradition of which some of my informants were aware. Most could not give me a clear account for this rule, though some thought it had to do with a person and their same-sex sibling sharing milk through their mother.

lineage. They could, he seemed to suggest, understand themselves as being united by the system itself. Ali Mirza pointed to the open-endedness of a system without prescriptive marriage rules in which people are likely to be able to find themselves linked by affinal ties, no matter how remote or attenuated. In depictions of life in nearby places like Chilas and the borderlands between Pakistan and Afghanistan, by contrast, a “tribal” mode of kinship was understood as foreclosing avenues for relating to others rather than opening them up.⁴³

Taking seriously this local claim that development begins at home, I explore in this chapter the practices by which people both create and seek to expand or transcend relations of kinship. In Hunza, I argue, people form intimate relations with others primarily through everyday agricultural and household labor that is given or shared in specific forms, on particular occasions and with a variety of degrees of expectation or obligation, voluntarism or generosity implied. Even the most “given” of kinship ties are made through the forms of labor by which people fulfill, or do not fulfill, acknowledge or repudiate their obligations to one another. Still other relationships, particularly those with neighbors or *hamsaya* (lit.: those who share shade), are singled out and celebrated precisely through the disavowal of obligation preceding or resulting from a given act of giving labor.

The previous chapter centered on labor given in response to collectively born obligations that are explicit (sometimes in the form of written contracts) and are

⁴³ This was clearest in occasional intimations that the people of Chilas were in truth not even capable of acting in concert with members of their own *biradari*; according to this discourse, elsewhere in the region the defining principle of kinship is segmentation, which taken to an extreme degree can divide even the members of a household from one another, isolating individuals within walls of self-interest.

enacted in the context of formal institutions, summoning the community as a political constituency bound by mutual interest or stake in common resources or projects. This chapter deals with one-on-one or household-to-household gifts of labor through which a range of possible modes and degrees of relating can be created and transformed. Unlike labor whose beneficiary is a collectivity of which the giver is a part, sharing one's labor with kin and neighbors more evidently involves a choice about when and to whom to give. As decades of work around the topic of exchange has demonstrated, people manipulate and strategize around a tension between obligation and disinterested generosity inherent in the structure of reciprocity in order to produce social relationships of different kinds. Labor in this context is a practice through which people both cultivate ethical qualities and reveal them to the evaluation of others. As such, it is a site of moral reasoning and reflexivity, modes of relating to the world widely thought of as conditions for ethical being and action (Foucault 1984; Faubion 2001; Rasanayagam 2010). Embodied and experiential forms of reflexivity may be difficult to recognize as such by the "conditions of social intelligibility" (Tambar 2014:654) imposed by modern disciplinary modes. However, I argue that in Hunza today it constitutes a valued form of engagement in the social and material world (Rasanayagam 2010:2-3)

Uniting both ends of the spectrum from obligation to generosity in the field of daily labor is the idea of love, *mohabat* (U.) that comes from and motivates acts of working alongside and on behalf of others. Such labor, therefore, is not only a domain of ethical reasoning, but also of embodied moral dispositions, sentiments and modes of relating. While such labor is importantly construed as being for the sake of others,

whether members of one's own immediate family or strangers, and thus the capacity to work hard and a willingness to "sacrifice" for others (Mayblin 2010b:28) is important, it is also important that such labor arise from and strengthen a desire to care for others. Not only people's willingness to labor for others but their apparent capacity to take pleasure in doing so is evaluated morally; people work with as well as for one another, taking what opportunities arise to create moments of mutual enjoyment and fun (*mazaq*) as they work together. Laboring with and for others is a sign of virtue not only in individuals but also as a form of collective identity, and, as Joseph Hankins (2014:17) notes, in his work on labor and identity in Japan, the labor that produces such signs transforms the laborer as well as the object of her labor.

To the extent that people engage freely in this work upon themselves and on their social relations through acts of giving or sharing labor, daily agricultural labor can be thought of as a domain in which people act ethically rather than morally, or, in Robbins' terms, in which the morality of freedom rather than the morality of reproduction holds sway. This would be a surprising claim, as the kind of daily, cyclical labor exemplified by agricultural and household work is often construed in terms of toil, of activity enforced by economic necessity or by relations of social (often strongly gendered) inequality or domination. Hannah Arendt (1958) situates such labor at the lowest rung of her hierarchy of value, beneath 'work' and 'action,' defining it as purely reproductive, producing nothing new and barren of creative potentialities. I argue, in what follows, that ordinary labor can contain both moral reflexivity and transformative potential, producing moral persons, relations and collectivities. By situating these potentials for ethical reflexivity, reasoning and

transformation in the most mundane and bodily practices, however, I also hope to show that the distinction between moral reproduction and freedom is not as stark or as evident in people's lived experience as it has sometimes appeared in arguments within the anthropology of ethics. The most expansive capacities of the moral imagination, I argue, are rooted in bodily engagements with others and the world in such daily reproductive domains as household labor.

Kin and Neighbors

The category of kin to whom one has specific obligations in the form of labor are called (one's close patrilineal relatives or "grandfathers' brothers") along with their households and descendants. One's *sukuim* are part of the same *rom*, but comprise a much smaller and less clearly bounded unit; the question of who counts as *sukúyo* depends on the particular family and on the situation, but they are people related by agnatic descent from male ancestors (Bu.: *áya/agma* [father, father's brother], *dáado* [father's fathers]) generally no more than one or two generations above the present one. In addition to helping to find suitable marriage partners for one another's children and assembling *phatu* (Bu. compl.: *phatu ghatóm*; U.: *mehr*) (money and personal items given to a bride by the groom's family) or *jaheez* (dowry) in preparation for a wedding, one's primary obligations to *sukúyo*, come in the form of assistance through labor, both in ritual and everyday contexts. The most essential occasion on which persons who are *sukúyo* come to one another's assistance, however, is during the period of mourning after a death. For the first seven days after someone has died, the members of the deceased's household do no work; instead, they grieve, recite prayers for the deceased, and receive visitors for the *tisra* (third day) and *satwa*

(seventh day) rituals. During this time, and sometimes afterwards as is deemed necessary or appropriate under the particular circumstances, the family's *sukúyo* work their fields, clean their home, and cook food for the family and its guests (Bu.: *kilar niyas*; to visit after a death). The most visible sign that a death has occurred in the village is the groups of women threading along the village paths to the same house for several days running, carrying the wide cloth-covered platters of *burum hanik*, (the ritual 'white plate,' used to mark many special occasions, which consists of layers of large, thin flatbread with a mound of butter on top) and other foodstuffs. While it was emphasized to me repeatedly that the extent to which actual *sukúyo* helped one another in everyday contexts varied according to the degree of closeness or affection existing between them, the failure of a household's *sukúyo* to help during this prescribed period of mourning was understood to indicate a grave breach and reflected badly on those involved.

The Hussein family, for example, found themselves at odds with their *sukúyo* after their eldest daughter, Iffat, accepted the proposal of Shahid, a Shina-speaking Sunni man from Gilgit, with her parents' blessing. Her father's remaining brothers were angry, not only because she was to marry outside the Isma'ili *jama`at* (which scandalized many in the village), but also because their right to assist in the decision-making around her marriage had been slighted. (I also heard second-hand that they felt that the family's investment in Iffat's education had been wasted.) They did not attend Iffat's wedding. By the time of the wedding of Karim, almost six months later, the families were reconciled enough for Ghulam Hussein's elder brother and other relatives to come to Hunza, but they stayed with a different household and remained

aloof from the proceedings. This did not go unnoticed by others: walking past the house, my friend Yasmeena commented, without prompting, that they did not have many *sukúyo* staying with them. For the Hussein family, this estrangement did not result in a significant change in their day-to-day work rhythms, since their *sukúyo* lived downcountry and were not a regular source of help in any case. The widower of Ghulam Hussein's sister and his family, who were close to them, also held themselves aloof from the household for a time, however, and this was a greater loss. Safdar, a young man who had been fostered by Ghulam Hussein and his wife and tended to split his time and his labor between his father's household and theirs, was caught in the middle and seemed very uncomfortable. During this period the Hussein family grew closer to Nasim's brother and sisters, who visited from Gilgit much more often. Nasim and her family were also *Shin*, and it was through them that Iffat had met Shahid in the first place.

As should be clear from this example, relationships even among the most given of kin can shift, and many people and households have close relations with people other than their *sukúyo*. Once I took the occasion of my weekly English lesson with a group of young men and women to ask about the category of *sukúyo* and the kinds of obligations pertaining to it. I asked whether *sukúyo* were also the people a family would call on when they had more work than they could handle, using the example of a potato crop coming in. Yes, they said, but, "they also come themselves," Nasreen emphasized. "We don't have to call them, they just come," Shazia agreed. "It depends on our neighbors; if we have good neighbors, then they also come to help for us," Nasreen quickly added, and all four present voiced their assent, "not only *sukúyo*."

While fulfilling obligations matters, then, it is not the fulfillment of a pre-existing obligation that marks a person or a relationship as good (Bu.: *shua*) but the spirit in which they work on behalf of others. This spirit is demonstrated when people arrive to help without being summoned, and even more so when there is no prior relation that compels them to come.

Labor and the Production of Virtue

To work willingly and with a light heart when the need arises marks certain people as morally good (Bu.: *shuasís*) and also, for young people, as potential leaders of the village (Bu.: *uyunkosís*). When it is their household's turn to supply *rajaáki*, they don't shirk and when the call goes out over the loudspeaker of the *jama'at khana* (the Isma'ili house of worship; literally community house) asking for volunteers to help in some collective task, they go of their own accord, readily exceeding their minimum responsibilities as members of the village. Young men who have paid jobs or are in school full-time are generally excused from criticism (although less so girls, who may be called *gutas* [lazy]), while those who neither work nor labor willingly, preferring to hang around the public spaces of the village, are derided as *badmaash* (loafers).

Who labors willingly beyond their specific obligations and who shirks is a matter of public knowledge and discussion. One young man who was known to have a willing heart when it came to helping others was Safdar, a nephew by marriage of Nasim who had been fostered by the family after his mother's death. One day I visited their home, finding only Nasim at home. In the course of explaining where the rest of the family was, she noted that Safdar had gone to help with a building project

undertaken by the Town Management Society, whose amplified call for volunteers I had heard earlier in the day. “*Safdar but shua*,” (Safdar is very good/lovely), she said proudly, adding that everyone in the village liked him because he was always ready to help when needed, even without being asked. Moreover, as he did so he was always smiling.

The virtuous person, comes into being not in isolation or through her actions alone, but in the context of particular kinds of valued social relations that are created and maintained in the sharing of labor. While individual virtue can be cultivated by laboring more than is required to meet one’s obligations, a kind of relational value is generated when people help one another in the absence of any specific obligation at all. The presence or absence of specific obligations, and conversely, the degree of voluntarism exercised by the participants in these exchanges makes a difference to the kind of relation created and its moral meaning. For this reason it sometimes suits people to downplay the importance of close kin as a source of assistance and care and to emphasize their relationships with those who are unrelated or related in some not-quite traceable way.

The category of neighbors is an important one precisely because it contrasts with the obligations represented by *sukúyo*. Nasreen said of *sukúyo* that it has a positive and a negative sense; on the one hand it is a family relation, but on the other hand it can also mean those who are “careless” toward one. In the conversation that followed, the rest of the group I mentioned earlier enumerated the formal occasions on which *sukúyo* help one another and are “careful” of each other. But when the talk turned to everyday contexts of assistance and care, they were quick to invoke the

figure of the neighbor, who helps because there is a need, and because he is good (Bu.: *shuá*). Even the obligation to reciprocate help that has been offered in the past was downplayed. When I asked about the expectation of reciprocity, the group was quick to assert that doing *amántse* is entirely a matter of one's own willingness, such that even prior acts of assistance do not create an obligation. As Nasreen put it, "it depends on him or herself, what he wants to do." With further questions, however, the group also acknowledged that if one party consistently failed to offer assistance when needed, they would likely cease to receive much help themselves, and "everybody will ignore him."

The term *amántse* (Bu.) designates helping others in the form of ideally mutual but importantly voluntary gifts of labor. The relationships thus created are characterized by mutual affection (U.: *mohabat*) and closeness. They can take the form of long-term attachments between families, or between one person and a household not their own (several young people who were friends with the children of the Hussein family were frequent visitors in both leisure and working hours) or between individuals, as in the case of Nasim and her friend, Rhubab, a robust and smiling former schoolteacher and widow who lived nearby with her only daughter.

I argue that *amántse* constitutes both a norm in everyday life and a kind of moral ideal that exceeds its realization in any particular act or relationship. The neighbor (U.: *hamsaya*),⁴⁴ is the prototypical figure toward whom such voluntary, affectionate and mutual help is directed. In this way it resonates with the account of

⁴⁴ Wilson (1999) gives *hamál* for "neighbor" in Burushaski.

Bedouin hospitality given by Andrew Shryock (2008), who, drawing on Derrida and Kant, argues that the “exemplary, moralizing power” of hospitality —its status as an ideal that orients action and constitutes a “form of politics”—lies in its “idealized or impossible” location outside the present, in excess of settled obligation or expectation, and as an exception to any pre-given rule. In exemplary narratives of hospitality, the recipient of hospitality is the stranger, one with whom no existing relationship applies, and toward whom, therefore, a kind of excessive, because wholly voluntary, generosity is possible. While it is not the case that *sukúyo* kinship in Hunza is given or un-constructed while the *amántse* operates in an absence of normative rules, expectations or judgments, I have suggested that Hunzakuts posit such a distinction between the two, which is part of what gives the practice of *amántse* and the figure of the neighbor their power in the moral imagination. On this basis, *amántse* as an idealized model of social relations holds out the potential for an indefinite expansion of the sphere of moral relationships, while at the same offering resources for a kind of critical stance on existing social relations embedded within everyday life.

The Moral Use of Pleasure

Walking down the main access road into Altit in mid-summer, I was hailed from the passenger seat of a Suzuki minibus by Nasim, the mother of a family with whom I had lived for a time early in my fieldwork. Her normally reserved face lit by a wide smile, she told me that the family had been looking for me all morning. They had hired the Suzuki for the day (a considerable expense) to carry themselves along with a half-dozen adolescent and teenage cousins up to their orchards in Duikar, a small hamlet perched atop the cliff above Altit. The Hussein family had six large and very

old black walnut trees on their plot in Duikar, Nasim informed me, and the time had come to harvest them. Such a large task required many hands and they had decided to make a day of it, packing a large ‘picnic’ and calling their young relatives to join them. Nasim’s demeanor and the festive attitude of the group in the back of the Suzuki clearly indicated that, in spite of the amount of work ahead of them, they expected to enjoy themselves thoroughly. “*Mazaq ho ga*” (it will be fun/enjoyable), Nasim assured me, urging me to squeeze in beside her. I regretfully declined, having scheduled interviews that day, but later various members of the family recounted what a good time they had had while climbing into the high branches to shake down the walnuts, staining their fingers black with the walnut skins and enjoying the view from *noor tóq* (‘peak of light’), a promontory overlooking the whole of the central valley.

The Hussein family’s anticipatory and later recollected enjoyment of that day in Duikar was echoed on many other occasions when my interlocutors sought ways to render pleasant and even enjoyable the necessary tasks involved in providing for their families and maintaining the concrete fabric of household, village and fields, or when they discussed past or potential future events of laboring marked by sociability and fun. As the focus of my project shifted its scope to include this kind of everyday labor, it became clear that such instances did not represent merely a pragmatic accommodation to the inevitable and continuous round of daily and seasonal chores. Rather, people’s efforts to create opportunities for and to valorize the experience of pleasure in their work pointed to the centrality of sociality, voluntarism and care to the ethical productivity of this form of labor. Somewhat surprisingly, given the strongly immoral valence of pleasure in many religious and philosophical traditions, its

presence in my interlocutors' accounts and experiences of labor was indicative of the primacy of an other-oriented ethical project in which the moral qualities of sociality itself were the object of ethical work. In the kinds of moral projects where people do not discount but rather celebrate the possibility that "the life of right conduct is pleasurable in itself," (Aristotle, quoted in Faubion 2001:91) as Faubion notes, "pleasure is an important epistemological index for ethical inquiry" (Faubion 2001:91).

Within the anthropological literature on morality, attention has been paid to the role of moral emotions and dispositions, such as compassion, anger, care and scorn, in the constitution of selves and social relations (Anderson 2013; Han 2012; Mattingly 2010; Zigon 2010). Most relevant for my purposes, a number of studies have addressed the moral significance of pleasure's opposite—the ambiguously emotional and embodied state of suffering (Mayblin 2010a & 2010b; Pandian 2009). In a number of these works, suffering has a dual significance: it appears as both a feature of the moral lives and elaborations of ethnographic subjects, and as an aspect of analytical models of ethical process (Zigon 2007; Robbins 2004). While the ethical significance of suffering and its role in the various forms of physical or moral work being undertaken in each of these cases differs, a common thread linking their accounts is the idea that the process of undergoing ethical work—in all of these cases, the work in question is work upon the self in a more or less Foucauldian vein—is marked by the experience of discomfort, rupture, difficulty or suffering. Furthermore, (for at least some of the authors mentioned) the experience of suffering is not incidental but integral to the process by which a completed self comes about. Keeping in mind the

preponderance of anthropological interest in suffering and its role in various kinds of ethical projects, particularly those to do with the individual subject, I hope to demonstrate some of the implications for anthropological thinking about ethics and ethical work of a case in which labor is not conceived primarily as toil, and in which pleasure rather than suffering is elaborated and made central to its value. What the salience of pleasure in experiences and discourses of labor in Hunza signals, I argue, is an ethical project aimed at the constitution of the social world as a whole and the quality of the sociality that makes up its content. As such, my project joins several other recently published works that seek alternatives to the currently dominant model of ethical practice as Foucauldian subjectivation in ethical projects that take the ethical community, sociality or a newly broadened conception of the political as their object or end (Anderson 2011; Mittermaier 2010; Rasanayagam 2010).

I want to make it clear that I am not arguing that physical labor is normally or even normatively experienced by people in Hunza as fun, enjoyable or pleasurable. A number of popular and social science works on Hunza from the mid-twentieth century, in which its inhabitants are portrayed as variations on the trope of the contented Asiatic peasant, happy in their ignorance, simplicity and bare sufficiency,⁴⁵ attest to the hazard of falling into such a reading. As noted in the previous chapter, traces of a long-standing historical narrative framing Hunzakuts as hard-working, self-sufficient

⁴⁵ See, for example, the titles of two books that exemplify the minor mid-twentieth century health fad centered on Hunza and the supposed longevity and good health of its inhabitants: *Hunza Land: The Fabulous Youth and Health Wonderland of the World* (Banik and Taylor 1960), and *Hunza Health Secrets for Long Life and Happiness* (Taylor 1978). In another account of Hunza for a popular audience written mid-century, *Karakoram Hunza: The Land of Just Enough* (Hamid 1979), the author depicts Hunzakuts as “a simple people who have not yet been affected by outside influences,” secure and contented under the benevolent rule of the Mir.

and contented mountain peasants are present in contemporary development discourse, naturalizing their capacity and willingness to labor in service of development projects and thus depoliticizing the projects themselves.⁴⁶ I also do not wish to erase the presence of suffering and other negative bodily and emotional states from people's accounts of their laboring lives. The work required to provide for one's household and maintain the public space of the village is ongoing, often tedious and sometimes backbreaking.

