

Changing Indigenous Cultures through Forest Management

Case Study: Co Tu People in Central Vietnam

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Host Organizations:



ĐẠI HỌC HUẾ
HUE UNIVERSITY



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by

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Table of Content

List of figures, tables, boxes, appendices and abbreviations	p.6
Foreword	p.8
Summary	p.9
Introduction	p.10
Chapter 1: Indigenous communities and forest use	p.15
§1.1 <i>Definition of indigenous communities</i>	p.15
§1.2 <i>Nature and society</i>	p.16
§1.3 <i>Indigenous knowledge and practices on forestry</i>	p.19
§1.4 <i>Community based forest management</i>	p.25
§1.5 <i>Conclusion: assessing the socio-cultural impact</i>	p.26
Chapter 2: Geographical and social context	p.30
§2.1 <i>Vietnam at a glance</i>	p.30
§2.2 <i>Ethnic minorities, poverty and forest use in Vietnam</i>	p.31
§2.3 <i>Co Tu People in Vietnam</i>	p.35
§2.4 <i>Forests and forest management in Vietnam</i>	p.37
§2.5 <i>Conclusion</i>	p.44
Chapter 3: Methodology and operationalization	p.45
§3.1 <i>Hypotheses</i>	p.45
§3.2 <i>Methodology</i>	p.46
§3.3 <i>Operationalization</i>	p.48
§3.4 <i>Conclusion</i>	p.49
Chapter 4: Research context	p.50
§4.1 <i>Research sites at a glance</i>	p.50
§4.2 <i>Stakeholders in FLA and forest management</i>	p.51
§4.3 <i>Bach Ma National Park</i>	p.53
§4.4 <i>The Green Corridor Project</i>	p.54
§4.5 <i>Conclusion</i>	p.55
Chapter 5: The socio-cultural impact of FLA on Co Tu people	p.56
§5.1 <i>Main social and cultural characteristics of the research villages</i>	p.56
§5.2 <i>The socio-cultural impact of FLA on the communities in the research villages</i>	p.62
§5.3 <i>Impact of FLA on environmental interactions and indigenous knowledge and forest management systems</i>	p.70
§5.4 <i>FLA and community based forest management</i>	p.75
§5.5 <i>Conclusion</i>	p.81
Chapter 6: Conclusion	p.82
Bibliography	p.87
Appendices	p.92

List of figures, tables, boxes, appendices and abbreviations

Figure 1.1: Kinds of human-environmental relations
Figure 1.2: Ladder of citizen participation
Figure 1.3: Conceptual model
Figure 2.1: Map of Vietnam
Figure 2.2: Distribution of poverty
Figure 3.1: Participatory methods in the communal longhouse of village no.8
Figure 4.1: Decision makers in FLA
Figure 4.2: Venn diagram: stakeholders at commune level of the management and protection of the forest
Figure 5.1: Financial wealth in village no.8
Figure 5.2: Communal longhouse in village no.5
Figure 5.3: Financial wealth in village no.5
Figure 5.4: Traditional rice wine
Figure 5.5: Reasons why the forest should be preserved
Figure 5.6: Co Tu forest classifications
Figure 5.7: Most important person in the village
Figure 5.8: Importance village patriarch compared to 10-20 years ago
Figure 5.9: Who do you ask for advice about forest use?
Figure 5.10: Creation of CFM
Figure 5.11: Forest exploitation in protected areas

Table 2.1: Community forest area in Vietnam
Table 4.1: General characteristics of the research villages
Table 5.0: Benefits of Forest Land Allocation
Table 5.1: Livelihoods of Co Tu people in village no.8
Table 5.2: Natural forest use in village no.8
Table 5.3: Livelihoods of Co Tu people in village no.5
Table 5.4: Natural forest use in village no.5
Table 5.5: Changed lives of Co Tu people in Aprang and Tawac compared to 10-20 years ago
Table 5.6: Functions of the patriarch, headman and sub-headman
Table 5.7: Changes in forest exploitation and farming.
Table 5.8: Topics during village meetings
Table 5.9: The importance of the Patriarch in both research villages
Table 5.10: Impact FLA on forest exploitation on village no.5

Box 5.1: Role of the Village patriarch in resolving conflicts: a case study

Appendix A: Topic lists
Appendix B: Questionnaire
Appendix C: Time schedule
Appendix D: Location of the research sites
Appendix E: Land ownership of Co Tu people in village no.5 and village no.5, Thuong Long Commune
Appendix F: Participatory mapping with the people of village no.8

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BMNP	Bach Ma National Park
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CFM	Community Based Forest Management
CPC	Commune People's Committee
DPC	District People's Committee
IK	Indigenous knowledge
FLA	Forest Land Allocation
FPU	Forest Protection Unit
FPMB	Forest Protection Management Board
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Ha	Hectare
Km	Kilometer
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MBPF	Management Boards for Protection Forests
MBSF	Management Boards for Special-use Forest
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
PA	Participatory Appraisal
PC	People's Committee
SFE	State Forest Enterprise
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VND	Viet Nam Dong
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Foreword

The most difficult chapter of a Master's Thesis is the foreword. What do you write in the foreword after working for ten months on your thesis? First of all, I present all of you this thesis with pride. It has been hard work, and doing research abroad and being away from your loved ones for more than six months has not always been easy. This was my first experience in doing research abroad, and I have gained so much new experiences and insights which I would never have gained if I had stayed in the Netherlands. Vietnam has gained a special place in my heart as well, since I can look back at my Vietnam memories with happiness. However, at the same time, I am happy that it has all finished successfully, and that I can pass over my new insights and knowledge to my people. However, I can also say that I already miss Vietnam. I will always consider Hue to be my second home-town, and I am looking forward to go back one day. I have been welcomed by so many people, and I have found a new family in Vietnam. Doing this internship has also brought me more peace in my mind. I know what I want to do in my future life and career. Professionally and academically, I have gained a lot of experience, but there is still a lot to learn. I have just tasted the life as a researcher abroad, and I am now ready to have my big 'meal' (excuse me, at the moment I am fasting, so I think a lot about food now).

A foreword wouldn't be a foreword if I didn't thank the people who have supported me in making this thesis. Without the help of many people, I would have not been able to write this thesis. I am indebted to them, and I hope one day I can do something similar for them. Presenting this thesis and thanking them, is just a small expression of my gratitude. I wish to offer my gratitude and thanks to everyone who made this study possible, especially Dr. Paul Burgers, my supervisor, and his colleagues of University of Utrecht, Mr. Tran Nam Tu, my supervisor in Vietnam, Dean Dr. Duong Viet Tinh and his colleagues of Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr. Tran Huu Nghi, Mrs. Phan Thi Thuy Nhi and their colleagues of Tropenbos International, Ms. Alicia Langendijk for her invaluable support, Mr. Thien and Mr. Danh for co-facilitating the research and the input of the data in Microsoft Excel, the local students who have greatly and invaluable supported us in the interviews and questionnaires (Ms. Thao, Mr. Chien, Ms. Hang, Ms. Thuy, Mr. Minh and many, many others), Ms. Phuong Dung for translating documents for me for so many hours, the local communities and officials who were willing to participate in the study, Mr. Tom, Ms. Astrid and Ms. Charlotte who were my fellow-students, Dr. Nguyen Xuan Hung, Mr. Trung, Mr. Phuc, Senor Jeroen van Bekhoven for providing me juridical information about indigenous people, my family in Vietnam for taking good care of me, my family in Holland for supporting me, and all my other friends, relatives and colleagues in Vietnam and Holland. *Cảm ơn rất nhiều!*

I hope you will enjoy reading my thesis and I hope it offers you some new knowledge and insights about Forest Land Allocation, Co Tu people and their relationship with the forests and community based forest management in Vietnam.

Mucahid Mustafa Bayrak

August, 15th 2010

Melaka, Malaysia

Summary

This thesis deals with the socio-cultural impact of the Forest Land Allocation Programme (FLA) on the indigenous Co Tu people in Central Vietnam and whether community based forest management (CFM) can mitigate this impact. Vietnam introduced the FLA programme in the 1990s and the main rationale of this programme is that if people would receive rights to forest land, they would be actively engaged in forest preservation and protection. People have to abide to the rules stipulated by the State on forest use and management and, therefore, the FLA programme is far from being truly decentralized. Traditionally, Co Tu people are semi-nomadic swidden agriculturalists and hunter-gatherers. They have developed complex systems related to forest management and land rights. However, those systems are closely intertwined with their social and cultural systems. Co Tu people have a different perception of 'nature' and their role within 'nature' and, therefore, changing their relationship with the forests will have a significant impact on their social structures and culture. In the case of Co Tu people this has led to: (i) a different way of life; (ii) changed perceptions of nature; (iii) deterioration of traditional forest classifications; (iv) a loss of indigenous knowledge and forest management; and (v) a less important role for the village patriarch. CFM has improved knowledge dissemination among the villagers and it has strengthened the traditional clan structures within the village. However, CFM has also strengthened the role of formal institutions in the village and it has been imposed by outside agents (such as international conservation organizations) who are actively engaged in trying to 'raise awareness' on forest preservation and re-educating the Co Tu people.

Introduction

“Indigenous peoples inhabit nearly 20 per cent of the planet, mainly in areas where they have lived for thousands of years. Indigenous peoples are among the earth’s most important stewards, as evidenced by the high degree of correspondence between the lands, waters and territories of indigenous peoples and the remaining high-biodiversity regions of the world.”

- *Indigenous peoples and conservation: WWF statement and principles, World Wild Life Fund, 2008*

General discussion

In 2008, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), world’s largest independent conservation organization, made a paper on indigenous peoples and conservation, and presented its statement and principles. They present indigenous peoples as “stewards of nature” (WWF, 2008; Springer & Alcon, 2007; WWF 2008a), appreciate their “enormous contributions” (WWF, 2008, p.2) to nature conservation, recognize their rights to “the lands, territories, and resources that they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used” (ibid, p.2), and they recognize the importance of indigenous knowledge and forming partnerships with indigenous communities in nature conservation. However, according to WWF (2008, p.1), their “nature-attuned” cultures are vulnerable to “destructive forces related to unsustainable use of resources, population expansion, and the global economy.” Indigenous natural resource management systems are only approved by the WWF if it is conforming to “national conservation and development objectives” (ibid, p.2), if it is “environmentally sustainable and contribute to the conservation of nature” (ibid, p.3), and it should be consistent with WWF policies on “endangered or threatened species” or with “international agreements protecting wildlife and other natural resources” (ibid, p.4).