But while the terraces and orchards of Hunza are not gardens of ease, neither are they primarily conceived of as fields of unremitting, unrewarding toil. Labor is not pleasurable in and of itself, or because of some naturalized essential disposition of Hunzakuts, but because moments for and dispositions toward pleasure are actively sought and cultivated. More to the point, a set of discursive practices that celebrate the pleasures of working alongside and for the sake of others, however seldom those pleasures predominate in the actual experience of labor, direct us toward the kind of ethical projects in which people are engaged. Somewhat against the grain of the theoretical preoccupation with suffering within certain strands of contemporary anthropology and in contrast with some recent ethnographic explorations of the moral meanings of labor in similar agrarian rural contexts (Mayblin 2010a, 2010b; Pandian 2009), I argue that these moments of pleasure point us toward the sources of labor's ethical value for Hunzakuts and locate and reflect upon the good in forms of sociality

⁴⁶ Conversely, Bhan (2014:192-193) shows that a prevalent image of Kashmiris as lazy and indolent justifies the violent and exploitative presence of joint privately contracted dam-building projects under the sign of 'corporate responsibility' and the moral pedagogy of hard work.

marked by voluntarism, mutuality and affection. As Mayblin (2010a:90) notes with regard to suffering, “for the suffering that derives from ordinary everyday contexts to take on a voluntaristic and sacrificial flavor, it thus has to be actively reconstructed as such;” it becomes a type of “elaborated suffering.” In what remains of the chapter, I attend to and take seriously the ways in which Hunzakuts seek to make their necessary labors pleasant, as well as to the ways in which they speak about and elaborate such moments of pleasure, in order to show how laboring in the light of this idealized social world renders everyday reproductive labor a site of reflexive and conscious ethical work.

Pleasure in the Moral Economy of Labor

Given that life in the valley continues to be configured to a considerable degree by the cycles of agricultural work, it should not be surprising, then, that many other functions of social life occur during, around, and through the ongoing performance of physical labor. Women visit and gossip over a pile of walnuts they are shelling. Ghost stories and knowledge about the various categories of monsters and spirit beings are transmitted from men to boys while they work at tearing down and rebuilding the *ghusulkhana* where corpses are washed in preparation for burial. A village meeting is held to discuss the construction of a new library-cum-tourist-center using voluntary labor to be contributed by the inhabitants; a summer rainstorm sweeps through and half the crowd leap to their feet and race to cover the apricots drying on their roofs with plastic tarps. In the context of quotidian acts of labor Hunzakuts transmit knowledge and values, participate in village politics, assert claims to social status and

moral virtue, and bring various kinds of social collectivities—households, lineages, neighborhoods, and villages—into being.

Amongst all the other things that Hunzakuts do while engaged in labor, they also seek out ways to enjoy themselves. Walking through the village of Altit, where I lived between December 2006 and August 2008, I could often see families seated at the edge of their fields around cloths spread with food, hear young men and women calling and teasing one another from field to field across the terraced slopes, and observe older children thrilled by the danger and responsibility of climbing trees to knock down ripe fruit. On the conjoined rooftops of the *khun* I spent many summer evenings with my neighbor, Yasmeena, splitting apricots for drying by the light of gas lanterns, absorbing her stories and listening while all around us similar groups talked and sang, and greeting friends who wandered from roof to roof.

On such occasions, the stories Yasmeena told often centered on the joys of similar evenings in the near and distant past. She loved to tell me of the era she could only just remember, when there was no electricity in Hunza and no satellite TV, when people would sit together just as we were doing but with only gas lights or tiny *plito* (candles made from seed paste) for light. The houses were small and the light dim, forcing people to huddle close together, and from this bodily closeness a closeness of the spirit was nurtured. Others, too, recounted past moments of pleasure, fun and sociability in labor, often evoked by whatever it was we were doing in the present. Through chains of memory and sensuous associations, I suggest, people attend to their own bodies and those of others in ways that link embodied sensation to particular modes of sociability and to images of an imagined past.

Indeed, the significance of this pleasure in working with and for others initially became clear to me through the recognition of my own emotional and bodily responses as I worked alongside friends and neighbors. Doubtless recapitulating the experience of many anthropologists before me, I found that I could become a participant in people's lives only when I pushed past the polite refusals, tied my *dupatta* (the wide shawl worn by women) across my body and took part in the tasks at hand. Even so, it was some time before I stopped seeing my participation in these activities as investments that would pay off in relationships cultivated and interview opportunities snatched on the fly, and started to see the work itself as the ethnographic substance of my research. It was the site where both the goodness and virtue of persons were cultivated and judged, and where even the most seemingly given of relationships were produced and reproduced. It was also strongly linked to a sense of Hunza identity expressed in terms of people's willingness to work as well as the spirit in which they did so.

People cultivate a disposition toward moral pleasure in themselves and in one another through what Thomas Csordas (1993:138-139) calls somatic modes of attention, "a culturally elaborated attention to and with the body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others" and includes "attention to the bodies of others." This is a mode of bodily attention and intersubjective orientation that Csordas describes as a "turning toward" rather than a "gazing at" (Csordas 1993:138). This turning toward others in the context of labor includes an intersubjective sharing of the pleasures of one another's company as well as an evaluation of others' capacities for such pleasure. Other qualities are evaluated as well. My friend Mahvish, for example,

lived downcountry but spent her summers in Hunza. During the summer, while her younger brother, also a university student, slept in late, she worked constantly in her parents' fields. She expressed delight when I would come to help her in her tasks, and would praise me extravagantly, but she was also extremely careful about monitoring my condition for any sign of weakness or difficulty, telling me "*aaram se karo*" (take it easy). She often said that people from elsewhere aren't used to this kind of work, even people from Karachi cannot do it—they are not strong (*mazboot*). She told me about a girl from the city who fell in love with a boy from Hunza and married him, "*becchari*" (U.: poor/unfortunate one). When she came to Hunza she had to learn to do all the work for the first time. Mahvish's mother, Haji Bibi, then responded that I was not weak (U.: *kamzoor*) but very good, always helping her, always with her—I was "*zindagi ki roshni*," (U.) the light of her life.⁴⁷

The affective states experienced during and discursively associated with labor were not incidental to its moral productivity. Thus, I found that while I was often tired, sometimes in pain, and almost always conscious of my unpracticed awkwardness, I was, nonetheless, very often having fun, as were the people I worked with, and they were attending to my enjoyment, my willingness, my pleasure in their company, and evaluating my performance and my character accordingly.

⁴⁷ Though I did not ask many questions about children and socialization, I observed on many occasions that a disposition toward pleasure in working with others is cultivated in children as well; they often come to the fields and are encouraged to play and tease adults, even as they engage in their own tasks.

Light, Care and the World

During the times when I sat with my neighbors in the evenings, very often over some task that needed doing, the talk often turned to past times, the work people did then, and the love they had for each other in those days. A recurring image was of people crowded together in the traditional one-room house, listening to stories of ancestral encounters with *pari* (fairies), or of Shiribadat, the cannibal king of Gilgit (Mock 1998), by the light of a single lamp or of small seed-paste candles (*plito*). The common phrase meaning to socialize with others is *garitse hurutas*, literally, ‘to sit with the lamp.’

According to a certain set of narratives in which the state of society in the present is compared unfavorably with that of the past, such imagery is deployed to indicate that though life in the past was hard and marked by scarcity and constraint, people loved each other more, and helped and cooperated with one another more freely, because they were always together, both at work in the fields and, in times of ease, in one another’s homes. Along with the increasing prevalence of market-based pursuits, increased out-migration and a general rise in ‘selfishness’ and ‘*pareshani*’ (worry or tension) said to characterize modern life, television was frequently blamed for the decline of the custom of *garitse hurutas*, replacing the sociable light of the lamp with the atomizing glow of the screen. On the other hand my friend, Yasmeena, who loved to recount such stories, claimed to be able to recall the time when the first television was installed in Altit, and the whole village crowded into the one home, spilling into the street and peering in through the window and skylight. So it is not television per se that isolates people, but the fact that nearly every household has one

that makes people less likely to congregate in each other's homes. Discourses of decline notwithstanding, *gartise hurutas* remained an important mode of sociality, especially when the power was out (*bijli band gae*).

Sitting with the lamp is one of many ways in which light figures as a metaphor for sociality in both regular speech as well as more poetic and proverbial expressions. One of the most explicit is a proverb I heard cited more than once: *háale garí néspal, majítulo sénáan*,⁴⁸ or, as it was translated for me, “first light the house and then the masjid.” As it was parsed for me, the verb ‘to light’ here denotes care in the sense of providing for others, and the masjid (an Arabic word meaning mosque) stands for the community at large; thus, the expression urges people to think first of their duty of care and material provision in relation to their own household before attending to their obligations to others.

At first brush, this bit of proverbial wisdom might seem to contradict the argument I have been making about the expansive, relation-making potential of caring for by working on behalf of those outside the circle of household and *sukúyo* relations. In the moments where I actually heard it deployed, however, it seemed to have the paradoxical effect of confirming the appeal—even the seductive pleasures—of laboring excessively beyond one's strict obligations.

One day, for example, I was conversing with Danesh, the man who appears earlier in the dissertation. He complained about the tendency of people in Hunza to

⁴⁸ Also cited in Tiffou 1993 (87); I have deferred to his orthography in this case. Tiffou supports the interpretations of my interlocutors, comparing its sense to the English-language saying “charity begins at home.” Another proverb cited in Tiffou's book that runs along the same theme is the following: *astáane duró qháir bilá, dárčuwe duró manís*: “there is no problem with the work of the shrine, but the work of Dárču [here a generic name for someone “of low rank”] must be done” (Tiffou 1993: 82).

give their time and labor in religious service (see Chapter 4) rather than devoting themselves to education and self-improvement. He noted that the problem was not the impulse to volunteer, which was good, but the fact that people did not first attend to themselves and their families, developing their own and their children's skills through education so that their service could be truly useful in contrast to the plague of 'mediocre volunteerism' inflicting Hunza. Wasn't there a proverb to that effect, I asked him, reaching for the precise phrase. He immediately quoted the proverb about lighting the masjid, agreeing that it captured the essence of his argument. In this context, the caution to provide for one's household before extending that care to others speaks to the seductive pull of the relations and pleasures that performing care through labor in those wider spheres offers.

It is not coincidental that the masjid stands in the proverb for the community at large—those others who are not close kin but who have at least potentially a claim upon one's consideration. Rather, this figure connects the sense of light as care in the vernacular with an Isma'ili cosmological imagery in which Allah's presence is figured as a source of light whose rays emanate outward into the created universe. This understanding of God as a central point of light supports a spatialized hierarchy of spiritual value in which people understand their own and others' spiritual/ethical status in terms of degrees of closeness to God and their moral projects as ways of moving toward or away from Him. This image of the light-filled cosmos sits alongside the more homely scene of neighbors and family clustered around a gas light, as possible figures for the community itself.

This kind of linkage between bodily practices and real or imagined social worlds is where, I think, Foucault's ethics of subjectivation, with his definition of ethics as a "conscious practice of freedom," as valuable as it is, does not provide all the necessary tools. Here we need something more like Appadurai's (2003) language of "imagination as a social practice" combined with the language of embodiment provided by Csordas and other phenomenologically-minded anthropologists. In Hunza, such linkages are an important way of connecting the social imaginary of development (as a possible future state) with the everyday, ongoing work of development's subjects. The idea of "cooperation" so central to the moral content of both a Hunzakut identity and the ideal of "spiritual and material development," is not only a matter of words, but is both rooted in and created through these everyday experiences.

For Faubion and Csordas, respectively, ethics and embodiment are important concepts or paradigms for anthropology because they offer ways out of the intellectual impasse of seeing action in alternately in terms of "determinism" or "decisionism" (Faubion 2001:84) or of "determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity" (Csordas 1993:152). Ethical reflection shows us how people engage critically with the conditions in which they are made and make themselves without requiring that they step outside those circumstances. Embodiment situates the subject as a participant in a material and intersubjective world that is crucially "indeterminate" and open-ended (Csordas 1993).

Both perspectives have their pitfalls. Csordas himself argues for embodiment as a paradigm alongside approaches concerned with meaning in a semiotic sense. For

his part, Faubion tries, for the most part convincingly, do demonstrate that Foucault's ethics offers a robust concept of the social, but does not offer an account of ethical practice beyond that of subjectivation. Furthermore, Faubion's reading of Foucault's notion of problematization, which is key to his understanding of the way that ethics is bound up with the possibility of large-scale change, is, I think, too caught up with a certain modern or Western idea of the relationship between the mental and the material. He quotes Foucault: "Thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather, it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present oneself as an object of thought and to question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does" (Foucault 1984:117 quoted in Faubion 2001:89). I want to return to this question of conscious thought as a stepping away and to its relation to the conditions of possibility for cultural change in the conclusion of this dissertation.

For now, I will note that while thought as "freedom in relation to what one does," is a useful and interesting way of thinking about freedom (and one that avoids some of the traps that Laidlaw (2002:323 & 2010), Mahmood (2005) and others have identified in concepts of freedom defined in opposition to structure) this freedom may take the form not of "stepping back" but of "turning toward," or of stepping in, inhabiting, involving oneself (Anderson 2013) in what one does. Foucault's formulation as elaborated by Faubion thus lends itself to the problems Csordas locates in more narrowly semiotic modes of interpretation, suggesting disembodiment, detachment and a certain identifiably critical stance as prerequisites for being ethical.

Standing back from one's action, "is itself an act, ordered in relation to variable contextual settings and practical necessities" (Tambar 2012:662).

In my account of labor as an ethical terrain, I have tried to show that reflexivity, while crucial to ethical action, is not necessarily always consciously or critically articulated in ways we might recognize as such. Tambar (2014:654), speaking of Alevi Muslims in Turkey, writes that the "conditions of intelligibility" for critical, reflexive subjectivity are such that "those practices that do not conform to modernity's disciplinary parameters are cast as uncritical: that is to say, as muddled, unsystematic, excessively impassioned, or insufficiently detached." By exploring ethnographically "the forms of historical consciousness and moral subjectivity that institutionalized reflexivity fosters, in relation to those that it forecloses," we can see that these practices may ground valued ways of being in the world as well as resources for ethically engaging with and perhaps for changing it (Tambar 2012:654).

Finally, I wish to propose that exploring mundane practices of labor in terms of moral work and ethical reflection furthers the project of rooting anthropological concepts for the study of morality in "ordinary ethics" (Lambek 2010). In looking to everyday experience as a terrain of ethics, we need not assume that we know in advance what the ethical looks like or what it consists of (Zigon 2014); rather, we can look to the ways people elaborate, reflect on and direct attention to their own and others' bodily states, feelings and intentions in ways that link them to more articulate images and ideas about the good, and that play with the tension between freedom and obligation.

Chapter Four. Gifts to God: Religious Volunteerism

“Islam means not only faith, but it means work, it means creating the world in which you can practice your faith to the best of your ability.”

-Aga Khan IV at the Ismailia Association,

Karachi, 27 September 1960

(quoted in Susumu 2000:156)

It's early on a Friday morning in January, and as usual the Hussein family is up before me. Outside the air is cold, arid and still, while inside the kitchen it's noisy and warm. Mayún helps her father into his shoes and coat while the others wolf down their *shapík* (Bu.: bread) and chai. Everyone leaves for the *jama'at khana* except for Naseem Bibi and her step-daughter, Maymunah, who are rolling out small balls of leavened dough on a corrugated wooden board, folding the ridged dough and pinching the corners together, and frying the resulting pockets golden-brown in a pan of oil. “*Shishér*,” Naseem names them, handing me one from the pile. While I eat she explains that it's the family's turn to provide food and tea for the *jama'at* to share during Friday morning *namaaz* (communal prayers) in their role as volunteers. After frying off the last of the *shishér* and pouring *duud chai* (U.: milk tea) from a large pot into plastic thermoses, the two depart heavily laden for the *jama'at khana*.

...

Passing the open gates of the central Altit *jama'at khana*, I can gauge attendance at *namaaz* by the number of pairs of shoes neatly arranged on the ground to either side of the door. Returning the same way as the congregation is dispersing, I see children approximately 4-6 years old weaving among the crowd, fetching the shoes of each congregant in turn as the adults stand gossiping in the entryway. Another evening, after coming home from prayers, Ghulam Hussein is grumbling to himself. His youngest son, teenaged Amir Jan, whispers gleefully to me that some mischievous members of the “shoes brigade” have lately taken to hiding his father’s shoes to tease him.

...

Arriving with several women from AKRSP at a *function* in Gojal (upper Hunza), our shoes are taken by a group of young boys dressed in the khaki shirt-and-trousers uniform of Isma’ili Boy Scouts, with green kerchiefs at the neck. The boys arrange our shoes in cubby-holes. Under the colorful canvas roof set up for the event, teenaged boys dressed in the same uniform guide us to our places among the rows of flat cushions with an air of courteous, slightly awkward authority. During an intermission between the speeches, songs and skits, teenaged girls in the white *shalwar kamis* and green *dupattas* of Girl Guides carry platters of bread and butter and thermoses of chai through the audience. Younger girls weave through the crowd collecting the cups and saucers afterward.

...

I sit writing up my fieldnotes in the living room of the house I share with three female employees of AKCSP, all highly educated young women from different parts of Hunza. They are changing into fresh clothes and hunting around for their *tasbih* (a string of prayer beads). Alia asks if anyone can make change for her so she can contribute to a collection that will be taken during prayers this evening. As they leave, Nabila tells me not to wait for them to have my dinner because, after *namaaz*, they are all teaching “night school,” religious education classes that parallel regular schooling from preschool through the equivalent of a Master’s degree. For the three women—none of whom are from Altit or have close family there—attendance at *namaaz* and their night school teaching are among the only occasions for sustained social interaction with the village community outside their work at AKCSP.

...

In this chapter, I turn from forms of giving labor embedded in relations of kinship and neighborliness to a form no less quotidian and ubiquitous in the social life of Hunza, but one more directly linked to both transnational and transcendent orders of value. Serving God by serving the community is among the most important obligations enjoined on Isma'ili Muslims today. Along with the payment of *dasond* (the Isma'ili equivalent of *zakat*, the tithe that Muslims are obligated to give to assist those less fortunate) to the Imam, it is a material sacrifice that binds each individual believer to the Isma'ili *jama'at* and to the Imam. Much has been made in recent scholarship of the centrality of *dasond* to the constitution of the modern Imamate (see Purohit 2012; Steinberg 2011; Green 2011), but in Hunza much more attention is given to the

voluntary religious service that, in both material and imaginative sense, “creates the world” of the *jama‘at*.

Many ordinary forms of religious service in Hunza, like several of those described above, center around the mundane care and maintenance of the physical building and grounds of the *jama‘at khana*, as well as the organization and provision of events associated with it. However, volunteers also fulfill their obligation by serving within the bureaucratic and hierarchical system of boards and councils that oversee nearly all aspects of Isma‘ili religious and social life. While labor is organized and centrally allocated in both forms of volunteering, it is primarily in the latter context that volunteers hold named and ranked positions or offices. The labor of volunteers produces the moral community of the *jama‘at* both at the level of the local congregation and at the level of the global, transnational Isma‘ili *jama‘at*. The multiple scales at which this production occurs invokes the ambiguity of the term *jama‘at*, its double sense as both immediate face-to-face ‘community’ and large-scale impersonal ‘society’ (Deeb 2006) and begs the question of how the two are linked in the experience of service for Hunzakuts.

As I will argue, the visions of community produced at these two levels are morally distinct from one another, and the tension between the two echoes and interacts in complex ways with many of the other points of problematization that arise in the context of development and modernization. These include tensions between individual and collective moral projects, as well as between the values of local control and autonomy and the potentials for both material and spiritual benefits from engaging with distant and hierarchically preeminent others.

In the context of religious volunteerism, the gift of labor does not only involve relationships between people (exchange), or people and collectivities (pooling), but between people and God (sacrifice). How does it change the moral meaning of giving to the community when the ultimate recipient of religious service is not the community but God? It is useful here to recall C. A. Gregory's discussion of Mauss's distinction between gifts to men and gifts to God and his claim that in many cases, "the relation of giver to god is manifestly a vehicle for the expression of relations between men" (1980:644).

Volunteerism is a gift of the volunteer's time and labor to God through the intermediary or proximate recipient of the *jama'at*; or rather, it is a counter-gift, a paradoxical return for God's unrepayable gift of creation. The community or, in some formulations, the Imam, receives the gift on behalf of God (though in truth what is given belonged the whole time to God, the ultimate spirit in the gift), raising the question of whether the aim of volunteering as a form of ethical action are primarily this-worldly, social and generous or other-worldly and soteriological? Does the religious volunteer hope to achieve primarily her own salvation through a highly individualizing relationship with God or the good of her community through generous and other-oriented action?

In this chapter, I examine these tensions within the practice of religious service through two theoretical frameworks: through the perspective of exchange, which I have been developing above and in the previous chapter, and through the lens of subject-formation, which Steinberg uses in his book *Isma'ili Modern* (2011), to understand the relationship between peripheral *jama'ats* like Hunza and the institutions

of the modern Imamate. Steinberg describes the long imbrication of Isma'ilism with Western liberalism throughout the 20th century and the ways in which this has shaped the office and institutions of the Imamate, its theology, the vision of modernity and its relationship to individual believers the *jama'at* as a whole. The primary role of Imamate institutions, he argues, has been to inculcate a distinctively modern Isma'ili subjectivity and a shared experience of the world. The concept of subjectivation helps to understand the action of a centralized and individualizing force such as the global *jama'at* (and is appropriate given the shared genealogy of its forms and concepts with Western liberalism) but I argue that it is not adequate to account for all the moral projects in which Hunzakuts are engaged nor to fully grasp the relationship between the Imamate and peripheral communities like Hunza.

Steinberg frames the relationship between the modes of subjectivation associated with the Imamate and the beliefs and practices of the peripheral *jama'ats* in terms of acceptance or resistance, which does not capture the ways in which people in Hunza's own attempts to make themselves into modern Isma'ili subjects are nonetheless rooted in their own social and material worlds. While Isma'ilis in Hunza do both embrace and resist the disciplining powers of the Imamate, they also subject those powers, or their local representatives, to their own moral evaluations and judgments. Thus while Hunza people often evaluate their own and others' lives in relation to norms and ideals promulgated by the Imamate, it is equally true that people's projects of developing and Isma'ili Muslim self "derive[...] moral force through participation within the flow of sociality within which which he or she is immersed" (Rasanayagam 2010:18). In this chapter I survey some of the many ways in which Hunzakuts engage

with both the global and local iterations of the jama'at through their work as volunteers. I begin with an account of the contours of everyday volunteering in the village of Altit.

Everyday Volunteerism

There is no single term used consistently for this form of activity in Hunza, though the Urdu *khidmat* (service) and *khidmatdar* (one who serves) are probably the most commonly used terms. However, the English words volunteering/volunteer and service are also very commonly used, and not only when speaking with foreigners. Making the question of nomenclature more confusing is the fact that both *khidmat* and, (as I mentioned earlier) volunteerism, are used in more general senses as well as in Isma'ili religious contexts. Much less commonly used in Hunza is the term *jama`ati seva*; *seva* is a concept common to several Indian religious traditions involving a “religious duty” of “selfless service” (Johnson 2009: Ciotta 2012:150) that was adapted in the late 19th century to something more akin to social service or a social duty to serve the poor (Patel 2007).⁴⁹ For purposes of this chapter, I will use the terms ‘*khidmat*’ and ‘volunteerism’ interchangeably, noting where I use the latter term in the more general sense discussed in Chapter Two.

As the vignettes at the beginning of this chapter illustrate, religious volunteerism in Hunza takes many forms, from the holding of formal roles and offices within the local Isma'ili councils and boards (more on this below) to the organized, but

⁴⁹ This term likely came into the Isma'ili lexicon as part of the syncretic religious tradition of the Khojas; the present rarity of its use even among Isma'ilis in Bombay (Strohl. pers. com.) likely reflects the purging of Hindu concepts from Khoja Isma'ilism by the Imams throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries. As the Isma'ilis of the Karakoram were never in close contact with either Hinduism or Khojas before this time, the term has likely never been in widespread use there.

less clearly specified and differentiated, roles of the ordinary volunteers who stand as a pool of on-call labor at any given time, as in the case of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides who are called on to manage the crowds at public functions. Like most of the examples given so far, many tasks performed by volunteers center around the mundane care and maintenance of the physical building and grounds of the *jama'at khana*, as well as the organization and provision of events associated with it, including regular prayers (*namaaz*). Many volunteer roles fall somewhere on a continuum between formal-to-informal division of tasks. In one of the earlier vignettes about making *shisher* and chai for *namaaz*, for example, Naseem and her stepdaughter, Maymunah, make friend *shisher* and chai for *namaaz*. They were taking their turn within a rotation that apportioned responsibility for every Friday's shared meal to women from each household whose members were presently serving as volunteers. During that period of time, Naseem and Maymunah were the designated volunteers from the Hussein household. Naseem explained to me that the family makes sure that at least one of its female and one of its male members are actively serving as volunteers (that is, listed on regular rotations or available to be called on at need) at any given time. She implied that this responsibility alternated among the household, but, in fact, she and Mayún were the ones most often present in Altit, while her older daughters spent much of the period of my fieldwork coming and going between Hunza and Gilgit, Islamabad and Karachi for periodic episodes of employment and university education.

Similarly, among the household's four sons (including Safdar, a nephew of Ghulam Hussein, the father, who was a fostered by the family after his mother's death

and split his time between the Hussein house and his father's⁵⁰) Karim, the eldest was often away on business of his own and in any case generally known as a "loafer," more interested in hanging out with his friends than in working. Rahim, the next oldest, was a steady and studious young man but not particularly distinguished in volunteering. The two youngest, including Safdar, the family's foster-son, were the most frequent and willing volunteers. Naseem told me more than once that Safdar was known by many in the village as a helpful and generous young man, always ready to go when the call came over the *jama'at khana* loudspeakers requesting volunteers. Amir Jan, the youngest member of the family, had a quick and agile mind and was slated for a university education and a professional career, but as both a highly social boy who loved to laugh and joke and a generous spirit, he also took pleasure in volunteering. The contrast between Karim and Amir Jan is illuminating; while both were known for being of unserious and sometimes frivolous dispositions, Karim's disinclination to work got him branded as a "loafer" and even a *badmash* (U.: someone who lives or makes a living in a bad way⁵¹). In spite of receiving the lion's share of his family's material support, his father Ghulam Hussein's somewhat gauche attempts to marry Karim off were greeted in the village with amused gossip. Amir Jan, however, though the youngest, was considered a good young man bound for a bright future

⁵⁰ Safdar's position in the Hussein family illustrates the argument I advanced about the relative values of obligation and voluntarism even in familial relationships; though Safdar was in fact a close relative—his mother was Ghulam Hussein's younger sister—Naseem and other members of the household tended to emphasize the foster relationship when speaking about him, stressing both their own decision to take him in and Safdar's choice, as a young man, to continue residing with them and acting as a member of the household. His affection for them and his own reputation as a hard and willing worker was a source of pride to the Hussein family.

⁵¹ Derived from Arabic and Persian roots, meaning 'bad' and 'living' or 'livelihood.'

Volunteering seemed to be one of many areas in which the religious and social organization, the community as village and the community as *jama'at*, overlapped almost completely. Volunteers are registered through the *jama'at khana* and often called over the loudspeaker on its roof, but when I asked if the volunteers are called only for work on the *jama'at khana*, Ghulam Hussein told me this was not necessarily the case. They might be called by the *nambardar* (village head) or the *mukhi* (treasurer and head of the *jama'at khana*) or “anyone.” Men do physical labor such as channel repairs, he explained, while women typically do the cooking for meals in the *jama'at khana* and for *functions*, ceremonies, and so forth.

Like *amantse* (mutual help) and *rajaáki* (obligatory collective labor), then, *khidmat*—and the periods of relaxation and rest that follow in the cycle—is a site of sociability, transmission of knowledge, and often of fun. It is a terrain of ethics within which people cultivate virtue and are publically evaluated on the moral qualities of their labor. Indeed, as will become evident, the boundaries between helping one’s kin and neighbors, fulfilling one’s obligations to the village, and volunteering in service of the *jama'at* are not always very clear, particularly in the context of tasks that might be construed broadly as development work (for example, the demolition of the old library described in Chapter Two). In each context, the medium of exchange is labor performed with and for others, and, like *rajaáki* and development work, the immediate beneficiary of one’s service is the community at large, rather than a particular individual.

Unlike these other forms of exchange, however, the practice of giving labor through *khidmat* is underlain by a theology of exchange according to which the

ultimate recipient is neither a person nor a collectivity, but God. As an immanent form of action in the world, on the other hand, *khidmat* takes place largely within a dense and hierarchical bureaucratic network of institutions. The network consist of local, regional and national governing councils and, at each level, a series of boards dedicated to particular aspects of religious and social life, such as the Isma'ili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards (ITREBs) and the Youth and Sports Boards. These institutions form a network paralleling the AKDN but complementary in function; they are often distinguished from the latter as '*jama'ati* institutions' as opposed to '*imamati* institutions' (Steinberg 2011:29).

While much of the ordinary work of volunteers as I have described it, takes place within the organized but relatively egalitarian context of the local *jama'ats*, in which hierarchy created by the division of labor is both limited and reversible, another prevalent form of volunteering is by holding office on one of the many local boards and councils. Many of these institutions are widely appreciated by Hunzakuts and held up as cornerstones of their successful self-government. At the same time, the people who serve in these institutions and the dynamics that arise in and around them are the focus of considerable dissatisfaction and critique, much of which illustrated the complexity of attitudes toward hierarchy in religious life in Hunza.

Although I only met her once in passing, the many comments I heard about a woman named Mastura exemplifies the problems of hierarchy. Mastura was president of the local council at the time of my fieldwork, and it was several times suggested that I should seek her out as an informant on matters of religious organization. My friend, Iffat, told me this but said at the same time that Mastura might not be willing to talk to

me, hinting that she was arrogant and, furthermore, intensely conservative on matters of gender. These themes were echoed later by two other friends, Nabila and Wajahat. I entered a conversation as they were discussing a woman who had been rude to Nabila—I quickly learned that it was Mastura they were discussing and that she was known to have “problems” with all the girls at AKCSP. She had criticized the way Nabila dressed, but what she meant, according to Nabila, was that girls should be inside, not wearing nice clothes or makeup, and therefore, that they should not work. “She should have been born in another time,” Nabila said, scornfully. Anyway, she asked Wajahat, isn’t she married to a man of the *Dirámiting* (the lineage of the former Wazirs)? Wajahat disagreed, not with the connection but with the idea that anyone was a wazir anymore. It doesn’t mean anything anymore, he said, “they’re just like us.” I responded that they sometimes seem to think they’re still wazirs. He agreed, but said, “I am king in my place, he is king in his, you are queen.” He added proudly that he once got into a fight with the former Mir; “this Gazanfar” he said dismissively, “he’s a very rude person.” The quick association both Nabila and Wajahat made between the brusque and bossy behavior of Mastura and the old ruling elite is illustrative of the way people respond to behavior deemed overly pushy or haughty by those in charge. Similar comments were often made, for example, about Iffat’s father Ghulam Hussein.

On still another occasion when Mastura’s name arose in conversation, the same criticisms of misguided religious conservatism and inappropriately controlling behavior were made. This time the speaker was my friend, Saqib. He complained that she summarily dismissed him from teaching “*Rumi ki Masnavi*” (Rumi’s Masnavi) to students in a night school religious education class, demanding to know what his

qualifications were for teaching Rumi. Mastura was the most consistent target of these accusations (and I cannot help but think that the criticisms of her contained a particularly gendered edge), similar comments were made about many interactions between ordinary Hunzakuts and those who served on the *jama`ati* boards and councils, as well those who held coveted positions in the AKDN and other non-religious organizations. While officials of the AKDN organizations were frequently the target of criticism over how they used the resources and power of their organizations for their own gain, however, as the comments above illustrate, high-level volunteers in the *jama`ati* institutions were scrutinized for the way they wielded the religious and moral authority of their office. These sensitivities and critiques are rooted in a long history of interaction between Hunzakuts and the Imamate, which has transformed local structures of religious authority as much as it has political and social life (Steinberg 2011; Susumu 2001). In order to make more sense of the comments, and to trace the precise contours of the conjuncture between the ethics of ordinary labor and the the spiritual and institutional chains to which it is linked, it will be necessary to give an account of this history and the way that the religious and worldly aims of the modern Imamate have developed in tandem.

Isma'ilism through the 20th Century

The history of the modern Isma'ili Imamate has been one of reinvention—of the role of the Imam, of the nature and extent of the community, and of what is owed by the latter to the former. When the first Aga Khan arrived in Bombay within a few years of leaving Qajar, Iran, in 1840, his first concern was to establish his leadership over the Khoja community there and, by the same token, his rights over its common property

and the tithes of its members. During the six century long lapse in communication between the Imamate and the communities converted through *da'wa* (mission),⁵² however, the Khojas had practiced *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation) and ultimately developed their own religious traditions, known as the Satpanth (true path), in which the distant Imam was figured as the *das avatara*, the tenth avatar of Vishnu (Virani 2011; Purohit 2012). Not all Khojas were convinced that the Aga Khan was in fact their Imam, and some of these responded to his claims of authority by identifying themselves as Sunni or Ithana'ashari Shi'i Muslims rather than Imami Shi'is. These early disputes turned primarily on questions of property; after a long series of disputes including a court case over inheritance rules in 1847, a group of Khoja leaders filed a case against the Aga Khan in the Bombay High Court in 1866 disputing his authority over them and his rights to any say in the distribution of their property on the basis of the facts that, they claimed, they were Sunni Muslims. The British judge, however, after providing his own interpretation of Isma'ili history and doctrines of which, he claimed, the Khojas themselves were ignorant (Purohit 2012:28), ruled that the Khojas were in fact Shia Imami Muslims and that the Aga Khan was their leader. An important point of evidence in favor of the Aga Khan was that the defense could show that the Khojas has paid 'tribute' to him in the past (Purohit 2012:48). The upshot of these rulings, along with subsequent cases in Bombay in 1906 and in Tanzania in 1924,

⁵² This lapse was not total, and contact did not begin in 1840; Purohit (2012:28-9) notes that members of the Khoja community had been paying tithes to the Imam in Persia and even making journeys to visit him prior to 1830, when the first dispute between representatives sent to Bombay by the Imam and a group of Khoja leaders who refused to pay the tithes occurred.

was legal recognition both for the status of the Aga Khans⁵³ as Imams of the Isma'ilis and for the Isma'ilis themselves as a singular, unified religious community 'different in law and custom from all other Muslims.' (Bocock 1971:366; Ruthven 1998:380).

If the first Aga Khan initiating the process of bringing into being a new vision of Isma'ili community under his leadership, it was Aga Khan III, who is largely given credit for shaping both the form and content of the modern Isma'ilism and the office of the Imamate, in particular. Sultan Muhammad Shah succeeded his father at the age of eight in 1885 (six years before Hunza was annexed by the British) and his Imamate lasted 72 years, spanning the transition from the colonial to postcolonial eras. He balanced his role as public figure and Muslim political leader in pre-independence India with his leadership of the Isma'ilis, and his relationship with the British and with Muslim reformers shaped the vision of modernity he articulated for his *jama`at* as much as his role as Imam no doubt informed his political stances. In particular, the contemporary Imamate is characterized by a hierarchical and rationalized bureaucratic structure and a theology notably concerned with the relationship between the spiritual and material dimensions of life and flavored with liberal individualism (Steinberg 2011).

From his position in Bombay, in the heart of a trading community with ties around the Indian Ocean, Aga Khan III intensified the process of contacting and cohering the Isma'ili *jama`at* while simultaneously consolidating the authority of the

⁵³ The title of Aga Khan, though granted to Aga Khan I by the Qajar ruler, was confirmed by the British government of India. The British crown subsequently reconfirmed the title and extended the attendant ceremonial honors to the next three Imams, including the present Imam, Aga Khan IV, even though his succession occurred in 1957, after the end of British rule in India (van Grondelle 2009).

Imam as its spiritual and temporal head. The Isma'ilis of the mountainous north of Pakistan (including populations in Chitral, Gilgit, Hunza and neighboring valleys) were among those contacted and brought into regular communication with the modern Imamate during this period. As Steinberg (2011:15) argues, however, while the activity of the early 20th century *da'is* (missionaries) was framed in terms of a restoration of contact between the Imamate and the more remote *jama'ats*, it was in practice as much an effort to “teach the farflung communities that they [were] Isma'ili and present them with a standardized version of what that means.” Aga Khan III also began a concerted effort to construct and disseminate a newly standardized, normative Isma'ilism. All this took place concurrently with and largely by means of the creation, beginning under Aga Khan III and carried on by the present Imam, Shah Karim al-Husseini (1957-present), of a series of distinct institutions designed to govern ever more, and more specific, aspects of life in Isma'ili communities, from matters of religious belief and practice to economic development in the poorer and more rural *jama'ats*. Aga Khan III used regular *firman*s and *talikas* (messages) distributed throughout the *jama'ats* to communicate with the community on matters of belief and practice (Ruthven 1998:385). Standardization of institutional structures and roles was aided by the publishing of successive iterations of an Isma'ili Constitution and rulebooks for Isma'ilis between 1905 and 1986 (Karim 2014:147, 150). Among other things, these documents codified the roles of local religious leaders in the communities: they designate a *mukhi* (treasurer) and *kamadia* (accountant) for each *jama'at khana*. The early twentieth century was also a period of incredible institutional growth, much of which was initially focused on the provision of social services, particularly in the form

of schools and hospitals, to the *jama`ats* of India and East Africa. The result of this process has been the two parallel and intertwined sets of institutions, the *jamati* institutions, comprised of the system of boards, councils and courts regulating and overseeing religious, personal and social life of Isma'ilis, and *imamati* institutions, which include the AKDN and various donor and for-profit ventures.