While at first these statements seem reasonable, a number of flaws can be recognized. First of all, who decides what “sustainable use” is? Most of the time, it are the powerful stakeholders (such as the WWF) who decide this, and not indigenous communities, who are often politically, economically and socially marginalized. Secondly, what exactly is ‘nature’? What should be conserved? Can ‘our’ definition of ‘nature’ be regarded as a universal one? The main argument in this thesis is that ‘nature’ is a cultural definition (Dwyer, 1996). Therefore, it would be unjust to assume that everyone, including indigenous communities who we hardly know, share the same definition. The third flaw deals with the representation of WWF of indigenous communities. By labeling those people as ‘stewards of nature’, they treat them as the so-called ‘ecologically noble savage’ – primitives who take care of nature since they form a part of it (Ellingson, 2001). The final flaw deals with the causes of environmental degradation. While the WWF acknowledges that industrialized societies are for a large part responsible for environmental degradation, many times the WWF, but also other organizations, blame poverty and/or overpopulation. It is often assumed that poor people practice swidden cultivation, because they are forced by poverty. This assumption is often not grounded, since in tropical rainforests swidden cultivation has been proven many times to be the most sustainable form of agriculture (Sponsel et al. 1996; Dove, 1983).

Indigenous communities and forest land allocation in Vietnam

This thesis deals with these flaws and its socio-cultural impact on indigenous communities in the context of Vietnam. Vietnam, backed by international conservation

organizations, has been working on the development of forest resources and its conservation since the 1990s. In 1993, Vietnam established the Forest Land Allocation (FLA) programme. This programme enabled the State to allocate forest land to organizations, households and individuals for long-term (50 years) use in accordance with the uses stipulated. People were able to own formal rights to forest land (through so-called Red Books) and the main rationale was that devolution would be the best way of managing and conserving forests. Farmers, who received forest land, were sometimes paid for protecting the forests and they were given subsidies for tree planting. However, it was still the State which decided how the forests were going to be managed and used. The State and other major stakeholders had a very 'biological' focus. This 'biological' focus, which has been propagated by many outside agents, did not pay sufficient attention to the local communities living in these forests. The State mainly paid attention to conservation and biodiversity (McElwee, 2001; Hardcastle, 2002; Nguyen, 2009; Sikor and Nguyen, 2007).

The indigenous Co Tu (or Ka Tu) people, who mainly live in Central Vietnam, belong to one of the officially recognized ethnic minorities in Vietnam and account for 50.458 people according to a census in 1999. Living in the mountains and natural forests of Quang Nam and Thua Thien-Hue provinces, Co Tu people have based their livelihoods, culture, social and political systems, and customary laws on the surrounding forests. Traditionally, Co Tu people were nomadic farmers who practiced swidden agriculture. Furthermore, hunting and gathering (collecting non-timber forests products - NTFPs) were important activities for the Co Tu people as well (Thuathienhue.gov, 2009; Tuan, 2009). Co Tu society is based upon the village and is traditionally governed by the village patriarch. Forests have cemented the Co Tu people's way of life (Tuan 2009, p.180), and, therefore, they have created knowledge and forest management systems, which are closely interrelated with their culture, worldviews, social and political systems. Co Tu people perceive 'nature' in their own distinct way, and made several forest classifications based on utilitarian, religious and cultural aspects. However, indigenous knowledge and management systems should be dealt like any other type of knowledge. It needs constant readjustments in accordance with the changing environment (Wiersum, 2000). Therefore, Co Tu people will not be labeled as 'stewards of nature' in this thesis, because that is a very Orientalist conception of indigenous people living in natural forests.

For decades, the Vietnamese government has been trying to transform the lives of its ethnic minorities. The Vietnamese government introduced sedentarization programmes (such as the Fixed Cultivation and Settlement programme) with the intention to give ethnic minorities a more 'stable' lifestyle and to transform traditional, often considered backward, agricultural practices to modern ones (ADB, 2002, p.10). Formal social and political systems were introduced in the villages, and many people were resettled. The same goes for the Co Tu people, who have been resettled from the uplands, and, currently, practice sedentary forms of agriculture and animal husbandry. The village patriarch has to compete with the village headman, who is elected by the Commune's People Committee (CPC), and Co Tu people are losing many of their customary laws and cultural practices. The FLA programme should, therefore, be seen within the context of the on-going sedentarization programmes.

Before the FLA programme, forests were owned by state owned forest enterprises (SFE's). However, there was a 'free for all' attitude on the forests, which means that many ethnic minorities were still able to practice swidden agriculture (although that was already made illegal)

or collect NTFPs. The FLA programme has altered the lives of many forest dependent communities. Not only did their livelihoods change, but also their social, cultural and spiritual lives have been altered.

Acknowledging the importance of traditional forest management systems, Vietnam has introduced community based forest management in 2004. It means that communities are able to receive a Red Book for forest land, and that they are involved in the forest management process. However, it is still the State which decides how the forests are going to be managed (Pham, 2008). It remains a question whether community based forest management can mitigate the impact of FLA.

Central question, sub-questions and problem statement

In what way did FLA change the lives of the indigenous Co Tu people? The main question of the thesis is not how FLA changed the livelihoods of local communities (which has been studied by Luxbacher, 2009), but how FLA has affected the socio-cultural lives of the local Co Tu communities. However, there is a link between changing livelihoods and changing social structures and cultures. How did FLA affect the way people perceive and classify the forests? How did the FLA program change the traditional community structures in a village? And how can community based forest management mitigate the socio-cultural impact of FLA on the Co Tu communities? Therefore, the central question of the thesis is:

What is the socio-cultural impact of forest land allocation in Vietnam on the Co Tu people in Nam Dong district and in what way can community based forest management contribute to preserve Co Tu culture?

Two Co Tu villages in Nam Dong district in Thua Thien-Hue province have been selected as case studies on the socio-cultural impact of FLA. One village owns a community based Red Book of its forest land, while the other village has forest land allocated to individual households.

The following sub-questions have been formulated in order to answer the central question:

- 1) *What are the main social and cultural characteristics of village no. 8 (Aprang) and village no.5 (Tawac)?*
- 2) *What is the socio-cultural impact of the forest land allocation (FLA) on the communities living in Aprang and Tawac?*
- 3) *How did FLA affect the environmental interactions and indigenous knowledge and forest management systems of the Co Tu people?*
- 4) *How does community based forest management mitigate the socio-cultural impact of FLA?*

Sub-question 1 deals with general information about both villages. Question 2 deals with the cultural and social dimensions related to forest management, while question 3 mainly deals with the utilitarian dimension. However, in order to fully understand the utilitarian dimension, the social, cultural and spiritual logics should be understood as well (see chapter 1). Therefore, the dimensions should be seen in an integrated picture and not as separate domains. Question 4 deals with the question whether CFM can mitigate the socio-cultural impact of FLA.

There is no direct relationship between FLA and socio-cultural changes. Co Tu people live, like most people, in an era of globalization. They are also connected to the outside world and it would be unjust to consider them to be living in isolation. Socio-cultural changes in Co Tu

society are caused by many different outside and inside factors¹. However, to what extent is it likely that FLA changed certain aspects in Co Tu culture and/or society?

Relevance of the study

Why is it relevant to study the socio-cultural impact of FLA on the Co Tu people in Nam Dong district? First of all, it is a human right for every ethnic group to preserve their traditional culture and customs. The rights of indigenous communities have been mentioned by various UN and other international conventions and treaties (such as International Labour Organization in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989 and UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007). By studying the socio-cultural impact of FLA, one can make recommendations on ensuring that the rights of indigenous communities in Vietnam are upheld or improved.

Secondly, indigenous knowledge and forest management systems can be beneficial for effective forest protection and preservation, but one needs to understand the underlying logic behind these systems such as culture, spiritual beliefs, world views and so on. The utilitarian dimension of indigenous knowledge and forest management systems is just one of the many dimensions we need to understand (Wiersum, 2000).

Thirdly, the socio-cultural impact of FLA on indigenous communities has not been studied yet. Therefore, this study can form a basis for further research on socio-cultural changes (partly) caused by FLA among Co Tu or other indigenous communities in Vietnam. By adopting a multidisciplinary approach (this does not only include using different theories or insights from different scientific disciplines, but also different methodologies), this thesis can be used by different scholars and policy-makers.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 presents the thematic framework for this thesis. Theories and insights from disciplines such as ecological anthropology and geography are used to explore indigenous forest management systems in a globalizing world. This chapter will also present the conceptual model for this study. Chapter 2 presents the geographical and social context of indigenous communities in Vietnam. This chapter will also describe the forest management in Vietnam in more detail – including indigenous forest management systems and the FLA programme. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and operationalization of the study. Chapter 4 deals with the context of the research sites – such as general characteristics of the research villages and projects in the area. Chapter 5 presents the research results. This chapter will answer the hypotheses (see chapter 3), sub-questions and central question of this thesis. Chapter 6 is the conclusion. This chapter will integrate all the information of this thesis in a coherent body. This chapter will also present some policy recommendations.

This thesis will not take a clear stance in the nature-versus-humans debate, since each case is context dependent. While it does criticize the biological focus of international organizations and the Vietnamese government, the author acknowledges the importance of ‘nature’ preservation. However, it is important to offer people alternative livelihood strategies, which are

¹ For example, many Co Tu people are giving Korean names to their children, because they watch a lot of Korean drama series, which are very popular in Asia (Thuathienhue.gov, 2009).

not only sustainable but also culturally appropriate. Culturally appropriateness does not only involve using people's utilitarian practices in forest management, but also the acknowledgment of the cultural, spiritual and social logics behind these practices. Community based forest management might be a good way in order to establish culturally appropriate management systems.