While the institutions of the AKDN are a more prominent focus in other chapters, this chapter focuses on the *jama`ati* institutions insofar as they are the primary site for much of the religious service performed by Hunzakuts. Beneath the Aga Khan's secretariat, based in France, the multi-tiered series of councils, from the national to the local levels, of the *jama`ati* institutions each contains a series of boards covering "religious affairs; (secular) education; health; social welfare; youth and sports; economic planning; grants and review; and conciliation and arbitration" (Karim 2014:150). While the highest officials of the *jama`ati* institutions are appointed by the Aga Khan, the majority of the positions are staffed by volunteers. Thus, people I knew in Hunza served voluntarily as president of the local Isma'ili Tariqah and Religious Education Board (ITREB), as members of the Altit Arbitration Board and the regional Youth and Sports Board, and as teachers of night school classes, as well as regular volunteers without official positions.⁵⁴

Theologically, the last two Imams have advanced what Boccock (1971:368) calls "an 'in-the-world mysticism' type of soteriology," an emphasis on living well and

⁵⁴ One effect of this process of institutionalization and standardization has been to undermine or all but eliminate local practices and forms of religious authority, such as those embodied in *pirs* and *khalifa*, that do not have a place in the new religious bureaucracy (Ruthven 1998:385; Susumu 2001).

achieving material success in this world coupled with a Shi'i emphasis on the *batin*, the inner or hidden dimensions of religious knowledge and practices. In a 1903 *firman* (quoted in Ruthven 1998:382) Aga Khan III said: “our religion is such that if you act with a clean heart according to its preachings, pray regularly and be pure, then you can acquire heaven during your lifetime.” He laid particular stress on the role of Imam as interpreter of religious truth (*haqq*) for the particular circumstances of the age, saying, “There have always been great transformations in the world. It is on account of this that the Imam of the Time is always present to guide you according to the changed times... My Firmans (authoritative pronouncements) in years to come will be quite different from the present ones... As the times change, so do the firmans” (Ruthven 1998:385).⁵⁵ Emphasizing the centrality of the Imamate in defining the Isma'ili community and translating the truth of religion to that community clearly distinguished Isma'ilis from other Muslims; at the same time, Aga Khan III worked carefully and gradually to standardize Isma'ili beliefs, practices and texts (including the *ginans*, devotional hymns in many languages that are commonly sung or played on CD and cassette in Hunza) and to purge Hindu elements.

⁵⁵ Both Aga Khan III and his grandson and present Imam, Aga Khan IV, articulated their vision of the Imamate in terms of guiding the *jama`at* through the transition to modernity. This vision is linked to the theological conception of the Imam as authoritative interpreter of religious truth in relation to the particular circumstances of his time, a role captured in the two most common epithets by which the Imam is spoken of: *hazir Imam* (the present Imam) and *Imam-i-zaman* (Imam of the time). Isma'ili doctrine emphasizes the Islamic distinction between knowledge that is readily apparent (*zahir*) and that which is underlying or hidden (*batin*). The discernment of inner, spiritual truth (*haqq*) and its implications for human conduct are subject to interpretation (*ta'wil*) in every age. While anyone can cultivate higher degrees of discernment through study, the Imam has access to more direct forms of knowledge.

This process of consolidation has, as others have pointed out, put pressure on local traditions of religious leadership and charisma and to the forms of devotion that go along with it. One such figure is Nasiruddin Hunzai, a controversial religious teacher, philosopher, poet and Burushaski language scholar with many devotees in Hunza and transnationally. Members of this group call themselves the *khan-e-hikmat* (the house of wisdom) and engage in both Sufi-like mysticism and devotional practices that apparently strike many others in Hunza as strange and unseemly. His ideas and his claim to authority itself are in conflict with the modern Imamate's rationalized and centralized version of the faith, and though unlike some other comparable local figures in other *jama'ats* he has not been excommunicated (Steinberg 2011:195), his Burushaski *ginans* (hymns) have been banned by the local council and his existence is something of a scandal by many in Hunza, although he has many followers among the very educated and within the AKDN itself.

As such controversies around local forms of leadership and unauthorized forms of practice (whether unduly traditional or novel) suggest, part of Aga Khan III's simultaneous standardization and differentiation of Isma'ilism was the redefinition of religious duty and practice. Like other Shi'i traditions, Isma'ili theology distinguishes between *zahir* (overt or outward forms and meanings) and *batin* (hidden or esoteric knowledge), strongly privileging the latter.⁵⁶ A number of the core religious duties considered obligatory for other Muslims, such as fasting during Ramadan and making

⁵⁶ A *firman* by Aga Khan III from 1905 reads: "All religions preach zaheri but your religion is batuni. All other religions are exoteric: if in this world you do good deeds then after your death you will go to heaven. But our religion is such that if you act with a clean heart according to its preachings, pray regularly and be pure, then you can acquire heaven during your lifetime" (quotes in Ruthven 1997: 382)

the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) are not required or are even discouraged for Isma'ilis on the grounds that the practice itself is not necessary if one attained the wisdom (*hikmat*) to comprehend the *batini* (inner) meaning.⁵⁷ While this privileging of the esoteric dimensions of knowledge and practice would seem to imply a rejection of the material world and of the here-and-now as a source of any value, in fact the opposite is true. The immanence of God in creation is stressed so that knowledge of the world (such as that gained through science) is also knowledge of God, and the pursuit of worldly prosperity is encouraged rather than frowned upon (Clarke 1976:586). The last two Imams in particular have emphasized the inextricability and complementarity between *din* and *dunya*, the realm of the spiritual and the material world of the senses. The result is a strikingly “positive evaluation of the potential of the material and the human world” (Bocock 1971:372).

The payment of *dasond* (a tithe of 12.5 percent to the Imam) and the performance of *khidmat* are two practices that remain incumbent upon Isma'ilis. In his *firman*s Aga Khan III referred to service as the “foundation of the faith,” and he said that “to serve is an Isma'ili way of life; it is Isma'ilism in every day reality” (Ruthven 1998:386). The relationship between *khidmat* and *dasond* is complex: *dasond* is given to the Imam, who (since the 20th century at least) redistributes it in the form of

⁵⁷ Other Islamic practices are retained by Isma'ilis in modified form: instead of five daily prayer times, Isma'ilis are supposed to gather twice a day in the jama'at khana for communal prayers (*namaaz*) and they pay *dasond* to the Imam rather than giving *zakat* directly to the poor or to charitable organizations. Still other rituals are unique to Isma'ilis, such as *nyaz* (a cup of water blessed by the Imam (*ab-i-shafa*) is shared by the participants) and *bhaiyat* (an oath of allegiance to the Imam sworn by Isma'ilis as a form of initiation. While the emphasis on esoteric truth rather than outward practice is older, many of these changes in ritual practice were instituted by Aga Khan III as part of his efforts to standardize Isma'ili practice (Ruthven 1998).

development aid, direct assistance and other programs that benefit the community. *Khidmat*, on the other hand, takes place largely within one's own local community or in roles that serve the larger regional and national *jama'ats*. This would appear to be a more direct form of giving: Ruthven, in fact, notes that, "Dasond is seen by Isma'ilis as a token of service to the Imam, and can be rendered in terms of service rather than money" (1998:386). Although I did not hear the two equated in quite this way in Hunza, nor did I hear it suggested that doing service relieves the obligation to tithe, though poverty does. However, the question of whether God or the human community is the ultimate beneficiary of acts of service is not quite clear. As the Isma'ili Institute puts it: "Service of God is not only worship, but also service to humanity, and abiding by the duty of trust towards the rest of creation. Righteousness, says the Quran, is not only fulfilling one's religious obligations. Without social responsibility, religiosity is a show of conceit" (Isma'ili Institute n.d.).

The question of what ultimate ends that motivate people to volunteer—of the telos of their volunteering, in Foucault's (1997) terms—is left somewhat ambiguous. Does one volunteer out of care or concern for one's fellow man or as a pious response to a strictly mandated religious duty? It might seem possible, from a Durkheimian perspective on the social, to collapse the two into one another, but as this chapter demonstrates, they are distinct in ways that have ethical implications. In a recent, provocative attempt to "provincialize compassion," Amira Mittermaier (2014:520) highlights the "liberal, humanist underpinnings of compassion" as a motive for volunteering, while "duty, in turn, highlights interdependence." In a similar vein, Talal Asad (2003:247) cautions against "assuming that ethics as such is essentially a matter

of internal condition, with the conscience as a sovereign matter. That conscience is a purely private matter at once enabling and justifying the self-government of human beings is a necessary... precondition of modern secular ethics. The Shari'a, in contrast, rejects the notion that the conscience is completely sovereign."

While compassion is not a virtue commonly invoked in Hunza, duty is; implicitly opposed to a notion of duty is the notion of *mohabat*, (love/affection), the kind of other-oriented generosity and caring that motivates Safdar, according to his mother, to be a willing volunteer. This form of motivation is more closely linked to the virtue of 'cooperation' so central to Hunzakut self-conceptions, implying less a distant but empathetic sentiment of concern than a positive willingness to work alongside and on behalf of others. Both duty and *mohabat* are invoked when people speak of volunteerism, but while duty implies, as Mittermaier (2014:520, 525) says, a "relationship of obedience toward God" that leads to a "mode of reciprocity that exceeds the social," volunteering from *mohabat* invokes the social directly, not in the guise of an individual, needy other but as a field of face-to-face, cooperative sociality. A notion of duty invokes the individual subject and his or her own relationship to God but situates this relationship with regard to society: "by grounding societal values in the principle of human moral responsibility to the Divine, Islam lifts the sense of public and social order to a transcendent level" (Institute of Isma'ili Studies n.d.). *Mohabat* involves people from the beginning in a sphere of relations defined by co-presence and care. Within the contemporary Imamate's vision of the interdependence of *din* and *dunya* (religion and the world), of lived religion as largely ethical and this-worldly in its concerns, however, these two aspects are not entirely separable. To an

almost unparalleled degree, the most intimate and mundane aspects of daily life in Hunza are entwined with hierarchical institutional chains linking the local community with the charismatic center of Isma‘ili religious authority, the Imam. Given that Hunzakuts interact with these institutions as both beneficiaries or constituents and volunteer staff, the combined effect of the *jama`ati* and *imamati* institutions in peripheral regions like Hunza is twofold: they simultaneously modernize and sacralize⁵⁸ many aspects of everyday life.⁵⁹

The process of Isma'ili institution-building was concurrent with the long demise of the colonial era and the rise of postcolonial nation-states in Asia and Africa. The conceptualization of the Imam of the time as translating the essence of religion and enabling its expression within the material conditions of the present has come to be strongly associated with the task of guiding the community through its transition to modernity and, thus, defining the ethical contours of a distinctively Isma‘ili way of being modern. This guidance is communicated as much through the discourses, practices and even the form of the *jama`ati* and *imamati* institutions as it is through the *firmons*. Volunteers, particularly in official positions, learn formal and bureaucratic

⁵⁸ Ruthven (1998:383) makes it clear that this process has been a complicated one and still contains the potential to cut both ways: “Paradoxically the spiritualization of the Isma'ili tradition became the counterpart of its secularization. As the esoteric or “inner” dimensions of the faith began to take precedence over the forms of outward observance, so the idea of the sacred itself became internalized. The goals of spiritual life were psychologized, re-focused on the God within.” That the simultaneously secularizing and sacralizing impulses within Isma‘ilism result in different forms of religious experience for Isma‘ilis positioned differently within the spatial and hierarchical extent of the *jama`at* is well demonstrated by the existing ethnographic literature (Clarke 2001; Steinberg 2011).

⁵⁹ Steinberg (2011:199) supports my own observation that entanglement of the Isma'ili institutions with everyday life is perhaps most intimate in the ‘underdeveloped’ rural peripheries of the global *jama`at*, where they offer forms of civic participation and access to material resources not otherwise available.

modes of participation, accounting and discipline that are equally applicable to participation in formal employment, national citizenship and the market.

It is on this basis that Jonah Steinberg, whose book *Isma'ili Modern* (2011) is the most comprehensive and in-depth study of the transnational character of the Isma'ili *jama`at* and its institutions to date, centers his analysis of these institutions on the concept of subjectivation. Steinberg argues that under the modern Imamate, “Under the current Isma'ili administration, ‘development’ becomes a vehicle for the inculcation of remote Isma'ili populations to modern models of personhood and citizenship, political participation, and corporate entrepreneurship” (2001:195). The standardization of religious belief and practice, too, is analyzed in terms of the creation of particular forms of subjectivity: “Thus a markedly active effort is made to construct and establish a common ground, a basis for shared experience, among distinct Isma'ili subgroups” (Steinberg 2001:195).

Steinberg’s extensive analysis of the Isma'ili ‘transnational formation’ amply demonstrates the value of the notion of subjectivation for understanding the ways in which the contemporary Imamate invites Isma'ilis to fashion themselves into modern and devoted subjects through a variety of modes and media. His analysis of the differences between the perspectives of the wealthy transnational Khoja elites, who predominate at the highest levels of the institutions, and those of the members of peripheral *jama`ats* and of the ways in which these peripheral *jama`ats* resent and sometimes resist Khoja hegemony is an important counter to Isma'ili rhetoric as well as scholarly assumptions about the unity and equality of the *jama`at*. A more sustained ethnographic account of interactions between Hunzakuts and the *jama`ati* institutions

(or rather, encounters between Hunzakuts *within* the *jama`ati* institutions, since almost all of the people who staff them are local) suggests, however, that this top-down account tells only part of the story. What Hunzakuts strive to produce through their service and other acts of giving labor is not only ethical individuals but also a moral community. Furthermore, what Hunzakuts primarily resist in their encounters with institutions is less their modes of subjectivation than the particular vision of community they represent. While the subjectivating and individualizing pressures of the *jama`ati* institutions are a source of tension for Hunzakuts, it is often a productive one (as will be more evident in the following chapter). Conflict around volunteerism, I argue, has more to do with the competing visions of collectivity that the practice produces.

Religious Knowledge, Hierarchy and Critique

As I suggested earlier, service within the *jama`ati* institutions raises the specter of hierarchy in ways that are troubling to many Hunzakuts. Sometimes, as in Nabila and Wajahat's remarks about Mastura above, this is understood as a reintroduction or re-inscribing of older, discredited forms of hierarchy associated with the princely state. Alternatively, as with the suppression of Nasiruddin Hunzai's *ginans* (devotional hymns) and writings by the local council, a hierarchy that privileges the codified, rationalized and purified forms of religious knowledge and practice over 'local,' mystical and expressive forms is imposed from without. Hunzakuts are troubled by these instances, not only for what they reveal about the bad character or hypocrisy of particular ethical actors or institutions, I argue, but because they associate the religious community of the *jama`at* with a vision of community that is hierarchical in its very

structure. That is, they present an image of the *jama`at* as a ladder or chain stretching between themselves (on the bottom rung or, alternatively, at the outer edge of the sphere) and the Imam at the top (or in the center).⁶⁰ It is not, as I hope to show, the radical distinction between the Imams and themselves that is problematic, but the idea of the social space in between as marked by a series of hierarchically ranked levels. The *jama`ati* institutions, though valued for the way they link the local communities to the Imam and act as a sign or tangible token of his presence, are, nonetheless, as bureaucratic organizations, thoroughly hierarchical and, thus, superimpose many levels of mediation along this chain. It is this mediation of the relationship between community and Imam by people like themselves that many Hunzakuts find inappropriate.

The alternative vision of the religious community is articulated when people speak, as they often do, of the Imam as the singular source of religious authority and truth and the sole author of “spiritual and material development.” The *firman*s—authoritative pronouncements by the Imam regularly distributed from Aiglemont and read out by the *mukhi* in the *jama`at khanas*—make a good figure for this form of direct, (relatively) unmediated communication. Perhaps an even more powerful, because bodily and material, symbol, is the ritual of *nyaz*, in which members of the

⁶⁰ Both figures resonate strongly with Isma'ili cosmological imagery, in which God is figured as a source of light emanating out into the universe. This image is paired with that of a single ray of light that is stronger at its source and fades at its furthest extent. The Imam is similarly figured as a light and as a central point in space.

jama`at share *ab-i-shafa*, water blessed by the Imam.⁶¹ While this is, in some sense, an even more radically hierarchical image, it situates the Imam as the figure of authority at a distance from the community itself; within the community defined and delineated by him, all are equal as his followers and children.⁶² The radical inequality between *maulah* (another term for the Imam) and *murids* (followers) is balanced by the radically egalitarian relationship among the *murids*, a balance made livable by both the Imam's distance from the daily affairs of Hunza and the certainty that what the followers receive in return for their gifts of service and tithe will be far more valuable than what they give

These two visions of moral community are not directly articulated as such, but emerge and are created through religious practice, and particularly through volunteerism. As Gregory (1980:644) noted in his initial formulation of the distinction between gifts to men and gifts to God, the latter may serve as an idiom or a "vehicle for the expression of relations between men." As a gift of labor owed to God (or the Imam) but received by the community, it situates people in complicated ways in relation to two visions of the proper ordering of relations between men, or what I call the moral community. A similar concern for the constitution of "ethical community" motivates Paul Anderson's (2011) response to Saba Mahmood's analysis of the Egyptian piety movement, arguing that religiously motivated gifts do more than

⁶¹ The Imam's physical presence during the ritual of *didar* is said by my informants to be the highest form of religious experience, and is echoed in the photos of the present Imam that are prominently and ubiquitously displayed in Isma'ili homes, shops and vehicles, as well as in the *jama`at khanas*.

⁶² The equality of believers was formally declared by the present Imam in 1969 (Susumu 2000:15) a move that further undermined the position of Pirs and other religious intermediaries important among the northern Isma'ilis.

“express” an image of community; rather, they create it. “Virtue,” Anderson (2011:4) says, “is constituted through transaction and exchange rather than simply through worship and ritual,” and what is at stake in striving to be virtuous is “not only self-formation... but rather the achievement of a non-secular sociality.”⁶³ As Anderson notes, it is this insistence that makes both the pietists and Hunza’s Isma’ilis non-secular, in the sense of rejecting the individualizing and privatizing of religious experience (Anderson 2011:7). Furthermore, this refusal sets Hunzakuts apart even within Isma’ilism, or, at least, within the most strongly liberal visions of Isma’ilism advanced by the modern Imamate.

The difference between these two figures of moral community replicates a tension I have described elsewhere between relatively egalitarian and hierarchical principles or movements in social life. Tensions arise between the two forms in Hunza when the labor given in religious service is potentially differentiated and ranked by value (and the worth of persons thereby also measured and ranked). However, as I have already shown, the hierarchical or ranked vision is not without its appeal. This is perhaps clearest in discourses surrounding religious education (*dinni ta’lim*) or what is colloquially referred to in Hunza as “night school.”

The night schools are part of a system of religious education that parallels the secular education system from “first class” up to the equivalent of a master’s degree (though advanced students may have to travel to more central villages or downcountry,

⁶³ Anderson (2011:5) also notes that in the case of the Cairene pietists, who call one another to work upon themselves through the exchange of pious words, the particular ideology of language in play effects their ability to shape a pious sociality through *da’wa*. The ideology of labor in Hunza that I have described in previous chapters, which turns upon the power of co-presence and affection (work with and for others) to make relations between ‘strangers,’ is no less important here.

like my friend, Mahvish, who received her MA in *Islamiyat* in Karachi). Many of my younger friends referred frequently to their own night school education, arguing that the institution lays an essential foundation of moral principles and correct behavior in the young. It is, as Steinberg has shown, a key technology in the Imamate's apparatus of subjectivation, producing and reproducing spiritual knowledge and moral dispositions of the community in its youngest members. Night school classes in Hunza are taught by village residents who are generally well-educated in secular terms, but they may or may not have proceeded beyond the primary level in their own religious education. In fact, most of the people I knew who taught night school disclaimed possessing a particularly profound degree of religious knowledge. Shahnawaz, for example, an English teacher and co-founder of the prestigious Eris School in Aliabad, had been tapped to oversee the night schools in Aliabad, though he claimed that his own religious knowledge was not particularly advanced. My friend, Saqib, mentioned earlier, was largely self-taught and prided himself on his spiritual understanding (he was a member of the *khan-i-hikmat* and a follower of Nasiruddin Hunzai); he claimed to have lectured in night school classes at the higher and advanced religious study levels in the past but was no longer asked to teach them, probably because many of his views on religious matters were highly unorthodox.