Chapter 1: Indigenous communities and forest use

“Those who are poor and hungry will often destroy their immediate environment in order to survive: They will cut down forests; their livestock will overgraze grasslands; they will overuse marginal land; and in growing numbers they will crowd into congested cities. The cumulative effect of these changes is so far-reaching as to make poverty itself a major global scourge.”

- *Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987*

Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland report, is one of the most influential reports on sustainable development and human-environment relationships in contemporary times. It strives for economic security, ecological integrity and social equity. The Brundtland commission assumes that ‘nature’ and people can be managed and blames the poor for environmental degradation, because of their ignorance and lack of education (Escobar, 1996). Many of these poor people are indigenous communities who depend on their natural environment and are socially, economic and culturally marginalized. But now they are also being blamed for environmental degradation, which just adds to the other prejudices and accusations. However, to what extent are those accusations ‘true’?

Understanding indigenous communities and their environments does not only involve understanding their nature and complex interrelationships with their environment, but also involves the social, political, and economic forces that are impinging rapidly and intensively from the outside. People must be seen in the broad-context, which involves power relationships, resource demands and other aspects of developing nations (Purrington, 1984, p.5), but also our and their constructions of ‘nature’ and the ‘Other’ (Escobar, 1996).

This chapter presents a thematic outline on forest use and indigenous communities, which includes perceptions on ‘nature’, indigenous worldviews, traditional natural resource systems and community based forest management.

§1.1 Definition of indigenous communities

How can we define the term indigenous people? Terms as traditional and indigenous are often seen, as opposed to formal and modern. However, seeing an indigenous person as someone who is not ‘modern’ only reaffirms our stereotypes. Until today, there is no formal definition of indigenous people within the framework of the United Nations. However, there are some general accepted definitions. According to a UN study of Cobo (1983), indigenous communities, peoples and nations are:

“Those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.”

Another definition comes from the International Labour Organization in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989:

“a) tribal peoples whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations.

b) to peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.”

The above definitions are generally accepted. However, they are somewhat outdated. It is assumed that indigenous people always manage a subsistence economy, but in the last decades many indigenous people shifted to market economies (van Leeuwen, 1998). Nevertheless, both definitions constitute the following components:

- Indigenous people have a distinct culture and ethnic identity.
- They are considered autochthonous.
- They possess distinctive social, cultural, political and economic institutions and legal systems.

Van Leeuwen (1998, p.5) adds that indigenous people identify themselves with a distinct culture and world view, which form the basis for their institutions, customs and knowledge. It should be noted that even though other local people, who are not classified as indigenous, do not have a traditional attachment to the area, their knowledge on forest management can be equally as valuable as indigenous knowledge (van Leeuwen, 1998).

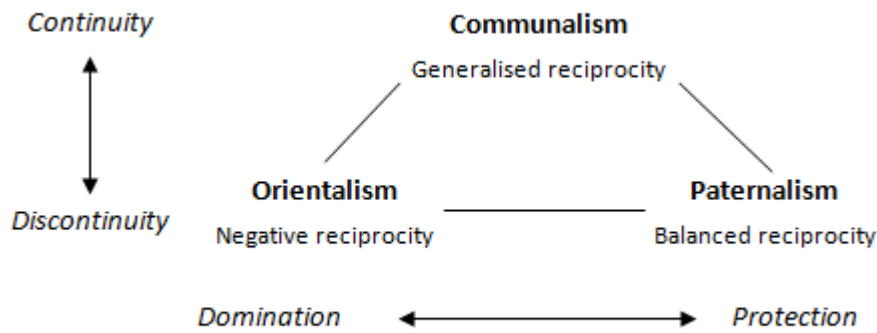
§1.2 Nature and society

There appears to be a dualism between ecology and social studies. The former deals with the order found in nature, whereas the latter deals with human phenomenon. People and nature are dialectally interlinked – they complement and supplement the other in many ways. Even though this has been recognized, most ecologists and social scientists continue to work solely with nature or with people and, therefore, allowing this dichotomy to exist (Pálsson, 1996, p63). How can this dichotomy be explained and what are the consequences of taking the concepts nature and society for granted?

1.2.1 Views on nature and society

Nature, as we know it, is an invention, an artifact (Dwyer, 1996, p.157). This does not mean that there is no nature out there, but it merely means that nature is constructed by people (Escobar, 1996, p.325). Nature is culturally construed and defined, and there have been many cross-cultural and historical analyses on the concept of nature. According to MacCormack (1980, in Ellen, 1996), nature is a system of arbitrary signs, which relies on a social consensus for meaning. We cannot be free from biases of the culture in which our concepts of nature and culture were constructed. Human-environmental relationships are constructed by someone's perceptions of the environment, society and oneself. Pálsson (1996) has identified three kinds of paradigms on human-environment relations: orientalism, paternalism and communalism (see figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Kinds of human-environmental relations



Source: Pálsson, 1996, p.67

The paradigm of environmental orientalism establishes a fundamental break between nature and society. Besides that, it also argues that people are masters of nature. They can colonize it and use it for their own interests - classified in the model as negative reciprocity. Domestication, frontiers and expansion are some key words, which could be ascribed to environmental orientalism. This paradigm also applies to environmental 'management'. Scientists present themselves as "analysts of the material world, unaffected by any ethical considerations" (Pálsson, 1996, p.68). Their view on the environment is considered universal. Orientalist environmentalists assume that they control nature, but at the same time they sometimes bring the species they exploit to near depletion (Pálsson, 1996, p.69).

The paternalistic paradigm also implies that humans are master over nature, but instead of exploitation it strives for protection and conservation². Humans have the responsibility to "meet, not only to other humans but also to members of other species, to fellow inhabitants of the animal kingdom, and the ecosystem of the globe" (Pálsson, 1996, p.70). In this paradigm, society and nature have a distant relationship, which is characterized by respect and formality. Someone who gives something to 'nature', can expect to get a fair return back (balanced reciprocity). Paternalistic environmentalists consider science to be neutral and objective as well and, therefore, they privilege scientific knowledge over other types of knowledge (Pálsson, 1996).

Concerning indigenous people, many paternalistic environmentalists tend to make a distinction between 'us'(e.g. Westerners) and 'them' (the indigenous people) and 'they' are being seen as primitive and a part of nature, while 'we' have already left nature. Paternalistic environmentalists label indigenous people as 'children of the forest' or 'primitives' who are taking care of 'nature' since they form a part of it – the so called ecologically Nobel savage (Ellingson, 2001). Ironically, at the same time they argue that (western) scientists are responsible for the conservation and protection of nature and 'we' should teach the 'primitives' how to conserve nature and act 'sustainable' (Pálsson, 1996; Escobar, 1996).

The Brundtland report is a typical case of paternalistic environmentalism. Nature and the earth can be managed and people and nations need to be moved towards 'sustainability' by changing their values and institutions (Escobar, 1996). The Western 'scientist-turned-manager' is in charge of this process, since his views are objective and neutral. The poor are blamed for degrading activities, because they lack an 'environmental consciousness' and act 'irrational'

² Generally defined as "managing the relationship between human and natural resources, in order to obtain the best profit for the current generation and keep natural potential alive for future generations" (Nguyen et al., 2009).

(Escobar, 1996). According to Escobar (1996), traditional knowledge systems are only considered complementary to ‘modern’ science. Sometimes outsiders (such as international conservationist NGOs) even expect local people to abandon their ‘environmentally harmful’ customary economic and cultural activities, without any alternative or incentive. Many Western environmentalists are increasingly preaching ecological morality to the rest of the world – therefore affecting the lives of many people living in ‘nature’ (Kottak, 1999, p.27).

The communalist paradigm rejects the separation of nature and society, and argues that people have a close interlinked relationship with their environment. According to Pálsson (1996, p.72), “unlike paternalism, communalism suggests generalized reciprocity, an exchange often metaphorically represented in terms of intimate, personal relationships”. Communalist environmentalists are in favor of a theory which fully integrates human ecology and social theory - therefore abandoning the nature-society dichotomy (Pálsson, 1996, p.72). Some communities perceive ‘nature’ as a giving environment, which, like a parent, provides them unconditional support. These communities do not make a fundamental distinction between nature and society. Therefore, it would not make sense to judge the customary economic and cultural activities of these people on the basis of our idea of what nature and society constitute (Pálsson, 1996; Purcell, 1998).

1.2.2 The new ecological anthropology and the role of geography

‘Old’ ecological anthropology used to focus on how “isolated” people would adapt to their environment. This could be physical adaptation, such as having bigger lungs in a high altitude area, but also culture was seen as a tool to adapt to the environment in order to enhance the chances to survive and live in relative comfort in various environments. Ecological anthropologists were ‘value-free’, they were analyzing eco-systems and cultures on micro-level and they used various models to explain human adaptation to an environment (Moran, 1982, p.7).

However, in contemporary post-modern times this has changed. Kottak (1999, p.25) argues that:

“We cannot be neutral scientists studying cognized and operational models of the environment and the role of humans in regulating its use when local communities and ecosystems are increasingly endangered by external agents.”

He states that people are affected by various international, national, regional and local forces. The focus is no longer solely on the local ecosystem, but on pervasive linkages, flows of people, technology, information, outside forces and power relations of the globalizing world, which have an impact on local communities and their ecosystems (Kottak, 1999).

In the ‘old’ ecological anthropology, *ethnoecology* would be described as any society’s traditional set of environmental perceptions or a cultural model of the environment and its relation to society (Kottak, 1999, p.26). Nowadays, local ethnoecologies are being challenged and transformed by outside forces such as migration, media, government policies, international regulations, technologies, commercial expansion and so on. Because of regional, national and international markets, people have incentives to degrade the environment and many traditional resource management systems have become useless (Kottak, 1999).

Two Euro-American ethnoecologies are challenging traditional ethnoecologies - namely: environmentalism and developmentalism. Whereas environmentalism's main concern is to preserve and protect natural resources from depletion or exhaustion, developmentalism propagates the expansion of a cultural model shaped by industrialism, progress and consumption. In the paradigm model of Pálsson (1996), environmentalism could be placed within the paternalistic paradigm, whereas developmentalism belongs to the Orientalist paradigm. Both environmentalism and developmentalism are transforming and replacing different local ethnoecologies, but the impact of these external forces is neither universal nor linear. However, when these traditional ethnoecologies are being transformed or replaced, it is necessary that there are culturally appropriate alternatives (Kottak, 1999, p.27). One of these alternatives is 'sustainable development', which is a third dominant ethnoecological model. According to Kottak (1999, p.27), "sustainable development aims at culturally appropriate, ecologically sensitive, self-regenerating change". However, could sustainable development be ignited from top-down?

Another issue of the new ecological anthropology is the international biodiversity focus. Sometimes, local people have the feeling that outsiders are more concerned about endangered fauna or flora species than their lives. It is one of the main tasks of ecological anthropologists to find a balance between conserving natural resources and traditional livelihoods in a globalizing world (Kottak, 1999; Bailey, 1996).

How can geographers contribute to the new ecological anthropological thinking? The answer should be obvious: flows of people, ideas and knowledge, ethnoecological models, representations of 'nature', socio-cultural impacts of external forces, multiple scale analyses, interconnectedness and so on, are in essence very 'geographic'. Harvey (in Hoogevelt, 2001, p.123), a social geographer, argues that symbolic orderings of space and time provide a "framework for experience through which people learn who or what they are in society". People are adapting their behavior, activities, and interaction with people (social life) within a particular space they are located – such as the formal and informal setting. When you reorganize space, it will change social relations. Therefore, those who can re-organize space hold the key to power, because they are able to change society (Hoogevelt, 2001, p.124). Traditional ethnoecologies could be changed, if governments or outsiders decide to reorganize the space of indigenous people, for example, by prohibiting people to make use of their lands. This could have huge social and cultural implications for the communities that are affected by these changes (Kottak, 1999).

§1.3 Indigenous knowledge and practices on forestry

As mentioned before, someone's environmental perception, values, ideas, culture and religious beliefs form his/her relationship with the environment – the so called ethnoecology. Many indigenous people have very intimate links with the natural environment they inhabit and, therefore, their livelihoods and knowledge systems are deeply interwoven with their environment. Many indigenous societies perceive their environment within the paradigm of communalism (Aisher, 2007; Pálsson, 1996).

There has been much research done on indigenous knowledge and practices (Aisher, 2007; Posey, 1985; Tuan, 2009). Institutions like the World Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme have tried to link indigenous knowledge and practices to various

development interventions (such as the Indigenous Knowledge Programme of the World Bank)³. Also, international declarations and treaties stress the importance of conserving and protecting indigenous knowledge and practices – e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity (adopted in Rio de Janeiro and ratified by 190 parties, including Vietnam, in 1992) states in Article 8(j) and 10(c):

“Each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate:

(...)

(j) Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.

(...)

(c) Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements.”

When one reads these articles carefully, it can be noticed that indigenous knowledge systems and practices should, according to the convention, only be protected and encouraged if they are compatible with conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Many international agencies, NGOs and governments continue to uphold a biological focus⁴ and, therefore, do not pay enough attention to local livelihoods, which depend on natural resources. Bailey (1996, p.320) argues that conservation efforts have more to do with social and political factors, than with biology. Analyzing indigenous knowledge systems and practices should not have the sole purpose to see whether these are useful for the conservation and protection of ecosystems. One should first pay attention to the underlying factors, which have established certain knowledge systems and practices. These include world-views, religious beliefs, history, culture, institutions, geography, and ecological and socio-economic factors as well as external influences (Kottak, 1999; Michon, 2000). According to Wiersum (2000, p.20), knowledge is “built through the complex process of “selecting, rejecting, creating, and transforming information, and is inextricably linked to the social, environmental and institutional contexts in which it occurs”.

Concerning traditional or indigenous ecological knowledge systems, Berkes (1999) has identified three interrelated components: (i) local people’s *beliefs* about their relationship and perceptions of the environment; (ii) biological *knowledge* of land and species; and (iii) exploitation and management *practices* – e.g. forest management. The following sections in this paragraph will deal with these components in the case of indigenous forest management.

³<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/EXTINDKNOWLEDGE/0,,contentMDK:20663799~menuPK:1692621~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:825547,00.html> –project website of the World Bank.

⁴ Some, like Escobar (1996), are arguing that it is rather an economic focus. By the ‘capitalization’ of nature, Western countries and international agencies can put a value on ‘nature’ and therefore economic sectors such as biotechnology, intellectual property rights and genetics can benefit greatly.

1.3.1 Indigenous worldviews and beliefs

Indigenous forest management should not be seen as a separate activity in daily life, but rather an element of the community's overall relationship with their environment (Wiersum, 2000, p.22). World-views of indigenous people often have a holistic nature – a conception of the world in which people, 'nature' and animals have complex interdependent relations (Michon, 2000, p.37). One should be very careful when generalizing about the world-views of indigenous communities, because this would treat them as a homogenous group, which they are certainly not. Nevertheless, van Leeuwen (1998, p.7) distinguished four types of world-views which are often associated with indigenous groups:

- *The giving environment* – 'nature' is seen as continuously and unconditionally providing people's subsistence needs.
- *The reciprocating environment* – 'nature' needs continuous investments in order to receive something back. Ecological balance is pursued, but not always reached.
- *The disposable environment* – when shortages occur, survival strategies have to be adapted and people shift their management systems to pure exploitation. Therefore, 'nature' is seen as something that shall be eventually destroyed. This is also the case when economic interests prevail over traditions.
- *The prohibiting environment* – because of religious or spiritual reasons, 'nature' is being protected.

These world-views do not only involve utilitarian considerations, but also include spiritual and cultural perceptions of the environments – e.g. the maintenance of sacred forests (Wiersum, 2000). Aisher (2007, p.479), for example, mentions how Nyishi people interact with their environment: "Through spirits, the human extraction of forest-related resources during hunting and shifting cultivation manifests as forms of exchange between humans and spirits". When one acknowledges the role these spirits play in Nyishi communities, their forest management practices can be better understood, instead of when someone chooses to focus on the utilitarian practices alone. Much research on indigenous forest management systems barely addresses the cultural, spiritual, social and political logic that underlies local understanding and interpretation of 'nature'. This often leads to misinterpretations or misuse of indigenous knowledge (Michon, 2000, p.36).

Paragraph 2.2 and 2.3 will further explore the relationship between spiritual or religious beliefs and the environment in the context of the indigenous communities of Vietnam.

1.3.2 Indigenous knowledge

According to Redford (1990), indigenous knowledge offers some valuable insights into local cultures, ethnoecologies and ecological systems. Even though Berkes' (1999) second component only deals with biological and technological knowledge, this paragraph will consider knowledge within a broader spectrum. According to Wiersum (2000), indigenous knowledge on forest use is not only technical or biological, but it also concerns social relations and institutions.

First, how is indigenous knowledge⁵ defined? According to UNESCO (2002), indigenous knowledge (IK) is:

“a cumulative body of knowledge, know-how, practices and representations. These sophisticated sets of understandings, interpretations and meanings are part and parcel of a cultural complex that encompasses language, naming and classification systems, resource use practices, ritual, spirituality and worldview.”

Another definition comes from UNEP (2007):

“Traditional knowledge refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world. Developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and takes the form of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language, and agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds.”

These definitions mention the *cultural or social dimension* (stories, songs, beliefs, rituals, language worldviews, spirituality and so on), the *utilitarian dimension* (know-how, agricultural practices, resource use practices and so on), the *institutional dimension* (community laws) and the *disseminatory dimension* (cumulative body, oral transmittance) of indigenous knowledge. However, Berkes (1999) adds that this knowledge should not be seen as being isolated from external influences, nor should IK be seen as something from the past. It has a dynamic nature, like any other type of knowledge and, therefore, it should be treated as such. IK can adapt to new social, economic and environmental conditions, and is continuously being modified by experimental skills. However, Wiersum (2000 p.21) states that IK is unique to a specific culture or society since it emanates from a specific environmental and cultural context.

Secondly, how can IK be linked to natural resource management and practices? According to Wiersum (2000, p.21), in many tropical regions, IK is a major element of making communal decisions on forest use and the organization of specific management practices. IK reflects society's culture and perceptions of the social and ecological environment. Therefore, many scholars, policy makers, development project planners, stakeholders and indigenous peoples themselves stress the importance of the conservation and protection of IK. Warren (1991 in: Van Leeuwen, 1998) argues that IK has three types of value:

- *Encyclopedic value* - large variety of information about species distribution, natural resources and regeneration technologies, which is not yet 'scientifically' described.
- *Efficiency value* – information which could be incorporated within 'modern' natural resource or forest management systems.
- *Emancipation value* – the incorporation of IK in development projects enhances active participation and stimulates self-determination of local people.

Posey (1985) states that indigenous ethnoecological knowledge is far more sophisticated than many scholars and policy makers assume. IK of ecological zones, natural resources, agriculture and management offers new models for development that “are ecologically and socially sound” (Poses, 1985, p.2). However, Michon (2000) argues that it is not sufficient to reduce IK into a set of utilitarian practices or simple techniques of forest

⁵ In this thesis I do not make a strict distinction between traditional, local and indigenous knowledge. The definition of 'indigenous' is already troublesome, and, as has been mentioned before, local and indigenous knowledge can be equally as valuable.

production. One needs a broader perspective on IK, which *also* incorporates the socio-ecological context, in order to get a better understanding.