As these two brief examples suggest, volunteerism in the context of the night schools is subject to implicit hierarchies based on levels of education, though not necessarily of religious knowledge. In this arena, some people's service is clearly more valuable than that of others, while some are downright suspect. The authority inherent in the pedagogical relationship also helps to mark the night schools as a domain of

hierarchy. The experiences of my friends Nabila and Alia, alluded to in one of the opening vignettes of the chapter, demonstrate that teaching the village children does not necessarily imply participation in the sociality that surrounded them. Both women were outsiders to the village, set apart from their neighbors by their origins elsewhere, their level of education, their exposure to foreign travel, and their relative wealth. They kept their distance from the social life of the village, protecting their own status in the process, and, in turn, were both respected and seen as snobbish and aloof by people I knew. In my conversations with the two women as they readied themselves to leave for *jama`at khana* or reflected on their teaching experiences, Alia, in particular, made it clear that teaching in the night school was an act of service that she regarded as both personally important and a religious duty, but it did not draw either girl more deeply into the village community. Volunteering in this context brings hierarchy home, extending it into the heart of the most intimate levels of the community.

The image of the *jama`at* as a ladder linking Isma'ilis to the Imam via a series of ranked positions in a bureaucratic structure has its attractions as a means to grow in spiritual wisdom as well as worldly knowledge and to achieve modernity in its material forms. It is, after all, possible to climb a ladder. Committing to this vision of community, however, means giving up on virtues of equality and mutuality important to the other, more egalitarian vision. For Isma'ilis in Hunza, it may also mean accepting their (low) place in a hierarchy that extends massively far above and out into space. This probably explains why the institutional vision of the community is adopted primarily from those who are not so low on the hierarchy, for whom it represents a real opportunity to climb still higher.

I want to return here briefly to Gregory's (1980) distinction between gifts to god and gifts to men. As a gift to God, a volunteer's labor creates a direct, dyadic relationship between herself and God, with the community only an intermediary, as is the priest in a sacrifice. The rationalized, bureaucratic forms of volunteerism imply an individualizing mode of subjectivation in which the volunteer's personal intention is what matters. It is probably not accidental, then, that while Hunzakuts tend not to talk much about or interrogate their own personal motives for volunteering, I have found message boards online in which young, English speaking and (presumably) transnational Isma'ilis discuss at length such questions as whether it is better to do their volunteering 'badged' (that is, in uniform and receiving recognition for one's work, which can, therefore, become the motive for volunteering) or 'unbadged' and, therefore, unseen and unrewarded. I would argue that volunteerism in its more egalitarian and intimate forms more closely resembles Gregory's category of 'gifts to men,' in which the creation or transformation of a particular social form is both the result and the motivation for giving. In this figure, the volunteer's labor is never 'alienated'; it is not taken out of local circulation. God—or the Imam—takes his share, but in such a way that it does not detract from the local supply. Here Gregory's sharp distinction—his insistence that there can be only one principle underlying any given form of exchange (1980:637). I would suggest that service in either of its forms should not be understood as exclusively a gift to men or a gift to God; rather, it is the way people manage the relationship between the two faces or aspects of the gift that defines a given form of exchange and the social relations it makes.

The rhetoric of reconciling “*din* and *dunya*,” so important to the present Imam’s articulation of Isma’ilism, modernity and development, is, I think, just such a way of managing this relationship at the level of the Imamate as a whole. In the next chapter, I continue to explore the productive tension between self and community, between spirit and matter, and between local and transnational scales of action in the domain of secular or worldly (*dunyawi*) education.

Chapter 5. Schooling Virtue

This chapter concerns the role of education within the larger project of material and spiritual development as it is articulated in Hunza. The cultivation of knowledge, technical expertise and ethical discernment through formal education is central to the vision of development promoted by the Imam, as well as to the history of the modern Imamate itself (recall that schools were among the first social welfare institutions created by Aga Khan III, along with maternal health clinics). Within the shorter timeline of institutional Isma'ilism's presence in Hunza, schools and educational institutions loom even larger. Many Hunzakuts embrace the idea of education for development wholeheartedly, with results that are readily apparent on the geographical and social landscape. I often heard education spoken of as a panacea for all the ills of the present, both those arising from what is characterized as the oppressive ignorance of the past and from the hectic materialism of the present. One of the *firman*s most often cited and discussed in everyday conversation by my interlocutors was a pronouncement by Aga Khan III in which he advised his community to prioritize the education of girls even over that of boys. This piece of guidance constituted a widely acknowledged, if imperfectly executed, ideal and was understood locally as yet another index of the modern and progressive character of their religion and its leadership.

Discussions of the *firman* on the education of woman appear often in my notes from 2000. However, at that time there were very few women in Hunza who had achieved an education beyond the secondary level. The negotiation of limits on women's mobility, particularly outside the valley, was a point of active concern and

strategizing by families committed to securing education for their daughters. These problems did not end with the completion of degrees. The women I knew through AKRSP, like Rubina who was mentioned in Chapter Two and her colleague Nosheen, were among the relatively few women with BAs and above living in Hunza at the time. They were treated with respect, especially by other women; women much older than themselves addressed them as *baji* (elder sister) and kissed their hands in the manner of one greeting a senior.⁶⁴ At the same time, both women struggled with the gossip and criticism from the wider community about the intimate proximity with men in shared office spaces and enclosed vehicles necessitated by their work. By the time I began more sustained fieldwork in 2006, the higher education of women was far more widely accepted as a fact and not merely as an ideal, though the social logistics and distribution of limited resources and the balancing of personal and familial ambitions remained thorny questions for individuals and households. In this respect Rubina and Nosheen remained pioneers; both were married with children by this time but continued their professional lives. Rubina talked of bringing a young cousin to live with her in Islamabad to keep house and help with childcare. University degrees were becoming more common among young women as well as men, and private schools of

⁶⁴ Hand-kissing is a gesture of greeting used among women and can index varying degrees of respect and affection. Both parties take one another's hands, and first one and then the other raises the back of the other woman's hand to her lips. The number of exchanges back and forth indexes affection and the person to kiss the other's hand first and last shows greater respect. A woman may greet a respected man or one who is senior to her by taking his hand and then releasing it, lightly kissing the back of her own hand. Men do not reciprocate, though I heard it said of Nasiruddin Hunzai that he kissed the hands of women, one of a number of practices by which he flouted contemporary norms of physical separation between unrelated men and women and asserted a more radical gender egalitarianism than even the Imamate itself sometimes upheld.

many sizes and pedagogical leanings had sprung up to meet a demand for quality education that the government and Isma‘ili educational systems could not fulfill.

Education was a primary site where individuals strove to improve their lives and, at the same time, an important locus of a broader sense of collective identity. Education simultaneously indexes modernity, piety and the virtue of cooperativeness for the community as a whole; people often cited statistics about the high rates of literacy and educational achievement in Hunza relative to surrounding areas and to Pakistan as a whole. These figures (often said to be over 90% or 95%, figures which circulate in local and national media as well) significantly bolster the sense that people have of being highly successful in development. In this chapter, I ask why education is such an important category in the vision of development articulated in Hunza.

In one sense, it is not at all surprising that this should be the case; formal education and its institutions have been central components in the ideological and strategic formulation of many reformist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries, no less in the Muslim world than in the West (Eickelman 1992; Hefner and Zaman 2007; Khalid 1998; Metcalf 1982; Starett 1998). As in many of these movements, teachers, parents and students in Hunza work to implement systems of formal education based on the most up-to-date pedagogical principles and espouse a “profound faith in the power of education to provide the solutions to the crises of ‘moral danger’ faced by their society” (Khalid 1998:1)—that is, as an antidote to the possible negative repercussions of modernization itself. Echoing currents within 19th and early 20th century South and Central Asian reformist, nationalist and anticolonial discourses, Hunza’s education enthusiasts propose that religion should be taught as a subject

alongside ‘modern’ subjects, such as science and English language, strongly disavowing any incommensurability between religious and other modes of knowing about the world (Devji 2010:38; Khalid 1998:12; Thobani 2011:180). Many of these earlier movements, however, hoped that modern education would affect a rupture with the past, inculcating modern forms of subjectivity, reforming religious knowledge and transforming those aspects of “traditional culture” deemed problematic (Khalid 1998). People in Hunza, on the other hand, often speak of education as fulfilling the essence of their tradition rather than superseding it.

Indeed, this apparent capacity of education to seamlessly join moral values associated with the emerging category of traditional culture with modern ways of being and living within Isma‘ili religious institutional and cosmological frames is definitive of the discourse surrounding education in Hunza. This conjunction of developmental promise, religious conceptions of knowledge, and the entwining of individual and collective futures situates education discourse as a central point of articulation of local understandings of and aspirations toward modernity. Everyday strategic and moral evaluations of the educational landscape are thus key sites at which the “future as a cultural fact” (Appadurai 2013:285) is produced as a distinctive configuration of ideas about individuality and collectivity, religion and the world, modern aspirations and traditional values. In the context of both the larger project of constructing an Isma‘ili modernity and the working out of this project as it is taken up by people locally, education is a domain where the collective moral imagination and pragmatic, everyday action are linked and in which individual advancement is linked to the spiritual and material progress of the community as a whole.

Alternative Histories of Development: Education in Hunza

The story of modern education in Hunza is older than that of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, and, in some sense, it provides an alternative development narrative to that centered on AKRSP, one with its roots in a different conjuncture of endogamous and exogenous agencies.

Although worldly education (*dunyawi ta'lim*) and the building of schools have been central to the project of creating an Isma'ili modernity described in the previous chapter, the arrival of institutions of modern, formal education in Hunza does not coincide with that of the Imamate institutions or the AKDN. In 1892, only a year after the annexation of Hunza and Nager, the British government opened a school in Gilgit (Felmy 2006) and over the following decades established primary schools in the surrounding valleys, including Hunza. In the early years, attendance was largely limited to the children of elites and by the need for special permission from local rulers to attend, especially in the upper levels. Even in the 1960s the people of the neighboring princely state of Ghizer required permission from the Raja to attend college in Gilgit (Susumu 2001:15-16). Leaving Hunza, which was necessary to acquire education beyond the primary level in the early decades of the 20th century, meant paying a tax to the Mir (Felmy 2006). These constraints on mobility, especially as it applied to education, were still part of living historical memory in 2000 and formed a significant strand of the “darkness to light” narrative. One informant, for example, told me the regularly-cited fact that the Mir once kept the watchtowers at the southern extreme of the valley manned with guards to prevent people from leaving;

the injustice of this situation was conveyed by the fact that people were denied the right to travel for education.

Public memory regarding education, however, gives credit almost exclusively to the Imams for its provenance. In 1946, on the occasion of his Diamond Jubilee (the 60th anniversary of his Imamate), Aga Khan III dedicated the gifts and tithes given by his followers for the inauguration of an investment trust to fund schools and social welfare efforts throughout the global *jama`at* (Ruthven 2011:192). Prior to that time the Aga Khan had been funding the building of schools one by one (beginning in 1905) among the Khoja communities of East Africa and India, and he urged his followers to pursue secular education along with success in professions, particularly in business and trade (Felmy 2006; Thobani 2011). The jubilee year marked a turning point in the scope and intensity of the process of the Imamate's institutional expansion, and it centered on the provision of education. The first seventeen Diamond Jubilee (DJ) schools were built in Hunza with funds from the investment trust;⁶⁵ by 1990-91, there were 39 (Felmy 2006:374). Though joined today by a variety of government and private schools, the DJ school system remains popular, in part, for the way it channels many of Hunza's brightest students into Isma'ili higher education institutions "downcountry" (in lowland, urban Pakistan), such as Aga Khan University in Karachi, and abroad, such as the Institute of Isma'ili Studies in London. These

⁶⁵ They were founded in 1946 "on the record," but Susumu (2001:11) reports that, in part due to the scarcity of local people with more than a year or two of schooling themselves, the DJ schools were not really operative until 1950, largely because there were not enough local people with even the few years of schooling necessary to serve as teachers.

universities offer programs in development-related fields that prepare many students for jobs in the AKDN or other Isma'ili institutions.

Although Aga Khan III, the creator of the DJ system, never visited Hunza, the founding of the schools and the beginnings of education in Hunza are very strongly associated with the personal agency of the Imam in the person of his successor, the present Imam. The current Aga Khan visited Hunza in 1960, during his first tour of the worldwide *jama'ats* in the early years of his Imamate. He was the first Isma'ili Imam to do so, and the collective memory of his physical presence is closely bound up with the story of education, as the following narrative demonstrates.⁶⁶

In the lush and pleasant garden of a small hotel in the village of Gulmit in Gojal (Upper Hunza), I heard an account of Hunza's recent history that wove education into the narrative of progress in a fairly typical way. The hotel owner, Sher Shah, after asking the subject of my research, launched into a monologue so extended and detailed I could barely scribble it down as he spoke (what follows is paraphrased from my notes).

Sher Shah's narrative rushed headlong through the old days of Buddhist influence to the arrival first of Shi'i and then of Isma'ili Islam, which was brought by wandering pirs like Nasir-i-Khusraw, who converted the people with *rhubab* and *zither* (stringed instruments common throughout the region, and used as

⁶⁶ The Imam's bodily presence has tremendous significance in Isma'ilism; "doing *didar*," or being in his presence, is spoken of a profound spiritual experience by many of my informants. Photographs of the Imam are ubiquitous in Isma'ili homes, shops, vehicles and other spaces. Many of the pictures of the Imam displayed in homes and Isma'ili public spaces in Hunza commemorate his presence in the valley, showing him disembarking from a helicopter, standing on a rocky hillside surrounded by his followers, or speaking at the inauguration of a school or development project.

accompaniment to Isma‘ili *ginans* [hymns]). Then in 1955 the first Diamond Jubilee schools were built by the Imam with the money from his Diamond Jubilee (in fact, this was in 1946), when he was presented with his weight in diamonds by the leaders of all his *jama‘ats*. In 1960 Prince Karim visited Hunza for the first time, and later gave the money from his Silver Jubilee to found the Karimabad Girls’ Academy and the Aga Khan Hospital in Karachi. Sher Shaw asked if I knew about the *maal-e-imam*, the 10 percent given by Isma‘ilis to the Imam, similar to the *zakat* (tithe) paid by Shi‘as and Sunnis? We give it, he said, and he gives it back to us in all these different ways. And now it is the year of his Golden Jubilee, Sher Shah said, the 50th anniversary of his Imamate, and the people are called to give their service in all parts of the community; if they are a doctor, for example, they might go to the villages and help the people. He went on to compare Hunza to lowland Pakistan: downcountry there are problems with extremists and terrorists, he said, but “here there is equality.” There are no beggars, not much of a gap between rich and poor. All have access to the same services, whether one is the Mir or from the poorest households. Women and men work together, there is “co-education” in the schools; in fact, he said, the women are now more educated than the men. They go downcountry for degrees and there they get jobs with NGOs, even in Afghanistan, or Kashmir after the earthquake, for example.⁶⁷

In this narrative, which is representative of many I heard, the history the DJ school system is woven into the broader narrative of progress from its inception. The narrative hinges on the arrival of the Imam in the valley, first in the form of the

⁶⁷ This is a reference to the 2005 earthquake that affected Pakistan-held Jammu and Kashmir most severely.

schools (the tangible products of his body weighed in diamonds) and then in his physical presence. It is one of continuous improvement and uplift, with the present a mid-point between the dark ignorance of the past and the better things to come.

As Sher Shah's account suggests, gender is central to this narrative of spiritual modernity. Hunzakuts gave differing accounts of the reasoning behind the Imam's injunction to give priority to the education of girls. Hunzakuts give differing accounts of the reasoning behind the *firman* on girls' education. Some said that the importance of girls' education lies in the special influence of a mother over her children. One interlocutor began to explain, "educate a woman and you educate..." His companion interjected, "...a whole family." "A *generation*," corrected the first. In other instances, the rights of women to education and employment for the sake of their own fulfillment or the value of their contributions to society were emphasized. While the AKDN today emphasizes the latter, classically liberal rationales, the former finds support in the language of Aga Khan III's statements on the matter (Thobani 2011:176). I heard mixtures of both understandings from many of my interlocutors. In Sher Shah's narrative, as in many others, the equality and co-presence of men and women in schools and workplaces is the final proof of Hunza's largely completed trajectory toward modernity; by the same token, it is proof of the Imam's own modernity, as the cause of this equality.

In accordance with the Aga Khan's guidance, the DJ schools educate more female than male students, a commitment that was increasingly extended to higher education. Whereas during my brief period of work in the region in 2000, the few women who had received bachelor's or master's degrees and gone on to work in the

valley (mostly for NGOs) endured a degree of isolation and suspicion from their communities, in 2006-08, the presence of educated women in offices and NGO land cruisers (themselves potent symbols of modernity, wealth and desire) was, while not completely free from controversy, no longer uncommon or remarkable.

Constraints on women's mobility remained, but families with the resources had proven remarkably willing to find creative ways of circumventing them in order to send their daughters to Gilgit or downcountry to attend university. They exploited relationships of extended or fictive kinship, for example, or sent siblings as chaperones or to establish households for their college-bound sisters and brothers. When I left Hunza in the spring of 2008, for example, three of the Hussein siblings were living in a small house the family owned in Gilgit; Rahim was taking classes toward a B.A., Mahnoor was preparing to enroll somewhere, and Mayún was keeping house for her brother and sister. In public discourse, people took every opportunity to boast of their compliance with the *firman*, both as proof of their pious obedience to their Imam and as evidence of the Imam's own modern and enlightened attitude; evidence, in other words, that compliance with his authority carries value in both Islamic and modern frames.

Through choices as intimate as whether and where to educate their sons and daughters, Isma'ilis in Hunza are self-consciously engaged in the construction of an 'enchanted modern' (Deeb 2006) whose specific contours are evoked by the phrase "spiritual development" and the idiom of reconciling *din aur dunya*, (religion and the world). This project is reflected in modes of action and discourses that link personal projects to larger moral considerations, implicating a variety of mundane practices,

small acts of signification and forms of sociality in the ethics of being modern. A particularly Isma‘ili modernity as it takes shape in Hunza, I argue, is centrally concerned with questions about the moral qualities of society and the relationship of individuals to their societies. For Isma‘ilis, education becomes a key site where knowledge essential to the formation of both modern individual subjects and a certain desired form of community is inculcated. It is this particular conjuncture of self and community, along with notions of the spiritual and the material, tradition and modernity, and the role of knowledge in mediating them all, that defines the central place of education in local conceptions of development.

As I have said, however, this Isma‘ili social imaginary is not singular, stable or uncontested. Far from offering a singular or unified vision of what the relationship between self and society is or ought to be, Isma‘ilis and Isma‘ili institutions find this question a problematic and productive, if often implicit, focus for the project of being Isma‘ili moderns.

For example, in contrast to the triumphal recitation of Hunza’s history recounted earlier, other informants offered narratives that, while acknowledging the value of both education and the Imam’s guidance, were less satisfied with the present state of things and less sanguine about the future. This point of view was articulated by the young nephew of a man I called ‘Uncle,’ Ghulam Murtaza, a college student home from Karachi for the summer who was eager to display his erudition. Speaking in English, he told me that, while in the old days people may have cooperated and “sacrificed” for one another, this was no longer true. Now everyone just wants to be wealthy and respected, he said, never thinking of helping others, not even their own

family. There was respect before—the respect of children for their elders and the respect of people for one another as equals—when people possessed more or less the same wealth and did not envy one another, whereas now, he said, some have a lot, and those who have less think of only how they can “snatch it.” People have turned away from cooperation and sacrifice, the “norms and values” of the old society, and everyone wants to be independent. All this might be due, he allowed, to the influence of foreign media and *Hunzakuts*’ travels outside the valley; people see that life without understanding it. He asked: did I understand the terms *zahir* (overt or apparent) and *batin* (hidden)? People want a modern life but they don’t see what its “real nature” is. Parents are ultimately responsible for all these problems, the young man said; they look after their children, give them good clothes, enough food and a good education, but they don’t teach them values. And this, in turn, is because of the parents lack education themselves.

At this point, I expressed surprise: in the young man’s discourse, education appeared to be both part of the problem (the source of the individualism and material concerns that blinded people to the *batin* or inner truth of life and its proper values) and the solution to that problem. There are two kinds of education, he responded. There is the “formal education” one receives in school and the “informal education” provided by parents. If parents are formally educated, rather than “illiterate” as too many are today, they will teach their children the values of their culture.

What is interesting about this account is that while formal schooling is contrasted with the informal education that takes place at home and, implicitly, is aligned with traditional values (e.g., cooperation, sacrifice and respect), formal

education is, nonetheless, the remedy for the ignorance that has stymied the transmission of traditional values. While not everyone agreed with Ghulam Murtaza's nephew about the dismal state of traditional values in the present, the idea that educated people would naturally have the discernment to appreciate these values was very commonly expressed.

Central to the argument of Ghulam Murtaza's nephew about the value of different forms of education and its general transformative power is the categorization of knowledge into *zahir* and *batin*. Here education, or at least the right kind of education, is important because it enables one to understand the "real nature" of things—most importantly, of particular modes of life. The present, therefore, appears as a moment of confusion and disarray because people have access to other ways of life but not the right kind of education to recognize their pitfalls. In this view, education is crucial to crafting a morally better way of living within the material conditions of the future. At the same time, it is also productively linked to the values of the past, such that the values of the past are imagined as essential to a truly developed future.

The idea of knowledge as discernment can be instructively contrasted with more pragmatic representations of education as simply a vehicle for information (such as that needed to pass national exams), or, alternatively, a set of skills (such as those needed for entry into a profession). These views of knowledge are acknowledged in local conversations about the importance of scoring well on national exams and securing a good job. They are also represented in the official rhetoric of Aga Khan Education Services, as well as in the skills trainings and capacity-building workshops

offered by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme. The presumption in this discourse is that knowledge as facts or skills can be acquired by a person and used to gain access to the opportunities afforded by modern life (e.g., university admissions and professional employment) without changing the person herself. Many Hunzakuts, on the other hand, explicitly reject understandings of knowledge as mere information or vocational skill in their discourse and decision-making around education. Both teachers and educated parents, for example, commonly complain about the national exam system and the constraints it places on their ability to focus on “quality” education. In terms quite similar to U.S. debates around standardized testing, they say that the burden of preparing students for the exams, which heavily determine their prospects for higher education, especially in rural areas, prevents them from teaching “real knowledge” that prepares them to live a modern and moral life. This is one of a number of points at which the Hunzakut notion of spiritual development emerges as distinct from the discourse of the AKDN and even the Imamate.

The understanding of knowledge as enhancing one’s ability to discern the *batin*, or inner, real nature of things, is widespread, but people in Hunza have differing ideas about how it is related to formal education or to the education available at particular schools and school systems. Parents and college-aged students I knew spent a lot of time talking and strategizing about which schools offer the best education and what that means. In the context of these kinds of judgments, the value of knowledge-as-discernment and its value as a set of acquired facts and skills are both related to a third source of value—the usefulness of knowledge and education for granting access to larger worlds and the opportunities they afford, both economic and social. The

potential of education to connect Hunzakuts to these worlds outside the valley is, undoubtedly a major source of its appeal, but not all such avenues are equally desirable.

Education for National, Transnational and Local Futures

Of all the spheres of development activity in Hunza, education is almost certainly the most generative in purely institutional terms. Although I did not attempt a formal survey of local institutions, the founding of new schools and the maintenance, leadership and reform of existing ones was more visible upon the landscape in the form of school buildings, signage and uniform-clad students, as well as more salient in the lives of my informants than comparable processes around any other endeavor. The variation among these schools was equally remarkable, but they can be categorized into three broad types: government schools (run by the Pakistani state); Diamond Jubilee schools (in which category I include some schools, such as the Karimabad Girls' Academy, which are not DJ schools but are overseen by AKES); and local private schools (many of which receive funding from international or Pakistani donors and philanthropists, but are run by people from Hunza). These latter are commonly referred to as 'English schools,' because most are, or purport to be, English-medium, as opposed to the DJ schools where English is taught as a subject but Urdu is the language of instruction.⁶⁸ The categories are not perfect, and so in what follows I sketch the broad outlines of local opinion about the different forms of education

⁶⁸ This is the case officially. Several of my teacher friends lamented, and I observed, that Burushaski is often spoken by default because both students and teachers may lack confidence in their Urdu fluency. The same was said about English in certain of the ostensibly English-medium schools.

available, and I do not attempt to present a detailed and accurate picture of the whole educational terrain.

Of the three categories, the government schools are widely considered the least desirable. Only those who cannot afford better send their children there, I was told, as tuition is free and other expenses and requirements (such as participation from parents) are minimal. The quality of instruction is considered poor—local teachers I knew said that the government does not provide adequate support in the form of teacher training and monitoring. English, as a subject, is offered later than it is in the DJ schools, though in both systems Urdu is the primary medium of instruction. Finally, the national exam system was widely denounced as corrupt and discriminatory to students from poor and rural areas such as Hnuza.⁶⁹ Although students in the other systems are still subject to the exams, DJ and English schools are thought to do a better job of mitigating the unfairness.

In outline, the critiques of government schools as sub-par, inadequately supported and potentially corrupt, were applied to all state services and institutions. At the time of my first visit in 2000 and then later in 2006-2008, the general attitude toward the government vacillated between resigned disappointment and cultivated indifference. As I note in Chapter One, the Gilgit-Baltistan region became part of Pakistan shortly after independence and was subsequently brought under administrative control by the federal government during reforms in the mid-1970s that ended the local sovereignty of the mirs. The region has never been fully incorporated

⁶⁹ For a widespread criticism of the national education system from both within and outside Pakistan: see, for example, “Ghost Schools” 2013; “End Corruption” 2011; Neelakantan 2007.

into Pakistan's parliamentary democratic system, however, which leaves its residents free of taxation or extensive interference from the state but without representation in national bodies and with minimal state services. The relative indifference of the government toward the region has largely been reciprocated by most Hunzakuts. As I discuss in the concluding chapter, this may be changing, especially since the reforms of 2009 were billed as a step toward full inclusion within the nation-state. The failure of these promises to materialize seems to have sparked a deeper sense of anger and betrayal than the attitude of indifference to the state my informants expressed to me during my fieldwork can explain. Beyond the poor performance of the state as a purveyor of development, however, the attitude of Hunzakuts toward the version of developed modernity that the Pakistani nation-state represents is ambivalent. While levels of both temporary and permanent out-migration to the cities of downcountry Pakistan from Hunza for higher education and employment are very high, and while many people do appreciate life in the cities with its conveniences and anonymity, they are also quick to condemn it in moral terms. Downcountry people are said to be too concerned with status and wealth, to be "closed-minded" and prone to religious "fundamentalism" (I was often told that Pakistan was full of "Taliban" and "Taliban-types"). Furthermore, they are described as not being "cooperative" like Hunzakuts, but selfish or, alternatively, "tribal."

Thus, though the cities of downcountry Pakistan offer educational and other opportunities unavailable in Hunza, these come with significant practical and moral caveats. As a means of access to a comparatively developed, comparatively modern world, then, the government schools fail in the eyes of Hunzakuts on two counts: the

educational preparation they offer is not adequate, and the particular world they provide access to is not one to which many young Hunzakuts today aspire to fix their destinies. It is worth noting that while this sentiment was widespread in 2006-08, it was likely less so prior to the 1980s, when the nation-state was the major avenue to modernity and many Hunzakuts found employment in the army.

If the nation-state fails to engage enthusiasm for its promises, the transnational Isma'ili *jama'at*, represented by the DJ schools, is more appealing. As the history recounted by Sher Shah, the hotel owner, demonstrates, the construction of the first DJ schools in 1946 represents the turning point in most versions of Hunza's development narrative. The DJ schools are presented as direct, unmediated gifts of the Aga Khan—the first in an ongoing series that includes the institutions of the AKDN. Thus, although they were not the first schools in the valley (Felmy 2006), the credit for bringing education to Hunza and inaugurating the era of development is given to the DJ schools. They are popular: in 2000-01, DJ schools accounted for more students than any other system (Felmy 2006:374). Showcase campuses, like the Aga Khan Higher Secondary School in Karimabad, with its excellent facilities, beautiful grounds and competitive admissions process, were the focus of both pride and aspiration for parents and students I knew.

At the same time a certain amount of dissatisfaction was voiced with the DJ schools in general, especially among those who expressed a preference for private schools. The criticisms were various, but tended to center around the hierarchical, bureaucratic structure of AKES. Some teachers I knew who worked or had worked in the DJ schools appreciated the amount of support and training available to them, but

they resented the concomitant oversight of their classrooms. Many parents had difficulty navigating the requirements placed on them and some perceived nepotism in the distribution of choice placements.

Favoritism was a charge that drew particular ire in the context of Isma'ili institutions generally, perhaps in part because they were held to a higher standard of fairness and accessibility than the government. Nonetheless, it was not an uncommon complaint. Like the other institutions of the Isma'ili Imamate, AKES and the DJ system are structured in hierarchical chains that link local communities to the Imam; in between, however, they traverse national, ethnic and class boundaries. The Hunzakuts who staff the local NGOs, boards, councils and schools gain status from their positions; they are subordinated in turn to regional, national and international levels of bureaucracy often dominated by wealthy Isma'ilis from downcountry, transnational Isma'ili elites and Europeans (Steinberg 2011). As proximate links in the chain connecting Isma'ilis in Hunza to their Imam in France, these layers of bureaucracy and the people who staff them share in the charisma that flows along these chains, yet they are, at the same time, deeply suspect. They simultaneously facilitate and interfere with what should be a purely spiritual relationship between the Imam and his *murids* (followers).

Some of this ambivalence is shared by AKES and the DJ schools. They are sites at which people can pursue personal material advancement while also fulfilling their religious duty by complying with an important injunction from their Imam. At the same time, the relationships in which Hunzakuts often find themselves within the DJ school system and other Imamate institutions have a hierarchical character that

people find problematic. As a sphere of both individually and relationally productive potential, the global *jama'at* engages the moral imaginations of many Hunzakuts; as points of entry into that world, the DJ schools are both highly valued and subject to moral critique.

Locally founded private schools, no less than the Aga Khan education system, are arenas for village and intra-village politics, but these struggles play out in the absence of an overarching or external institutional framework. Local schools operate in a space of tremendous social and institutional productivity between the international NGOs and donors, which often provide funding and other resources, and the assorted groups and interests that make up village communities. They are a space of creative experimentation with new pedagogical practices, moral visions of education, personhood and community. To give a sense of the variety these experiments in education, I will briefly describe the two 'English schools' with which I had the most contact.

In 2006, one of the newer private schools in central Hunza was Eris Academy, which was already generating considerable excitement among educated parents for its up-to-date pedagogical principles and its students' high exam scores. Shahnawaz, a young man I knew in 2001 when he was teaching English at a government school, helped found Eris along with a group of other teachers impatient with the quality of instruction at the existing schools. There were only two full-time administrators; the teachers set policy by consensus. The teachers had started the school with their own money. They had not acquired any foreign funding and hoped to expand and improve their facilities through tuition alone. They were quick to make use of non-tangible

resources; when I showed Shahnawaz the Project Gutenberg website, he was immediately enthusiastic about its huge archive of English literature and the simple interface that would make it possible to upload and print on their outdated computers and intermittent internet connection. The school had ties to the Hunza Education Resource Project (HERP), an older, locally-initiated teacher-training and resource center for teachers from any educational systems. Though its founders struggled to provide basic infrastructure and to make ends meet on drastically reduced salaries, Eris seemed well on its way to being one of the most well regarded schools in the valley. The Eris teachers had also helped instigate the creation of an early childhood education center run on Montessori child-centered principles, partly as a place to send their own young children.

By contrast, the Moray School in the village of Altit was not known for its innovative pedagogy, but it represented an achievement of a different kind. The Moray School was founded by a local man who harnessed the wealth and support of out-migrants settled downcountry as well as the moneyed connections he had made working for a national bank to build the large, multistory cement structure. The reputation of the school in Altit was somewhat mixed. While a private school in an imposing modern building was widely considered to be a benefit to the village, the manner of the school's administration revealed its purpose, in the eyes of many, to be a matter of securing its founder's political position rather than providing the very best education. During the construction of the third story (to be used as a "proper" examination hall) some of the teachers sniped that the money might better have been used to fill the empty shelves of the library or to equip the empty computer lab.

Ghulam Uddin, the principal of Moray School, informed me that every household in the village had voluntarily contributed labor and funds to the initial construction. Echoing the participatory logics of development discourse, he insisted on the importance of the parent-teacher organization in determining the needs and direction of the school, arguing against Moray's critics that the school belonged to the village and had its support. He also told me that the money for the school had come entirely from the village community, while the founder liked to boast about the contributions of wealthy and influential philanthropists who were not even Isma'ilis.

New Beacon house shared the Altit *shavaran* (formerly the village polo ground) with both the government school and the DJ school. Nasimullah, an influential man from a nearby village with a high position in an AKDN NGO, once remarked that this seemed a wasteful division of resources and contrasted the situation in Altit unfavorably with the situation in his village where, he said, they had concentrated their efforts on making the DJ school better and on funding, through a voluntary contribution from all the well-off households, a bus service to transport students above the intermediate level to and from various schools in Karimabad.

What I hope to show by this comparison is that the landscape of local educational institutions is diverse and reflective of the variety of agendas, resources, and values that Hunzakuts bring to the arena of education. To note one similarity between Moray and Eris, both are ostensibly English-medium. For many people this is the principle advantage of private schools. English presents a significant advantage in gaining admission to universities, especially the more prestigious in-country ones and those in the West. Beyond merely pragmatic considerations, though, English was

spoken of as providing a connection to the developed West. As Ghulam Uddin put it to me when I volunteered to teach part-time at Moray: through English, Hunza's people can easily "absorb your civilization and your achievements." Always one for grand rhetorical flourishes, he added that Hunzakuts would "even sell our mountains" to gain these advantages.

English, then, provides access to a vision of modernity and the modern world associated with the West, and specifically with a vision of the West that is rich in both material and spiritual development. People in Western countries are said to be *aman-pasand* (peace-loving) and cooperative; their knowledge, particularly in the realm of science, is presumed to have led to a deeper insight into the inner truths of the world. As I suggest earlier in this dissertation, Isma'ilis emphasize that scientific and religious truths are not incompatible; rather, science can yield truths inscribed in the material world (*dunya*) by God (Thobani 2011:180). In a 1983, speech the Aga Khan explained the relationship between science, religion and the world: "Indeed, one strength of Islam has always lain in its belief that creation is not static but continuous, that through scientific and other endeavors, God has opened and continues to open new windows for us to see the marvels of His creation" (al-Husseini 1983). The fact that their *hazir* Imam himself lives in the West is cited by many Hunzakuts as evidence for its greater spiritual enlightenment. The West, as figured in certain discourses in Hunza, is a version of contemporary modernity that can stand for the ideal future state of social life in Hunza once development's promise has been fulfilled—but not in a straightforward way or one that diminishes the importance of religion or the local.

So what is the character of this future ideal, this spiritual modernity, and how does education in the context of local English-medium schools bring it closer? The stories of the two schools described above exemplify values of cooperation, volunteerism, sacrifice, and local autonomy. The teachers at Eris Academy were admired for their selflessness in giving up steady, well-paying jobs to found their school, while the founder of Moray School, in spite of his claims that the school was a cooperative village effort, was criticized for wielding power inappropriately. Moray's founding, nonetheless, represented a recognized and valued style of leadership in the arena of village politics.

Without wishing to overly simplify a complex and always-changing picture—the moral meaning of education in Hunza is not singular—I want to suggest that the promise behind the intense generative energy surrounding local schools is the possibility of constructing, via collective effort in the here-and-now, a version of modernity that holds out the promise of uniting personal and collective aspirations as well as spiritual and material development. By attending to the specifics of the practices and discourses around education, from the transformative powers attributed to knowledge to the preference for particular schools over others, it is possible to trace the moral contours of multiple futures, and to see how people orient toward them through their actions.

A version of the material in this chapter will appear as “Schooling Virtue: Education for ‘Spiritual Development’ in Northern Pakistan,” in the forthcoming volume *Religion and Modernity in the Himalaya*, Megan Adamson Sijapati and

Jessica Vantine Berkenholtz, eds., Routledge, 2015. The dissertation author was the primary researcher and author of this paper.

Chapter 6. The Future in Place

In this chapter I take up questions of time in relation to development and, specifically, the multiple temporalities that can characterize development projects and the experience of those engaged in them. I have already shown some of the ways in which the temporality of development in Hunza is complex: the radical temporal rupture that characterizes the “darkness to light” narrative lies alongside a narrative of ongoing and continuous uplift. A eutopian (Karlstrom 2004) emphasis on cooperation, mutual help and care places development within the scope of human action, if not already present in fleeting moments, while claims that place all responsibility for development in the hands of the Aga Khan render the possibility of development radically contingent on an external, quasi-divine agency. Utopian hopes that soon Hunza will be just like Paris coexist with the ongoing and everyday politics of wheelbarrows and town management. In moments of frustration and despair, people wonder whether development has already gone too far, or whether it was never possible at all. Even the phrase “spiritual and material development,” common in both AKDN literature and everyday conversation, evokes a complex conjuncture of mundane, worldly time with the time of eternity.

My reflections on temporality largely center on a difference between the contexts of my research in 2000 and 2006-08, a difference partly owing to my own circumstances and partly to the historical changes that had taken place in the meantime. In 2000, AKRSP was unquestionably the most significant agent of development in the valley, though hardly the sole agent. With its focus on economic and infrastructure development and its language, it reflected, in many ways, the

progressive temporal orientation of development generally, although as I discussed in Chapter Two it was not without its own complex relationship to the past and present, drawing as it did on local ‘traditions’ of collective labor and community consensus-building. During my dissertation research, however, AKRSP was a distant figure, and the very different work of heritage preservation and management done by AKCSP was a far more salient and tangible presence. AKCSP looms large in my dissertation research experience in part because of AKRSP’s less regular presence in the valley by this time, and because I chose to settle in Altit, where AKCSP had just begun a major restoration project, and I wound up being involved with the organization in multiple ways.