1.3.3 *Indigenous forest management*

There are some persistent ideas that indigenous people or ‘natives’ live in harmony with their environment, and that their ways of managing forests are always superior and sustainable. These ‘ecologically noble savages’ are, therefore, being treated as just another species of animal who are incapable of transforming or altering their environment (Hames, 2007; Redford, 1990; Ellingson, 2001). The representations of the ‘ecologically noble savage’, associated within the paternalistic paradigm, have two political dimensions. First of all, these views are used by indigenous people themselves in their struggles for self-determination and equality. Secondly, many international environmentalist/conservationist NGO’s and other agencies are using these stereotypes for their own agenda’s. They use labels such as “guardians of the forests”, “stewards of nature” or “the once and future resource managers” in order to describe indigenous people (see the WWF example in the introduction chapter of this thesis). However, later on, this image of the ‘ecologically noble savage’ met severe criticism, and radical environmentalists even argued that indigenous groups do not conserve natural resources and should, therefore, be removed from natural conservation areas (Hames, 2007, p.186).

There are several studies that state that some indigenous forest management practices are superior to other practices (e.g. Posey, 1985; Dove, 1983), but there are also studies that support the opposite (e.g. studies mentioned by Hames, 2007). According to Redford (1990), many indigenous forest management systems are only sustainable if there are abundant natural resources, low population density and a limited market economy. This thesis will *not* deal with whether Co Tu forest management practices are sustainable or not. The main argument is to remind the reader that indigenous forest management systems should not be over-romanticized nor is ‘modern’ science always superior. Forest management systems should be continuously adapted to its environment and there is no general blueprint of how to make sustainable use of natural resources (Michon, 2000).

Indigenous forest management should not be considered as an isolated activity. Often indigenous forest management consists of: “practices for modifying the forests within the framework of an integrated system of resource utilization; these practices augment crop cultivation and/or livestock management” (Wiersum, 1997, p.3). Wiersum (1997, p.4) has identified four indigenous forest management types. These types resemble the types of world-views of van Leeuwen (1998), which were mentioned in section 1.3.2:

- *Protected native forests* – native forests which are protected because of their religious/cultural significance or for protecting village water sources – e.g. sacred forests, village forests, forests belts, spring forests and so on.
- *Resource-enriched native forests* – the species composition of these native forests, either old-growth or fallow vegetations, has been altered by selective protection, purposeful regeneration and seed dispersion of desired species. These are species for both commercial and subsistence purposes (van Leeuwen, 1998, p.7) – e.g. individually claimed trees, enriched natural forests and enriched fallows.

- *Reconstructed native forests*- wholly or partly cultivated forests with several planted species, wild species of lesser value and non-tree plants – e.g. forest gardens, planted temple forests and fortification forests.
- *Mixed arboriculture* – forests with cultivated stands of planted domesticated tree species – e.g. home gardens and small holder plantations.

Deforestation

Many indigenous communities are swidden cultivators and, therefore, they are often accused of being the main contributors to deforestation in their respective areas. However, under traditional conditions - a relatively mobile population and low population density, subsistence economy, polycropping, adequate fallow periods and ample forest areas – swidden cultivation has been proven to be sustainable. It could even enhance the biological diversity of a forest (Sponsel et al. 1996; Moran, 1982). Both Sponsel et al (1996) and Dove (1983) argue that swidden or shifting horticulture is the only type of farming which is proven to be the most sustainable in tropical forest areas. Dove (1983) calls it a myth that swidden cultivation of forest lands is destructive or wasteful. Many forests which we consider to be unaffected by humans, are actually anthropogenic, which is “the outcome of hundreds of generations of shifting horticulturists’ clearing and cultivating of plots of forests” (Sponsel et al. 1996, p.8).

What are the main causes of deforestation? According to Utting (1993, p.14) many studies highlight the roles played by shifting peasant agriculture, conversion of forests to pasture, expansion of agro-export crops, uncontrolled logging, fuel wood gathering, urbanization and population growth. However, scholars disagree on what the primary causes and the underlying social forces are. Is it something inevitable? Or are government policies responsible? And what are the appropriate measures against deforestation? Paragraph 1.4 describes a possible measure against deforestation – namely: community based forest management.

Sponsel et al. (1996) distinguished the following causes of deforestation:

- *Shifting and shifted farmers* – If the conditions for sustainable swidden cultivation change, it could contribute to deforestation. These changes include a shift from subsistence to cash cropping or an increasing population density. It also depends on the type of swidden cultivation – some types are not or less harmful for the environment than other types. However, many government policies tend to describe *all* swidden cultivation practices as destructive or ‘back ward’ and, therefore, ignore the differences among swidden cultivation types. This resembles the dualistic theory of Boeke (in Yamada, 1980), in which he distinguished a dualism between a ‘modern’ and capitalistic sector (commercial-cropping, advances agricultural methods) and a traditional, ‘back ward’ and subsistence sector (swidden agriculture) within the economy of a country in the South.

Shifted or migrant farmers also contribute to deforestation. These migrants are often resettled by the government in order to deal with problems of population growth or by changing the ethnical composition of an area where many indigenous communities live in order to gain more political control.

- *Extractive consumption* – logging for export is a major cause behind deforestation. Logging can decline both the quality and the quantity of trees in forests. Many countries are driven by greed, and some countries which were timber exporters in the past have now become timber importers. Logging also contributes to extensive forest fires. Other mentioned

causes are: commercial monocrops, ranching, hydroelectric dams, construction of highways, and mining.

- *Politics and the Military* – this includes corruption and illegal logging, war strategies to destroy forests on purpose, geopolitics, and so on.

The consequences of deforestation are severe. These include soil erosion, floods, storms, climate change, biodiversity loss as well as diseases, war and poverty (Sponsel et al. 1996).

Indigenous forest management systems should be perceived as dynamic and able to evolve with changing conditions. These changing conditions are: i) ecological (such as resource depletion and land degradation); ii) technological (such as new agricultural technologies); iii) economic (such as increased commercialization and new demands for forest products); and iv) socio-political (such as population growth, changing tenure conditions and government policies). These changing conditions can contribute to deforestation and forest degradation, but in other cases people have reacted by changing or modifying their management strategies in order to mitigate the negative impact caused by these conditions (Wiersum, 1996, p.6).

§1.4 Community based forest management

Vietnam, backed by international conservation organizations and NGO's, introduced community based forest management in 2004 by allocating forest land to local communities and involving them in the forest management process. What exactly constitutes community based forest management and in what ways can local people participate in the process?

Conservation organizations and NGO's, such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, World Wildlife fund and others, have developed many skills necessary to conserve and manage protected areas. They have good public relations, have access to many funds, and are able to direct governments to conserve and protect new areas for protection. Furthermore, they are working with new technologies to monitor ecological change and to identify different ecosystems, as well as areas which need most urgent protection. They are also increasingly paying attention to local communities in order to 'teach' these people about the value of biodiversity and the importance of conservation. The next step was trying to bring local people in the conservation process (Bailey, 1996).

One cannot effectively change the local institutions of forest management, if it happens from top-down. Portes (2006) argues that if one wants to change people's institutions, one should try to identify the underlying structures of institutions and social organizations, which include: culture, power, values, norms, skills, class structure, status hierarchies and roles. Imposing institutional 'blueprints' from the outside or institutional grafting does not change the deeper structures. In forest conservation this has been often the case. According to a study of the World Bank (in: Poffenberger, 2006):

“The dissolution of traditional local institutional arrangements has not been followed by the establishment of more effective institutions, and national governments in most developing countries have not adequately substituted for these former resource management regimes.”

In order to establish more “effective” institutions for forest management, the concept of community forestry or community based forest management (CFM)⁶ was introduced. The main

⁶ Synonyms are: community based forestry, or community based conservation, and so on. There are no distinctions made, since that would be out the scope of this thesis.

assumption is that when forest users are able to craft the forest-use rules themselves as well as being engaged in monitoring and maintenance, forest are more likely to be in better conditions (Hayes, 2006; Gibson et al, 2004; van Laerhoven, ND).

According to Roberts and Gautam (2003, p.2), CFM can be defined as:

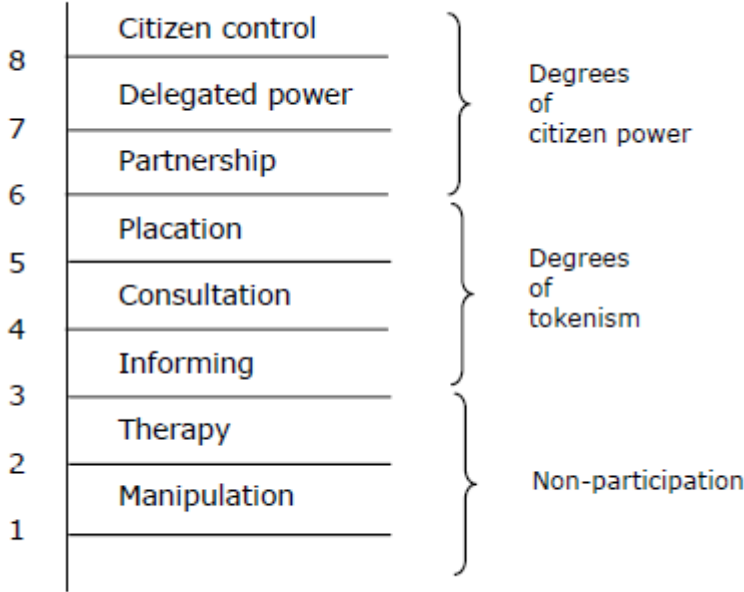
“An urban or rural forestry or forest based activity controlled by the community either directly or through management accountable to the community through representatives. A direct result of these activities will be benefits, which accrue back to the community”

CFM is clearly people centered, which involves local communities (also defined as stakeholders) in decisions that affect their quality of life and in activities in forests, which they are dependent on (Roberts and Gautam, 2003, p.2).

Over the past decades, many international agencies, NGO’s and governments have supported several CFM initiatives. These initiatives include: enabling communities to reestablish management over their forests, empowering communities and local governments with resources, stewardship rights and responsibilities, and documenting indigenous systems of resource use and customary laws. Many NGOs have focused on building CFM support capacities, such as community organizing strategies, participatory mapping and livelihood enhancement schemes (Poffenberger, 2006, p.2).

CFM has much to do with engaging local communities in the forest management process. It means that local people are participating in the management process. However, the term ‘participation’ has multiple meanings. Arnstein (1971) has shown this by distinguishing different types of “participation” (see figure 1.2). Type 1 and 2 are non-participatory. Their real objectives are to enable power-holders to ‘educate’ or ‘cure’ the participants, instead of enabling citizens to participate in a programme. Type 3, 4 and 5, are ways for citizens to advise the power-holders, but the power-holders retain the right to decide. Type 6 allows citizens and power-holders to make decisions together, whereas type 7 and 8 give citizens the full power of deciding (Arnstein, 1971). Ideally, CFM should be at least at type 6, however in reality this is often not the case (for an example, see Nguyen et al, 2009).

Figure: 1.2 Ladder of citizen participation



Source: Arnstein, 1971

§1.5 Conclusion: assessing the socio-cultural impact

“Local people, their landscapes, their ideas, their values, and their traditional management systems are being attacked from all sides. Outsiders attempt to remake native landscapes and cultures in their own image.” – Kottak, 1999, p.26

Theoretically, the forest land allocation (FLA) programme in Vietnam could have a huge social and cultural impact on the affected indigenous Co Tu communities. However, local ethnoecologies are able to offer resistance to outside forces and the impact of these forces vary. How can we assess the socio-cultural impact? What are its main components? Based on the information in this chapter, two domains are distinguished:

- *Cultural domain* – many indigenous people have holistic world-views and a different perception of ‘nature’. Their relationship with the environment is very intimate, which can be classified as the communalist paradigm. Indigenous knowledge does not only serve utilitarian purposes, but it also serves spiritual, religious and cultural purposes. Indigenous knowledge, culture and world views should not be seen separately, since they are deeply interwoven. Indigenous knowledge is often orally transmitted and defines the customary laws of the people. Also, indigenous forest management practices or ethnoecologies should not be seen as separate activities. It forms an integral part in the lives of many indigenous people living in the forests. Indigenous forest management practices often reflect the community’s world view and perception of nature. Contrary to common perception, indigenous people do not always live in harmony with the ‘nature’ nor are they the main drivers behind deforestation.

The FLA programme can have several implications for the Co Tu people. First of all, it could start or even amplify the process of cultural ‘degradation’. If people face restrictions on forest use, it will result in the loss of a lot of knowledge, which does not only include biological and ecological information, but also world-views, religious information and so on. Especially, if one considers the fact that Co Tu people only orally disseminate knowledge. If one takes away an integral part of a community’s culture, which is in this case forest use, the socio-cultural impact on the communities could be significant.

- *Social domain* – As mentioned before, social relations and structures of many indigenous people are deeply interwoven with their environment. Therefore, they organize the environment in ways which represent their world-views and cultures. For example, many indigenous people have sacred forests. These are forests with a special religious or spiritual significance and are, therefore, prohibited by customary laws to exploit.

Harvey states that ones who are able to reorganize space have the power. Those who can re-organize space can change the social relations which take place within that space. If a government decides to reorganize the space of an indigenous community into, for example, a national park, it can have social implications for the included communities. This can change social relationships among the people, but also people’s relationship with the environment. What will happen to a community’s structure if a sacred forest is destroyed? How does this affect the social cohesion⁷ of a community? What will also happen to the traditional institutions, if they are not replaced appropriately according to the community’s standards?

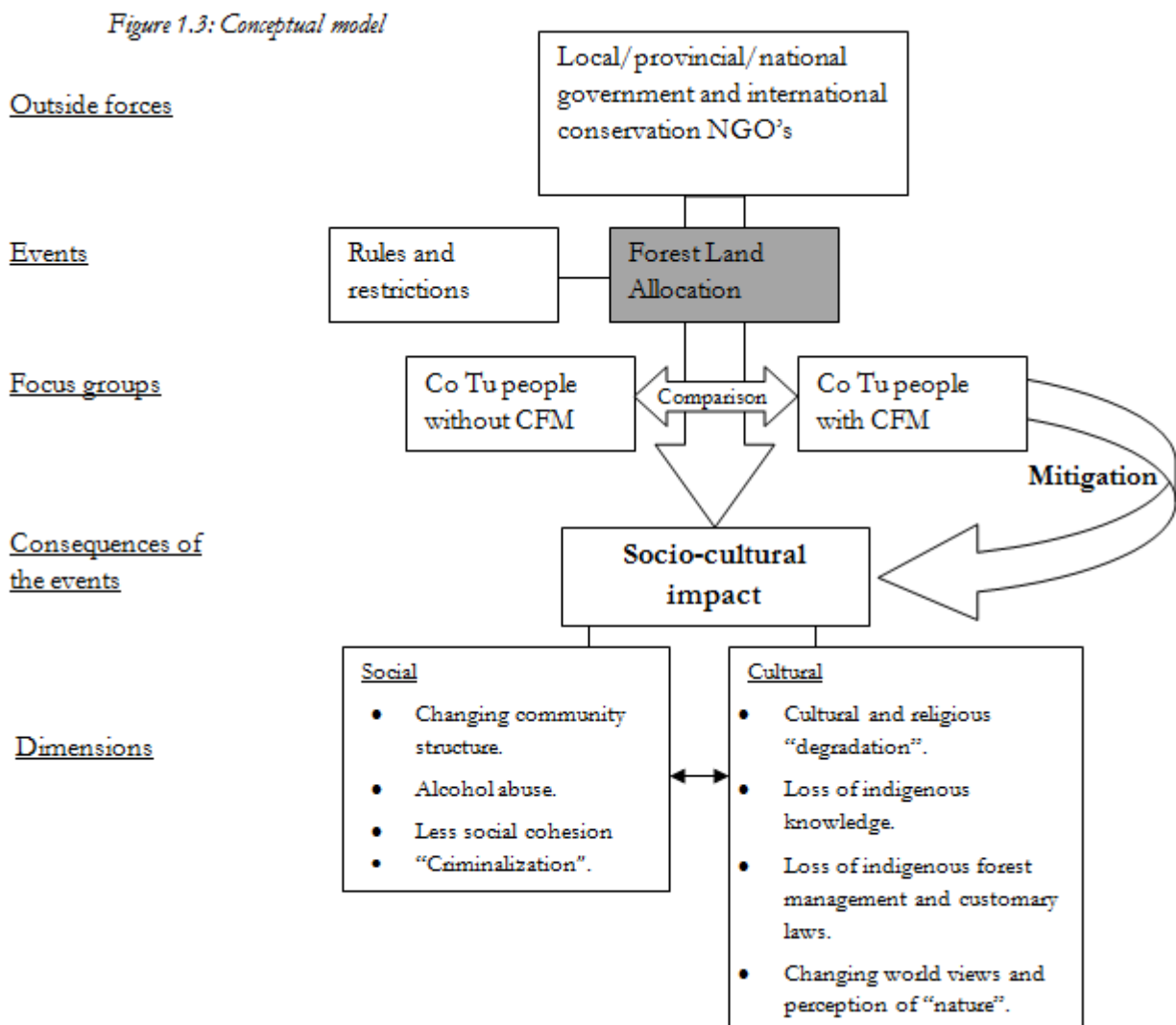
⁷ According to Friedkin (2004, p.410), the definition of social cohesion consists of two parts: “(a) individuals’ membership attitudes (their desire or intention to remain in a group, their identification with or loyalty to a group, and other attitudes about the group or its members); and (b) individuals’ membership behaviors (their decisions to sever, weaken, maintain, or strengthen their membership or participation in a group, their susceptibilities to interpersonal influence.”

Finally, if indigenous people are restricted or prohibited to make use of their environment, how are they able to support their livelihoods? Indigenous people are already socially, economic and culturally marginalized. Common practices of indigenous people are now illegal and these people change from small subsistence farmers into ‘illegal loggers’ (McElwee, 2004). A lack of sustainable alternative livelihoods systems and the “criminalization” of indigenous people will only put these people in an even more disadvantaged position. However, the main purpose of this thesis is to focus on the social and cultural impact of the FLA programme, since the livelihood approach will be out of the scope of this thesis.

In order to see whether community based forest management (CFM) can dampen the socio-cultural impact of FLA; two Co Tu villages have been selected and compared. In one village CFM is introduced, while the other village does not have CFM yet (see chapter 4).

1.5.1 Conceptual model, central question and sub-questions

Figure 1.3 presents the conceptual model of this thesis and a visual summary of the thematic framework. This model should be placed within the context of the Co Tu people in Nam Dong district. Chapter 2 will, therefore, deal with the geographical and social context.



The central question of this thesis is: *What is the socio-cultural impact of forest land allocation in Vietnam on the Co Tu people in Nam Dong district and in what way can community based forest management contribute to preserve Co Tu culture?* The following sub-questions have been formulated in order to answer the central question:

- 1) What are the main social and cultural characteristics of village no. 8 (Aprang) and village no.5 (Tawac)?
- 2) What is the socio-cultural impact of the forest land allocation (FLA) on the communities living in Aprang and Tawac?
- 3) How did FLA affect the environmental interactions and indigenous knowledge and forest management systems of the Co Tu people?
- 4) How does community based forest management mitigate the socio-cultural impact of FLA?

Even though the conceptual model (figure 1.3) implies that the socio-cultural impact of FLA is solely negative, this is not necessarily the case. FLA may have improved several aspects of the lives of Co Tu people. Therefore, the central question is an open research question. The main aim of this thesis is to explore the socio-cultural impact of FLA - whether it is positive and/or negative.

Chapter 2: Geographical and social context

This chapter presents the geographical and social context (in its broadest sense) in which the research takes place. This chapter will first deal with the national context of Vietnam. Paragraph 2.2 deals with ethnic minorities and, particularly, the Highlanders in Vietnam. Paragraph 2.3 deals with the social-cultural dynamics of the Co Tu people. The last paragraphs will deal with the main dynamics of forest management in Vietnam.