While it would be inaccurate to suggest that cultural heritage management had replaced microfinance and infrastructure projects as the dominant model of development in Hunza, the shift is emblematic of my argument about the character of development through this period. The set of events, circumstances, and conundrums that presented themselves around the work of AKCSP on the built environment of Altit both supported thoughts I had already begun to have about the temporal structure of development discourse in Hunza and prompted me, along with many of my friends and neighbors, to think about how the complex temporalities captured by the idea of spiritual development were embodied in everyday practice and materialized in the world around us.

Like different forms of development and practices of aid (Scherz 2014), different cultural heritage projects have their own temporalities and are linked to different ways of conceiving the relationship between the heritage itself and the individuals and

communities who view, use or inhabit it. ...In this chapter I consider the ways in which several projects carried out by AKCSP in Hunza have been conceived and received as invitations to imagine community and history.

Altit *Khun*

AKCSP is the local arm of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), an NGO under the AKDN umbrella whose mandate includes the restoration and management of ‘cultural heritage,’ meaning primarily those aspects of the built environment judged to have historical and architectural significance. Informed by current theory and practice in the field of heritage development, and operating within the ambit of the AKDN’s overall development strategy, AKCSP describes itself as having “a focus on using cultural heritage as a resource for community development.” The organization’s presence in Altit was marked by the comings and goings of its personnel: its higher-ranking male staff anomalous on village paths in their Western suits and its Land Cruisers regularly travelling the access road between Altit and AKCSP’s main office in Karimabad. It was equally visible in its products: the changes wrought on the fabric of Altit itself during the years prior to and continuing through my fieldwork. The focus of AKCSP’s work in 2006-8 was on the restoration of the 900-year-old Altit Fort, which overlooked the densely clustered houses of the *khun*. The fort is a long building of stone and wood finished with smooth mud with a single tall tower, it is set above the *khun* on a crag and is accessible through a beautiful gated garden called *Khabasi*. Perched dramatically between the village and a sheer cliff some 600 feet above the River Hunza, the fort had been the residence of the Mirs until they decamped to the larger and newer Baltit Fort. Like other AKCSP restoration projects,

the building had been given by its owner—in this case by the former Mir of Hunza—to be held in trust on behalf of the community as a whole.

Many members of the Altit community were involved in one way or another with the fort restoration project. None of the primary AKCSP staff were from Altit, though most were from other parts of Hunza. However, a number of Altit residents were directly employed by the project, including a group of twenty young women who were trained in surveying and a variety of other highly technical skills involved in the mapping and restoration of the site. The Altit Town Management Society was formed by AKCSP (somewhat on the model of the Village Organizations founded by AKCSP) to represent the village community's interests and to enter into contracts with AKCSP regarding the division of responsibilities for projects jointly undertaken by the village and the NGO (as we saw at the beginning of Chapter 2). The employment and other opportunities provided by AKCSP were the focus of much interest and excitement in Altit, but they also caused jealousy and resentment on the part of those who did not receive these benefits. Some people were concerned about the possible increase in the number of tourists who would come to Altit to see the completed fort, in anticipation of which the proposed *ticket-ghar* on the site of the old library was being built to direct and contain the visitors.

By and large, people in Altit were much less interested in the fort itself than in the employment opportunities and minor hazards presented by the ongoing work and the uses to which it would eventually be put. The aspect of their cultural heritage that had caught people's imaginations much more than the towering old monument was the fabric of the *khun* itself.

In 2003, when AKCSP started its work in Altit, it had already restored the larger, more accessible and more iconic Baltit Fort, located in Karimabad,⁷⁰ which had been the Mir's residence and seat of power under the princely state until its dissolution in 1974. Whereas the Baltit Fort had initially been treated as a single monument, its restoration was conceived independently of the surrounding structures and the space of the village as a whole, in Altit AKCSP reversed its strategy. Rather than beginning work on the long-empty and disused fort, it began with the restoration of the ordinary houses and common spaces of the *khun*.

According to both AKCSP staff and Altit residents, before 2003, Altit *khun* was nearly uninhabitable. Its unpaved alleyways were sometimes impassible with mud and standing water, where mosquitos bred in summer. Electrification had occurred piecemeal and haphazardly, resulting in a spiderweb of jury-rigged lines overhead and occasionally draped across buildings and walkways. The houses were small-- in most cases a single room at ground level with a partially covered rooftop shelter above for use in warmer weather. While once the crowding and the presence of animals (mainly goats and sheep) sharing the ground floor with humans during the winter were tolerable, even desirable for the warmth they generated, by the 2000s few people wanted to live this way. According to the accounts of numerous Altit residents, by the time AKCSP began its work there the houses of the *khun* was only about half occupied, its public spaces often empty. With the expansion of available land for farming, the availability of food sources other than subsistence agriculture, and the

⁷⁰ Baltit was renamed Karimabad in honor of the present Aga Khan, Shah Karim al-Husseini, in 1983.

loosening of strictures against the building of houses on arable land (formerly prohibited), people had begun to move out of the *khun* and into new, multi-room houses, often built of concrete and other modern materials, loosely scattered around the village land on people's individual plots.

These new houses were felt to have many benefits, not least of which was their capacity to serve as markers of a family's status and material wellbeing. The Hussein family, for example, lived in an impressive 6-room structure just outside the village core, surrounded by outbuildings, a kitchen garden and a small lawn with a formal border of flowering plants. A wall with a gate separated the plot from the alleyway along its upper boundary, which, like the other features, is far more characteristic of dwellings in downcountry Pakistan than those of Hunza. In this way, it reflected the history of its owner; Ghulam Hussein, in his seventies at the time of my research, who had spent decades downcountry, first in the army and later rising through the ranks at a large national bank. With his savings, he also bought several plots of land in Gilgit and built a house there, as well as helping to found Moray School, the private school I discuss in the previous chapter. On his retirement, he moved his family back to Hunza and set about establishing himself as an important man (Bu.: *uyunkosís*) and a village leader. The house, with its rectilinear construction, its formal dining room and multiple separate bedrooms, and its modern conveniences, such as built-in countertops and cabinetry in the kitchen (rare even among the other new houses I visited) and a washing machine (also rare, though defunct when I lived there) served to index his status, ambitions and allegiances.

For all the advantages of space and modernity afforded by newer houses like the Husseins', however, many people expressed dissatisfaction with them. For one thing, they were cold: with their uninsulated cinderblock construction, larger floor plans and higher ceilings, they were far more difficult to keep warm in winter than the small houses of the *khun* with their contiguous structure. Secondly, the privacy and separation afforded by the new houses, both with respect to fellow members of the household and in relation to others, did not appear to be valued in practice as much as it was valued symbolically. The Hussein family's own way of inhabiting their house was indicative of what appeared to be general patterns of preference. In spite of the many rooms available, when they were on their own or with frequent visitors, the Husseins spent nearly all of their time in a single room. The central room of the house had been built to replicate many of the stylistic features of the *há*, the traditional one-room Hunza house (including the layered ceiling construction, skylight, sunken floor and raised seating areas around the walls), but this room was only used for formally entertaining important guests, as during the two weddings that took place in the house. While I lived with the family, I claimed one of the back bedrooms, but between my departure and the marriage of Karim, the family's eldest son, it was used only for storage. The room used by the family the majority of the time was the kitchen, which was well, heated by the wood stove used for cooking. The room also held the television and the mats for sitting and sleeping. During good weather the door to this room was propped open and the paved porch outside became the center of social activity.

Other people I knew also found that their newly constructed houses were not perfectly suited to life as they preferred to live it. Especially for those whose houses were located at some distance from the *khun*, the new houses meant more isolation from their neighbors than they considered ideal. ACKSP's decision to restore and refurbish the *khun* itself before beginning work on Altit fort proved to be a consequential one for both the private and public life of the village, at least as I heard it after the fact. AKCSP paved the alleys of the *khun* with stone, shored up walls that had been in danger of collapsing into the street, refurbished the public seating alcoves (*baldi*) and the central square (*jatáq*) and provided underground electrification and sewerage to all homes. They accomplished all this with an eye to maintaining aesthetic continuity, but with at least one significant limit. Along with agreements over the division of responsibilities for funding, planning and labor, the contract between AKCSP and the village community included the requirement that all livestock be moved permanently out of the *khun*.

By the time of my fieldwork, many families had moved back into the *khun*. A number of families I knew had established a seasonal pattern of residence, living in the *khun* through the winters and moving out to their 'summer houses' in the fields when the weather changed. One such family was that of Darvesh, whose teenage daughters, Rehanna and Rubina, told me that they enjoyed their residence in the *khun* more because of the constant visiting back and forth between neighboring houses. While the Hussein home, located at the edge of the *khun*, seemed to draw visitors at all hours and times of year, I generally found Darvesh and his family on their own when I visited them at their summer house.

The frequency and mutuality of my own social interactions increased dramatically when I moved from a rented room in a disused hotel on the edge of Altit into a small house in the center of the *khun* whose owners had not elected to return. People I had never met before felt free to enter and introduce themselves, while long-term friends took the initiative to come and see me more often, expressing, in various

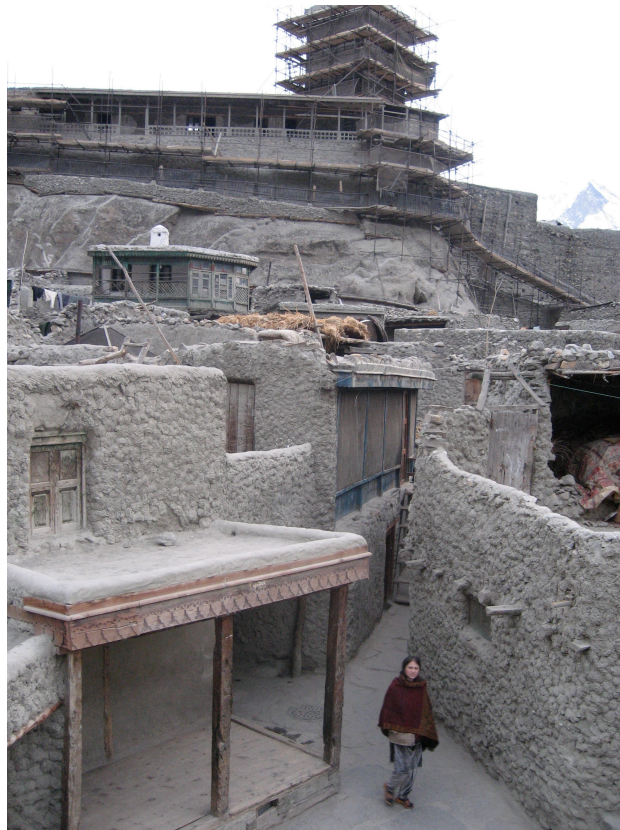


Figure 1: Altit *khun* with Altit Fort (under restoration) in the background. *Jataq* (plaza) and *baldi* (covered sitting area) in foreground.



Figure 2: The restored Baltit Fort seen from the Altit link road.



Figure 3: Altit village seen from the summer village of Duikar.



Figure 4: Pitting apricots and readying them for drying on a rooftop, Altit *khun*. ways that they felt far less constraint on visiting me in such a close and familiar setting. I had already realized that residence in a hotel, especially one whose owner was known to host occasional drinking parties on the premises, had slightly unsavory connotations that made it difficult for my female friends to visit me, while the fact that I lived alone made it awkward to receive male visitors. Other reasons for my isolation were revealed more gradually. The smaller settlement clusters far from the village center, like the area called *matoom das* where my hotel was located are situated in or near areas of barren or unused land (Bu.: *das*), which are felt to be inhabited by *buut* (ghosts), *bilás* (monstrous witches), and other potentially dangerous non-human entities, causing many people to avoid them near or after dark.

Living in the *khun* drew me into relationships of neighborliness and mutual help in a way that had been difficult to establish before. I found myself on speaking terms with far more just by walking through the *jatáq* everyday and returning

greetings. My neighbor, Yasmeena, who appears in Chapter Three, poked her head around my door on the first day I moved in, and was in and out of my house for the rest of my time in Hunza.⁷¹ Though many people found her manner brusque and off-putting, Yasmeena was a tireless teller of stories, and she had a deep interest in “*hamare culture*” (our culture) and *hurutas-diyeyas* (Bu.: sitting-standing; way of doing things)⁷² that was rare among young people. Her nephews called me *guuntso* (Bu.: aunt), and I was the first outside the immediate family to meet the new baby, Ali Zan, when he was born; later, they waited for my return from the US to hold the ceremony marking the emergence of his first tooth.

The physical warmth and the rooftop sociability of the *khun* was a relief to me after my months on the outer fringes of Altit life, but I was far from being alone in appreciating them. The young people who came to my house for weekly English lessons, for example, had widely divergent opinions about the value of the old fort as an exemplar of “our traditional culture” and about what should be done with it. However, all agreed that my new house was extremely suitable. They offered to help me clean up the slightly disused rooftop area so that I could sit and sleep up there; when I asked if that would be inappropriate, given that I was alone, Yasmeen responded that she would come and sleep on my roof with me.

⁷¹ My relationship with Yasmeena and her family had the unexpected benefit of largely ending the constant, intrusive visits and calls from local agents of the intelligence services, which had been causing trouble for me, and those who associated with me, for months. As it turned out, Yasmeena’s elder brother worked in the Gilgit office of one of several government agencies that had taken an interest in my security, and once under the protection (or surveillance) of his family, I was no longer hounded.

⁷² This is probably a calque from the Urdu *utna-betna*, with the same meaning.

While by many accounts the *khun* was half-empty and inhabited only by those who couldn't afford to move elsewhere, at the time of my fieldwork it was bustling and vibrant. It was hard to get an accurate count because of people's seasonal comings and goings, but I would estimate that at least 80 percent of the houses were inhabited. The last months of my research, in the summer of 2008, coincided with the height of the yearlong Golden Jubilee celebrations celebrating the 50th year of the present Imam's tenure, during which time an unusual number of *tamasha* (festivity with music and dancing) were held in the central *jatáq* to celebrate both the event itself and the many weddings that were planned that summer to coincide with it. Thus, for the whole of that summer the *jatáq* and the surrounding rooftops were regularly crowded with people pressed around the walls to leave the central space clear for groups of male dancers to perform.

What these modes of sociability add up to, I suggest, is a mutual entanglement of the symbolic dimensions of the built environment and the lived, bodily experience of it. Savova (2009:550) calls this "heritage kinaesthetics," the bodily practices by which people relate to and bring to life the built environment, in contrast to "heritage aesthetics" in which people encounter their environment through its static qualities. Opening a neighbor's door and stepping inside uninvited, joining others on the rooftops to work, gossip or to sleep, and joining a neighbor in a routine task are all ways of engaging in social life in the present that also have resonance with ideas about how things were in the past and with notions of tradition and culture. Such practices are the substance of the virtue of 'cooperation' that is often cited as the reason for Hunzakuts success in development. As such, they are moments where a connection

between a particular version of history and a set of possibilities is not only thought about but also embodied.

Arjun Appadurai (2003:46) writes that, “the production of locality is a reminder that even the most apparently mechanical forms of social order that seem to function without design, contingency, or intentionality but simply by the force of routine—what we used to call habit—involve large amounts of deliberate attention, effort and labor.” The *khun* was not a space of mechanical reproduction but of renewed life and restored possibilities, of which people express degrees of consciousness and reflexivity in their words and actions. Appadurai (2003:46) links this to his idea of imagination as a social practice: “Part of that attention, effort and labor is involved in collective ideas of what is possible. Therefore, for the local to have some spatialized embodiment takes an effort which transcends that very spatiality.”

From the perspective of Altit residents and the AKCSP team alike, the *khun* restoration project was a success. The unanimity of *khun* residents’ appreciation for it was so consistent that it presented itself as a problem to the anthropologist who was hired by AKCSP to conduct an impact study on the project. At the end of her second day of administering surveys, Dr. Rehman, a professor from a well-known downcountry university, vented her frustration to me: the only criticism she could extract from her interview subjects was from those outside the *khun* who wished the electrification, sanitation and other benefits had been provided free to all the houses in the village, rather than just to those in the historic core. Dr. Rehman found it utterly improbable that such a large project could have provoked no dissatisfaction at all from

its beneficiaries, and expressed suspicion that someone at AKCSP had manipulated the selection of subjects for her to interview to achieve a biased result.

There was far less unanimity about the value and future of the Altit Fort. The notions of history and identity materialized in the bodily involvement of Altit residents with the fabric of the *khun* contrasted sharply, and sometimes explicitly, with that symbolized by the two historic forts.

The value of the *khun* project in the official discourse of AKCSP publications and documents is complex. On the one hand, its attitude, though couched in the technocratic language of NGOs and shaped to the requirements of its particular audience, this passage from AKCSP's (n.d.) letter nominating the Altit restoration for a UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award for Cultural Conservation is closely in line with what I have been describing as the attitude of Altit residents:

Beyond its purely architectural significance, the rehabilitation of the old settlement was undertaken on the premise that an intimate relationship exists between the built environment and the living culture it houses. The physical structures of the settlement reflected and sustained a particular social structure and set of cultural values. The idea for the conservation project was to make the old structures livable and responsive to the desire of the residents for the basic comforts and conveniences of a modern life. The physical structures of the settlement embody its history; unlike monuments such as the Altit fort, they tell the story of the ordinary citizens of Altit.

At the same time, the document does not avoid the temptation to describe Altit, its history and inhabitants with reference to other monuments deemed culturally and architecturally significant and to a specific history that links these monuments. Collectively, they lend themselves to narration in terms of a version of Hunza's history that will be readily recognizable to a reader even distantly familiar with the

tropes of lost kingdoms and princely states hidden in the mountainous borderlands of empire (AKCSP n.d.):⁷³

Altit settlement is located in central Hunza in close proximity to the historic settlements of Ganish and Karimabad. It is said to be one the earliest settlements of this region: most scholars agree that it was established in the 15th century A.D. Altit's historic value lies in its having been the first capital of the ruling Mirs of Hunza. Its cultural importance is further magnified by the presence of the magnificent Altit Fort, perched commandingly on the edge of the 700-foot Hunza gorge. The elders remember that the village once had a fortification and eleven shikaris (watchtowers), presently buried under the rubble of memory. The original fortified settlement (*khun*) of Altit is located at the base of the towering fort, protecting its approaches.

This ambiguity is present throughout AKCSP's documentation of the *khun* restoration and of related projects. One interlocutor within the organization suggested that the ambiguity stems from the fact that while many AKCSP staff members have nuanced views about the meanings of heritage, the princely state and its history, those in charge are primarily architects who have less concern for the meaning and politics of the monuments they restore than for their value and preservation *qua* objects of historical significance. The involvement of AKCSP in planning and presenting its projects for consumption by tourists (and, as the UNESCO nomination document demonstrates, for other outside audiences) likely plays a role as well.

The ultimate fate of Altit Fort was undecided when I left Hunza in 2008, but the Baltit Fort provided a clear example—to AKCSP, to my interlocutors in Altit, and to myself—of alternative ways of imagining heritage and its possibilities.

⁷³ Note that the timeframe for the fort's construction in the quote below (15th century) is out of step with claims about the age of the fort given in the same document and other sources as either 900 or 1,100 years old; the confusion seems to stem from scholarly disagreement and possibly the building of the fort in different stages.

Materializing the Princely State

Larger, more accessible and more iconic than Altit Fort, the Baltit Fort in Karimabad was AKCSP's first project in Hunza and was completed in 1996. Baltit Fort's restoration hinged on its conceptualization as a monument of Hunza culture conceived of in terms of the history of the princely state. The fort was restored before and apart from AKCSP's later work on other historic structures, primarily the residences of the former Wazirs' lineage (the Diramiting, also called *Wazirkuts*). The redesign of the fort's exterior and the space immediately surrounding it reinforce its separation from the daily life of Karimabad; this may well have been the case during the Mir's time as well, but the modern gate and ticket-house add new dimensions to its social and spatial demarcation. From outside, its whitewashed façade and commanding position make it strikingly picturesque; its image is used to symbolize Hunza in a wide range of media. Inside, the fort has been turned into a museum, with old dishes and furniture on display in the rooms and portraits of the former Mirs, Ranis and Wazirs (advisers to the Mir) on the wall.

Once I had the occasion to tour Baltit Fort in the company of Safiullah, my primary interlocutor at AKCSP, and an eminent professor of responsible tourism who had been hired to develop a coordinated approach to promoting and managing tourism in Hunza. As we strolled gradually up through the streets of Karimabad and around the fort, the Professor emphasized the need to connect the disparate items of heritage (the fort, an old water-mill, the residences of the Wazirkuts) into a tourist 'circuit' connected by a narrative that could be conveyed to the visitors by guides who, from the terrace around the base of the fort, could gesture toward the other monuments

visible around us, including the water channels, the *shavaran* (polo ground) and Altit Fort. The goal was to increase “length of stay,” and to let people know how much there was to see and do in the immediate area. Inside the fort, the Professor explained that on his last visit his imagination had been caught by copies of treaties in the fort’s library between the Mir and the Chinese Governor. This time, the professor was particularly excited about a series of pegs in the wall of Altit fort that had functioned as a timetable to aid in the regulation of the irrigation system. Warming to his theme, he told me that these were the kinds of stories that need to be told.

It went unsaid that the kinds of stories that could best be used to tie the monuments together, and package them for touristic consumption, were made coherent by the figure of the princely state. The shared history of Hunza was the history of the state, and the “collective identities” produced through its commemoration were, implicitly, those of subjects of the mountain kingdom (De Cesari 2010:625). If heritage perceived by its trustees as part of “a general democratic disposition toward the public good” (De Cesari 2010:629), the public good here is presented as bound up with an image of the primitive but paternal state. As historical actor in this narrative, the state dispenses water through the bureaucratic technologies of timetables and centralized planning, while playing its own hand in the “Great Game.”

As I have already shown, this is not the history of the present that most engages many of the people I knew in Altit. People’s investment, or lack thereof, in particular histories was manifested in attitudes toward heritage restoration projects and toward the heritage itself. Yasmeena, another researcher with whom I crossed paths,

was in Altit not to study the *khun* restoration, but the way that young people thought about and related to Altit Fort, whose restoration was then in progress. I participated with her in conversations with a number of *khun* residents; Razia had hoped to elicit stories, memories and associations surrounding the fort, but our informants expressed few, either positive or negative. The fort had stood empty and neglected for many years, and, in its crumbling state, it was perceived as a hazard by those who lived directly under or climbed upon it. In fact, one girl said that in the statue of a *markhor* that stands on the top of the tower did fall onto the roof of her family's house in the *khun*. Few of the informants had ever been inside the fort.

When it came to the *khun* restoration, or to the many jobs being created for Altit residents—young women, in particular, were being trained as surveyors—or the future benefits of increased tourism, Razia's informants were voluble. However, they expressed what was to her a frustrating lack of connection to or interest in the fort itself or its history. To Razia, the goal of contemporary heritage development was to take up and strengthen people's connections to their cultural identity by preserving and celebrating their historic past and its monuments. The goal of her research was to find ways of making the Altit Fort restoration accessible and relevant to Altit's people, their concerns and interests. The new project was to be more than a tourist attraction or museum, as the Baltit Fort had largely become. In service of this ideal of a kind of living heritage, Razia hoped to find out and draw upon a latent relationship between Altit people and the fort. Her finding of an apparent lack of interest in the fort, except as an opportunity for income-generating activities, was a setback to this ideal of heritage development theory and practice.

Appadurai (2003:46) writes, “Physical spaces are part of the material that individuals work from, draw on, to some extent take for granted, and in other instances highlight, sharpen, consciously use.” Different kinds of spaces, with their different associations in history and memory and daily practices, are suitable for such uses in differing ways and available to particular people different degrees. In Altit, That Altit residents were not interested in the fort— or not interested in the way that some of those involved in its restoration might have hoped— is less a sign of their indifference to their cultural heritage than an indication of what, precisely, the very ideas of heritage, of culture, and of history, mean to them, and how they relate them to development and its possible futures. If, as elsewhere, heritage management in Hunza is part of a project for imagining and materializing hegemonic group identities or visions of the “public good” (De Cesari 2010:629), then the question that gets to the heart of Altit villagers responses to ACKSP projects is what, exactly, constitutes the public good and what aspects of their history and material heritage are understood to embody that good—and are, thus, worthy of investing with both their care and their hopes for the future.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have attempted to approach international development ethnographically as an ongoing fact of life for its subjects. I have argued that development in this context is not only a top-down project or set of institutions but an arena for individual and collective critical engagement with a set of material possibilities and a set of moral ideals. The late twentieth-early twenty-first century was experienced as a period of abrupt and profound transformations imposed on the valley from outside, from the end of the princely state by government fiat to the construction of the Karakoram highway to the beginnings of international development in the form of AKRSP. Hunza in this era has seen increasingly intensified engagement with and reliance on the market economy as well as with the transnational Isma'ili *jama'at* and its religious and social imaginaries. From another point of view, equally prevalent in Hunza development discourse, this history has been an ongoing process of active negotiation of the diverse temporalities, agencies, demands and possibilities associated with development. Seeing development as a structure of interaction between agencies (NGOs, governments, donors) and subjects allows it to be seen as multiple projects rather than one and opens up the space to see what happens 'in the meantime' of development; to see it as a lived and changing set of relations between various external and internal agencies.

Both critics and proponents of development have been concerned, implicitly or explicitly, with the question of whether processes of development increase or decrease freedom for its beneficiaries (Escobar 1995; Fergusson 1994; Sen 1999). I suggest that we have to think about what freedom is and how we recognize it. What constitutes

freedom and whether freedom is, in fact, a central goal of their own moral projects as they conceive them is a question that must be asked in each case (Laidlaw 2002; Mahmood 2005; Scherz 2014). In Hunza, I have shown, the advent of the era of development is strongly associated with a dramatic increase in freedom from oppression, in spite of the fact that a primary practice by which people enact that freedom and a significant site of comparison with the past, *rajaáki* labor, remains largely the same, at least in its outward form. In Hunza, as in many places around the world, the freedom many people most value is the freedom to create and nurture morally entangling relationships with one another. Both the anthropology of ethics and the older literature on exchange place freedom and obligation at opposite ends of a continuum of human action. Any substantive notion of “development as freedom” (Sen 1999) needs to take into account the specific ways in which people engaged in particular kinds of ethical, social and political projects are motivated to make use of their freedom. At the same time, critiques of development should, perhaps, start from the anthropologically grounded assumption that relations of obligation, debt and power are ubiquitous and ask in more nuanced and case specific ways, as some recent studies of specifically neoliberal development do, whether a given project, agency or situation tends to support or dissolve the possibilities people are most interested in (e.g. Bhan 2014; Karim 2011; Scherz 2014).

Questions of freedom and power are closely related to the production of persons as subjects, a concern that links the anthropological study of ethics to that of development. I argue in this dissertation, however, that it is not only subjects that are created within the ambit of development but also moral worlds and forms of sociality.

In responding to invitations to fashion themselves as particular kinds of ethical subjects, both in the context of religious service and of formal education, people orient themselves toward alternative images of moral community; projects of self-making also entail making social worlds. That the development literature does explore ways in which people become subjects of development not only individually but collectively; too little attention has been paid, however, to the ethical dimensions of subjectivation—the way people themselves respond to invitations to remake themselves in particular ways. Conversely the literature on ethics has sometimes focused on the freedom of self-fashioning subjects at the expense of exploring the ways in which their ethical labors may be aimed as much at relations between moral persons or fields of ethical sociability (Anderson 2011; Rasanayagam 2010).

A theme that runs throughout this dissertation is that of temporality and its relationship to development and other moral projects. As other theorists have said of hope, the temporality of development is complex: it is at once an orientation toward a future and a stance within the present. It can even be the case, as I have shown, that hopes for future development are engendered through and supported by memories, representations and embodied engagements with the past ways of living. While some scholars of development who address this multiplicity of temporalities emphasize the falseness of a progressive notion of time (Fergusson 1999; Mosse 2004), I see these multiple temporal orientations as resources for the ongoing negotiation of life and wellbeing.

To say that development, as a space of encounter and negotiation, takes a particular form in each place and time is not to relativize it out of existence. A certain

temporal structure is among other elements that development as a universalist, if not actually universal project (Pigg 1992:492), has in common everywhere is a certain temporal structure. In its teleology, its linearity and its embedded assumption that its fulfillment is dependent on an outside agency, development invites people to hope in ways that make them vulnerable. As Mattingly says, to hope is to risk disappointment. I end this dissertation with two brief narratives in which disappointment and frustration are common themes in order to highlight a final point about development in Hunza; that it is a form of labor that, while not reproductive in Arendt's sense, is ongoing and open-ended. It produces no final products or states, but only life itself, and that is never finished.

The pain that arises when the ongoing struggle to achieve development is perceived as failure was made clear to me by Danesh, whose comment that development is the jihad of Hunzakuts opens this dissertation. I first met Danesh in the context of an ongoing series of projects aimed at developing local handicrafts for the tourist and overseas markets, on which he acted as a local advisor and collaborator to the NGOs involved. He ran his own handicraft business and owned one of the more polished tourist shops in the main bazar in Karimabad. Beyond merely buying handicrafts downcountry and selling them in Hunza, as owners of other shops did, Danesh employed and trained the artisans who made his wares on a piecework basis. He also worked with them and with a local NGO to design products more appealing to Western tastes and identify foreign markets for Hunza handicrafts, as tourism had slowed in the mid-2000s. Wanting to know about the role of business and entrepreneurship in the ideal of spiritual and material development, I asked Danesh,

one of the most thoughtful and deeply ethical people I knew: did he feel that business people had an ethical obligation or social responsibility to their society?

His answer was a bald “no.” The reason that people go into business is to make money, to support themselves, he said—it is not out of a sense of social obligation. While I struggled with the implications of this unexpected response, Danesh told me the story of his business career. He had begun like all the other shopkeepers—just “buying and selling,” and he did well for himself. It was true, he said, that in the beginning he’d had certain “ideologies” in his mind—dreams of producing handicrafts locally rather than selling items from downcountry, of preserving and disseminating the old skills and introducing new ones, of building a local business that would benefit everyone. It was when he began to put his ideas into practice, however, that the trouble began. Soon he was dealing with much greater overhead costs, trying to train his artisans in new skills and to cope with the vagaries of the market and the fickle tastes of tourists. His problem, he said, was that he was trying to run his business like an NGO. One day his sister-in-law told him, “I’m worried about you. NGOs get funding from outside – it doesn’t matter if they don’t make a profit. But if your business fails, you will lose your house, your land. They will arrest you.”

This was the moment, Danesh said, of his change of heart. He got rid of the factories he operated on other people’s land and built a shed on his own property for the work. When business was slow they slowed production, even when it meant no longer employing some of the artisans. It was a difficult and even painful transition for him, but his business survived. To answer my question, he concluded, business people do not act out of a sense of social responsibility or volunteerism. They cannot afford

to. Even if he had, “in the back of [his] mind” some ideology of volunteerism, it was not his main motivation (“at least 80 percent” of it), which was rather “to make a little business for [himself].”

In his telling, Danesh openly articulated the tensions between two systems of value that underlay his experience. But as I read it, his too-frequent protestations of his own self-interest— as well as his attempts to work out in percentages the precise proportion of selfishness to voluntaristic “ideology” constituting his motivation—belied his initial flat disclaimer of any altruism. He had tried to live out the synthesis of volunteerism and entrepreneurship, the possibility of which was underwritten by the notion of spiritual and material development, and his frustration at his failure to fully do so was born of a deep and ongoing commitment to this project.

Danesh went on to make the comments referenced in Chapter Five on “mediocre volunteerism,” making this the lesson of his own story: you have to look after and improve yourself if you are too good to your community. By the end, Danesh had softened his stance considerably; of course, people should volunteer. Volunteerism was the reason development had succeeded in Hunza. What makes Hunza distinct from the surrounding areas, he said, what makes them uniquely successful in the arena of development, is that when the call comes, they are willing and happy to come and work for their community.

Danesh was unusual among my informants not so much for the strength of his simultaneous commitments to volunteerism and material advancement, but for the fact that he had attempted to synthesize these dual commitments into a guide for action, and for the degree of success he had achieved. His experience hints at a vicious cycle

in which the closer one approaches to material success, the more valuable one's service is; but as one strives to make one's success beneficial to the community through 'volunteering,' the very success that gives that volunteerism its enhanced value is jeopardized. His story seems to caution that all the desire for and commitment to development cannot overcome material circumstances and the cold logic of the market. It hints that the conjuncture of spiritual and material development contains an intrinsic contradiction that can only be resolved by distance.

As we have seen, close up development is not a stable set of relationships between clearly defined entities but an ongoing process of negotiation. The flexibility and open-endedness of this process, which, I have tried to suggest, has enabled a sense of optimism and local control over development, also leaves open a space of vulnerability to reversals, shifting power relations and unintended consequences. Committing to development in a globally interconnected world means placing one's ability to achieve desired ends in the hands of entities not only external, but distant and impersonal. What seems like an adequate pace of change to one generation can seem unacceptably slow to the next; or unjust to another. Caught between frustrated desires for greater economic, educational and other opportunities than can be generated locally and equally powerful desires to retain local agency and autonomy in the face of ongoing change, there is the possibility that opinions about what kind of development is needed and where to look for it may increasingly diverge. Events occur that cast doubt on the ability of development-as-usual to provide a stable basis for people's wellbeing. Development in the sense of ongoing negotiation and ethical work gives way, at particular moments, to politics of a more contentious and

potentially violent character. Indeed, there is reason to think that some of this has already had an impact on the way the future appears from Hunza today.

On January 2010, a landslide partly destroyed the tiny hamlets of Sarat and Attabad, the northernmost village of Central Hunza, killing some 20 people⁷⁴ and damming the Hunza river at a narrow gorge that marks the boundary between Central Hunza and Gojal (Upper Hunza).⁷⁵ As the waters backed up behind the resulting dam over the subsequent months, a 14-mile long lake formed, swamping the lower-lying villages of Gojal, destroying houses and cultivated lands and displacing an estimated 457 families.⁷⁶ Seven miles of the Karakoram Highway were submerged and Gojal was cut off from the rest of Pakistan, only accessible by boat. Work to construct a spillway to drain the lake without causing massive flooding downstream was unbearably slow, at least in part because the government was concerned about the risk of massive flooding downstream if the dam was breached suddenly.⁷⁷ People were widely critical of the government's response and also, according to Martin Sökefeld, of the AKDN for refusing to take a political stand by demanding government action. The disaster seems to have dramatized a feeling that was already being expressed in Hunza in 2008, largely in response to the failure of larger-scale business ventures to

⁷⁴ The toll was as low as it was because the slope above Attabad had been declared unstable in 2009 and the families resettled, but a group of residents, tired of living in tents, had returned to the village.

⁷⁵ I draw on accounts from the Pamir Times (<http://pamirtimes.net/>), along with Sökefeld (2012) for this account.

⁷⁶ Many of those displaced from Attabad and Gojal were housed in Altit; throughout 2010 I could see the tents in the *shavaran* (polo ground) on Google Maps.

⁷⁷ Only in the spring of 2014 did I begin to see indications in local news reports that people have begun to return to their land in significant numbers.

get off the ground: that some of the constraints facing the people of the region were too big to be addressed by the non-profit sector, even the AKDN (Sökefeld 2012:203).

Protests were organized by local political groups, including the Progressive Youth Front, a group based in Central Hunza with strong anti-government leanings, the more overly nationalist Balawaristan⁷⁸ National Front, and another organization, the *Rabita Committee*, which formed after the Attabad disaster.⁷⁹ The government arrested demonstrators and repeatedly imposed Section 144 of the criminal code banning public gatherings of more than 5 people. In August of 2011, police fired on protestors, including displaced families, in Aliabad, killing two Gojali men. Organizers, including the head of the PYF, were detained and the government refused to release either the results of its inquiry or many of the jailed protestors, who were widely alleged to have been tortured. While Sökefeld confirms my own impression that people with nationalist or even strongly anti-government sentiments in Hunza are a small minority, he also notes that in this series of events, “the antagonism between “the people” and “the government” became relevant and visible to an unprecedented extent” (Sökefeld 2012:204-2015).

Taken together, these instances sound notes of caution about the narrative I have presented in this dissertation. While that image is as true as I can make to what is, I argue, a very prominent and powerful way in which Hunzakuts themselves think about and seek to manage their experience of development, such alternatives point to

⁷⁸ The term Balwaristan (or Boloristan) is based on *Bolor*, one of several antiquated designations that corresponds roughly to present-day Gilgit-Baltistan and is used by those with nationalist sentiments.

⁷⁹ In one of these events, a crowd with picks and shovels attempted to widen the spillway themselves.

both its constructedness and its vulnerability to the continuing flow of events and to the way in which different actors construe them. Danesh's difficulty and pain were the result of his very commitment to the model of ethical entrepreneurship that marks, for many, the way forward, suggesting that cracks between the "spiritual" and the "material" in Hunza's development may widen the closer this project comes to its fulfillment. Recent events, on the other hand, throw into doubt the possibilities for that fulfillment. These events highlight the partiality of Hunza's material development, its continued remoteness and its vulnerability to natural and political forces, while at the same time calling into question the capacities of the agency primarily entrusted with that development to remedy this situation. My sense was that the anti-government politics of the Progressive Youth Front were indicative of a deep ambivalence rather than antipathy to the state arising from precisely this recognition: its members were more critical of the state than anyone else I knew in Hunza because they wanted more from it.

I end on these notes of ambivalence and caution not to suggest that another, truer narrative centering on conflict, domination and suffering lies beneath it, but to affirm that what it takes to construct the good is hard, ongoing work, and that it, like development, is better understood as a process than a product. The emancipatory project of liberalism that underlies development and the commitments of many anthropologists alike tends to reflect the assumption that if barriers to human flourishing—inequality, power, or need—only be eliminated, we might achieve happiness as a stable state. Given all the lessons learned by anthropologists over the past several decades about the processual nature of culture this seems, at least from the

vantage of the present state of things, a dangerous illusion. Though I take issue with the way that suffering and power are equated with truth and analytic seriousness in some strands of recent anthropology, work that locates the good in its diverse forms—hope, care, involvement, piety—in difficult and precarious circumstances (Anderson 2013; Han 2010; Mattingly 2010) does get at the basic fact that people make the good where they can, when they can, out of what materials they have available. Foucault is aiming at something similar, I think, when he says that while relations of domination must be resisted, relations of power are inevitable and might, in certain respects, be cultivated. From this perspective it may not be an admission of defeat or an expression of moral pessimism to study the good in the most seemingly inimical circumstances. I propose, however, that we should study its unique conditions of possibility in times and places where it flourishes as well, while refusing to essentialize it. That moments where the good seems immanent in life, where a particular vision of development seems achievable or where something like a moral community coalesces are fleeting, does not make them less real.

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