§2.1 Vietnam at a glance

Vietnam is a country in South-east Asia with a population size of 87 million in 2008 - being the 13th most populous country in the world (see figure 2.1). Most Vietnamese people live in rural areas. The urbanization rate in 2008 was only 28%. Vietnam is a socialist single-party republic, but like economic powerhouse China, the country is experiencing economic liberalization, relatively fast economic growth (GDP growth rate was 6.2% in 2008) and a further integration in the world economy. Agriculture plays an important role in the Vietnamese economy – accounting for 22% of the sectoral share of GDP in 2008. The service, and industry and construction sectors respectively accounted for 38% and 32%. Main export products of Vietnam in 2007 were crude oil (17.5%), garments and textiles (16.1%), sea products (7.9%), footwear (8.3%), rice (2.9%), coffee (3.7%) and others (43.6% - CIA, 2009).

Life expectancy at birth in Vietnam was 73.7 years in 2007 and the adult literacy rate in 2005 was 90.3%. 15.5% of the Vietnamese people lived below the national poverty line in 2007. Poverty is fundamentally a rural problem in Vietnam – 90% of the poor people live in rural areas. Many of these poor people depend on the forests and natural environment to survive. In terms of the Human Development Index Vietnam ranked 105 out of 177 countries in 2007 opposed to rank 120 in 1995 (CIA, 2009; UNDP Vietnam, 2009).

2.1.1 Doi Moi reforms

Vietnam introduced the *Doi Moi* policies in 1986. These policies abolished the compulsory grain-purchase quotas and instituted free trade market prices, it ended collectivized agriculture, and farmland was distributed to individual households. Furthermore, the policies enabled foreign companies to invest in the country and it reduced or eliminated trade barriers (Sunderlin and Ba, 2005, p2). According to the World Bank et al. (2009), one of the central features of *Doi Moi* was the devolution of some types of power. In the 1980s, the country established basic property rights for farmers and firms were given some autonomy to make production decisions. In the second decade after the *Doi Moi* reforms, provinces gained more autonomy and devolution of land-use decisions continued. Also local governments were given more responsibilities over human resource management. In the recent years this decentralization process continued – local

Figure 2.1: Map of Vietnam



Source: CIA, 2009

governments gained more say in human resource management, public-private arrangements expanded and there is a further decentralization of public investment decisions (World Bank et al, 2009). The *Doi Moi* reforms contributed to a strong economic growth in Vietnam and lifted millions of people out of poverty. However, as the other paragraphs will show, not all people - especially ethnic minorities - are benefiting from these reforms.

§2.2 *Ethnic minorities, poverty and forest use in Vietnam*

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country – having 54 officially recognized ethnic groups. The largest ethnic groups are the Kinh (Viet) (86.2%), Tay (1.9%), Thai (1.7%), Muong (1.5%), Khome (1.4%), Hoa (1.1%), Nun (1.1%), Hmong (1%) and others (4.1%) (1999 census - CIA, 2009). With exception of the ethnic Chinese (Hoa), the Khmer and Cham, the remaining 50 ethnic groups are living in remote mountainous and rural areas, and are economically and socially marginalized (Baulch et al, 2008). Central Vietnam, where Nam Dong district is located, consists of many indigenous mountain communities – including the Co Tu people. How can we describe the general situation of these people? To what extent does poverty dominate their lives and in what way do they make use of the forests?

2.2.1 *Definition and classification of ethnic minorities in Vietnam*

According to the Asian Development Bank (2002; p.9), there is no clear understanding on the concept and coverage of ethnic minorities in Vietnam. After the independence from France in the 1960s, the government of Vietnam was interested in classifying the different ethnic minorities for administrative, developmental and research purposes. The National Programme of Ethnic Classification was set up by Vietnamese ethnologists of the Institute of Ethnology in order to classify and define ethnic groups (*dan toc*). Their definition of an ethnic group was:

“A stable or relatively stable group of people formed over a historical period with common territorial ties, economic activities, and cultural characteristics. [...] A stable community was one formed over a historical period, involving relationships of identity in regard to language, habitat, socioeconomic activities, and cultural characteristics, and was also conscious of a shared ethnic identity” (ADB, 2002, p.5).

However, the present classification has many weaknesses since many groups and subgroups are not included. Some groups are also placed under the same ethnic label, while there are greater cultural differences between them than between two separate ethnic groups. Furthermore, because of cultural, historical and linguistic differences, many smaller ethnic subgroups are dissatisfied that they are placed within a larger ethnic group (ADB, 2002, p.5).

According to Salemink (2003; p.29), most identified groups were not based on ethnic self-identification but on linguistic similarities and differences among the people. Outsiders (in this case the Vietnamese ethnologists) recognized these similarities and differences, and placed the people into different ethnic groups. The basic assumption in the nineteenth and twentieth century was that linguistic differences coincided with cultural and political differences. However, many scholars claim that this is not always the case. Salemink (2003; p.31) states that “linguistic ‘boundaries’ do not necessarily converge with cultural or political realities”. Therefore, the Institute of Ethnology is currently reevaluating and conducting a new project on ethnic classification, because more adequate ethnic identification is required for administration, development and research activities (ADB, 2002, p.5).

2.2.2 Short description of the indigenous mountain communities in Vietnam

According to a national census in 1999, the officially recognized ethnic minorities in Vietnam accounted for 10,527,000 people - 13.8% of the total population. This represents an increase of 1.82 million people in the period of 1990-1999. Throughout years, many Kinh people have been migrating to areas where many ethnic minorities live. For example, in the Central Highlands the Kinh people accounted for 5% of the total population in 1945, 50% in 1975 and more than 70% at present (ADB, 2002, p.6). In Vietnam, 94% of the spoken languages belong to the Austro-Asiatic family (including Vietnamese), 3.7% belong to Daic languages, 1.1% belong to Mia-Yao languages and less than 1% belong to the Austronesian or Tibeto-Burman languages (Ethnologue, 2010).

In pre-colonial times, the indigenous communities in the mountains of Southeast-Asia were called *Moi* by the lowland Vietnamese, *Kha* by the Lao and *Phnong* by the Khmer – which can be glossed as ‘savage’. In the early colonial times, the French would use the same labels or they would just call them ‘savages’. Later on they used the label *Montagnards* (mountain dwellers). After 1955, this label was also adopted by the Americans or they would simply call these people ‘yards’. Nowadays, the indigenous mountain communities in Vietnam do not have an official collective label but they each have their own ethnic label (Salemink, 2003).

It is very difficult to characterize the indigenous mountain communities or Highlanders in Vietnam. Salemink (2003) distinguished some of the most common notions about these Highlanders, but it is important to keep in mind that we are talking about culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse people. First of all, a common notion is that most Highlanders are nomads - or at least semi nomads - who practice shifting cultivation and move on when the soil is exhausted. The Vietnamese government introduced sedentarization programmes (such as the Fixed Cultivation and Settlement programme) with the intention to give ethnic minorities a more ‘stable’ lifestyle and to transform traditional, often considered backward, agricultural practices to modern ones (ADB, 2002, p.10). However, contrary to common assumption, many Highlanders do have a bounded territory and elaborate systems for delineating clan or community land (Salemink, 2003, p. 32).

Many Highlanders are also blamed for the heavy deforestation in Vietnam. ‘Slash-and-burn’ agriculturalists are believed to exhaust the soil for rice and other vegetables and move somewhere else to do the same practices. Since colonial times, the Highlanders have been encouraged and even forced to move from swidden cultivation to more ‘modern’ and sedentary cultivation. However, as already shown in paragraph 1.3, these ‘modern’ methods did not take sufficient account of the ecology of tropical mountain areas. The Highlanders clear plots with controlled use of fire for multiple crops. After two or three years the soil is exhausted and they clear a new plot. The fallows are used for grazing cattle and low-intensity crops like grasses or ‘green manure’ (weeds that quickly regenerate soil fertility). After 10-20 years, the cleared plot is regenerated by the forest and the same process starts again. Therefore, the Highlanders make use of a long-fallow and rotating farming system (Jones et. al. 2002; Dove, 1983). Most communities engaged in swidden cultivation had “a delineated territory and an elaborate local knowledge and regulatory institutions – [defined as customary laws] – by which suitable, sufficiently regenerated plots of land were periodically reallocated to households to clear and work” (Salemink, 2003, p. 32). Agriculture was and is usually combined with animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, and gathering of timber and non-timber forest products (Jones et. al. 2002). Nowadays, many

Highlanders are also involved in sedentary forms of agriculture, if the ecological circumstances permit it. They grow cash crops such as coffee, rubber, tea, pepper and cinnamon on a permanent basis (Salemink, 2003, p. 32).

The archetype Highlander village consists of a series of elevated longhouses, which are inhabited by several households belonging to the same clan. The centre of the villages has a high-roofed communal house with in front a decorated pole for the ritual buffalo sacrifice. However, this archetype is according to, Salemink (2003, p.32) an amalgam of various architectural patterns. Some ethnic groups such as the Mnong would build their houses on the ground and communal houses cannot be found in Edê villages.

Another common assumption on the part of outsiders is that the Highlanders are consisting of clearly distinct tribes - distinguishable by their language, traditional clothes, architecture and 'their manners and customs'. Another assumption is that their daily lives are ruled by old men – such as shamans, village chiefs and elderly. Many outsiders have also thought that the Highlanders were all matrilineal (Hickey, 1982, p.36) and have fantasized, in popular media, about their exotic women and primitiveness - therefore contributing to the construction of a 'noble savage' (Ellingson, 2001). Of course, the reality is much more complex. The political system of the Highlanders was highly decentralized and even fragmented. There were supra-village institutions allowing different villages to share a common territory for swidden cultivation. Also, some religious institutions were respected in the wide area – such as some shamans. Traditionally, Highlander communities were ruled by 'big men'. They were no kings in traditional (western) sense, since they were never absolute masters within their respective villages or even families. They rose to position of prominence because of economic successes, religious prestige, military prowess and so on. These 'big men' often dealt with the outsiders, but for Western observers, searching for kings, they were just minor chiefs or religious leaders (Salemink, 2003, p. 35; interview with Nguyen, 2010).

The Highlanders have been able to conserve their traditional religions in a region where Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam dominate. Their traditional beliefs and practices are often labeled as 'animist' and they are, because of a lack of written scripts, considered invalid to be called 'modern' (Salemink, 2003, p. 34). Highlanders believe in a number of gods, like "god of thunder", and spirits connected with particular places (forests, rivers, mountains, rocks, etc.) or particular animals (such as pythons). People with special skills and knowledge become shamans or spirit mediums. Religious beliefs are closely connected with customary laws governing the relations between people, the environment and the spirit world (UNHCR, 2001, p.16). Therefore, within their territory, Highlanders have specific laws on making use of the environment in order to maintain a sustainable equilibrium (Vuong, ND). However, even though there is a growing interest in indigenous forest management, the religious dimension has been often overlooked by scholars and policy makers (Salemink, 2003, p. 34). There were many attempts made by both the Vietnamese government and outsiders, such as Evangelists, of getting Highlanders to abandon 'superstition' and 'backward' beliefs. Some of these attempts have been quite successful since many Highlanders are adopting 'new' religions such as Catholicism, Protestantism or Communism. However, this also contributes to new forms of conflicts between for example Christian converts and other believers (UNHCR, 2001, p.17; Jones et. al, 2002).

2.2.3 The ethnic dimension of poverty

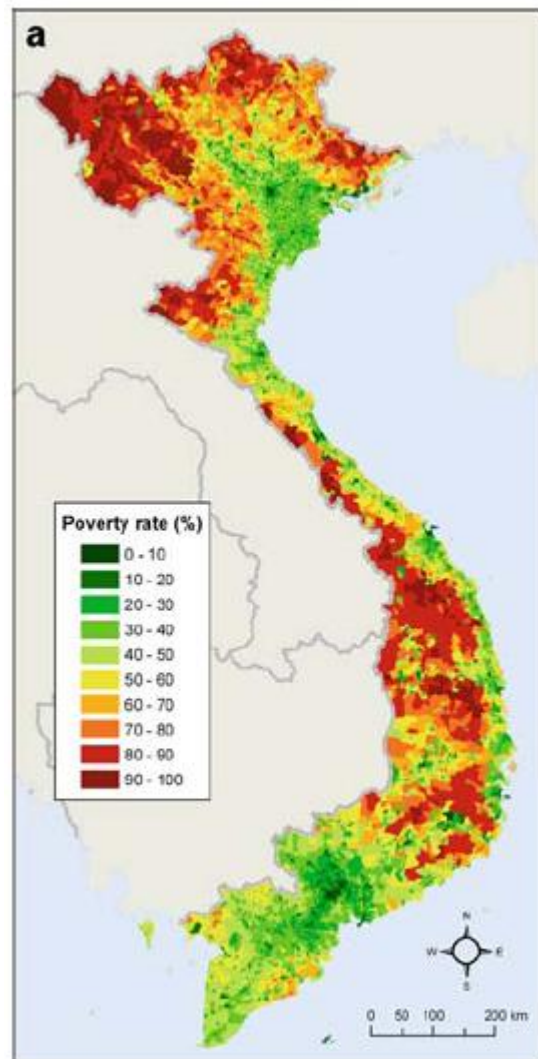
Many studies have shown that ethnic minorities who are concentrated in upland and mountainous areas are much poorer than the ethnic majorities, because they lack access to infrastructure, health services and educational facilities. The same goes for Vietnam – according to a national survey in 2002, 30% of the poor were ethnic minorities even though they only account for 14% of the total population. The poverty headcount ratio in 2002 was 64.3% for the ethnic minorities (with the exception of the ethnic Chinese who are generally quite wealthy) and 22.3% for the ethnic majorities (Kinh and Chinese people). Although Vietnam has experienced a remarkable reduction in poverty, the ethnic majorities mainly benefited from it. For example, in 1990, the share of ethnic minorities among the poor only accounted for 20%, as opposed to 30% in 2002 (Gaiha, 2007). Figure 2.2 displays the geographical distribution of poverty in Vietnam. Most poor regions are physically remote and inhabited by ethnic minorities.

It is important to take into account why these ethnic minorities are poorer than ethnic majorities. Is it because they are located in mountainous areas, or because they lack access to education (socio-economic components), or is it because of any structural constraints such as social

exclusion? According to a study of Gaiha (2007), the households belonging to the ethnic minority groups are more vulnerable to various shocks than the ethnic majority groups. Furthermore, household composition, education, land holding and location are important determinants of expenditure and poverty. Finally, ethnic minorities are also poor because of structural constraints, because the returns are much lower for them than for ethnic majorities. According to a study of van de Walle and Gunewardena (in: Gaiha, 2007), about 50% of the expenditure inequality between the ethnic majorities and minorities is explained by the socio-economic component and the other half is explained by the structural component.

According to Epprecht et al. (2009 p.17), “rural poverty significantly increases with geographic remoteness, even after controlling for other factors such as ethnicity and education”. However, social-cultural distances, such as language barriers or cultural differences, may be a more important barrier to poverty alleviation than geographic remoteness. Epprecht et al. (2009) reveal in their study that ethnic minority households who master the Vietnamese language tend to be better off, because they have better access to information and services.

Figure 2.2: Distribution of Poverty



Source: Epprecht et al. 2009

The Vietnamese government has implemented many projects and programmes, which were specifically aimed at reducing poverty among ethnic minorities. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these programmes and its corresponding impact, but it should be noted that it is assumed by the Vietnamese government that sedentarization and sedentary cultivation are possible solutions for poverty (ADB, 2002).

§2.3 *Co Tu People in Vietnam*

The Co Tu (or Ka Tu) people belong to one of the officially recognized ethnic minorities in Vietnam and account for 50.458 people according to a census in 1999. Their language, Katuic, belongs to the Mon-Khmer subgroup in the Austro-Asiatic language family. The Co Tu people are the biggest ethnic minority group in Central Vietnam. They mainly live in the mountains and natural forests of Quang Nam and Thua Thien-Hue provinces in the districts Hien, Gang, Nam Dong and A Luoi. They are believed to be one of the oldest ethnic groups in Vietnam and they are related to the Cham and Kinh (Thuathienhue.gov, 2009; Tuan, 2009). Co Tu people are also labeled as “Ka Tu” which means ‘savage’ in local dialect or “something not very noble” (Salemink, 2003, p.31). This means that the label “Co Tu/Ka Tu” could have been given to anyone living in the mountains of Central Vietnam. This poses a problem since it is, therefore, not sure whether people who are labeled by outsiders as “Co Tu/Ka Tu” really belong to the same ethnic group (Salemink, 2003).

2.3.1 *Co Tu society and culture*

In traditional Co Tu society, the village (*Vel* or *Vi*) is the grassroots administrative unit and has well-defined boundaries. These boundaries are defined by traditional institutions. Co Tu society is based on clan and kinship with social ties between other villages. A typical Co Tu village consists of thirty houses. Each village has a communal longhouse (*Guorll*), which is the social, cultural and religious centre of the village. A traditional Co Tu village consists of different clans and families. They are governed by a village patriarch (*Takeoor Vel/Vi*) who is elected by the village’s elderly. The village patriarch has much experience in cultivation, worshipping and social aspects and is in charge of social and natural resource management and solving its related problems. The village patriarch plays an important role for the village. Without him the traditional village would disappear (Tuan, 2009; Dang and Schuyt, 2005; Tribasia, 2009). Nowadays, many Co Tu villages have, besides a village patriarch, a village headman who is nominated by the Commune People’s Committee (CPC). In addition to that, Co Tu people have lost many traditional activities and customs. This has weakened the role of the village patriarch, since people lost the habit of consulting the village patriarch regarding production experiences, problems or conflicts. Most of the conflicts and problems in the villages are now resolved by the local government, which often makes decisions in a top-down fashion. However, in many Co Tu villages the village patriarch is still being elected (Tuan, 2009; p.179).

Being semi-nomadic, Co Tu people traditionally practice swidden cultivation based on a variety of highland crop cycles which are centered upon hill rice. Besides hill rice, they also plant com, beans, cassava, sweet potatoes, banana and other vegetables and fruits. Hunting and gathering (collecting non-timber forests products) are also important activities. Most Co Tu

people depend on the available natural resources for subsistence purposes (Dang and Schuyt, 2005; Tuan, 2009).

Co Tu people have abundant folktales, folk songs, folk-dances and folk poetry. They are famous for their folk festivals such as the *Đám Trâu* (buffalo-stabbing) festivals. Traditional clothing of Co Tu people reflects rank, status and clan identity, with a wide range of natural motifs, colors and designs. However, nowadays, many Co Tu people choose to wear more ‘modern’ clothes (Dang and Schuyt, 2005; Tuan, 2009).

2.3.2 Customary laws and forest management

Co Tu people have strong ‘animistic’ beliefs in, what Dang and Schuyt (2005, p.4) call, “spiritual essence of all things”. They have a deeply ingrained knowledge and cultural and religious appreciation of the forest and its offerings. Forests have cemented the Co Tu people’s way of life (Tuan 2009, p.180). Therefore, many customary laws of Co Tu people deal with forest management, since not only their livelihoods depend on forests, but forests also play a major role in their spiritual, social and cultural life.

Traditional cultural institutions of Co Tu people govern land use, land ownership, tree tenure, water resource management and forest management (Dang and Schuyt, 2005, p.4). Co Tu people divide forests into four types, which resemble the types of forests mentioned in paragraph 1.3 (Tuan, 2009; p. 180):

- *Ghost forest* - these forests are formed by strange phenomenon related to Co Tu people’s customs and manners, and spirit life.
- *Spirit forest* – in these forests their gods (such as forest or water) and spirits live. Co Tu people believe that if you outrage the spirits your personal and community’s safety will be disturbed. Co Tu’s customary laws strictly prohibit exploiting spirit and ghost forests.
- *Headwater/water protection forest* – these forests are used to protect water sources. Cutting timber in these forests is only allowed for communal interests.
- *Forest for exploitation* – these forests are used for cutting (fire) wood and making coffins.

Traditionally, Co Tu people identify two regimes of land and forest tenure: common property and private property. Common property is understood at three levels: community, clan/family and family branch levels. The ghost, spirit and headwater forests, and grassland are owned by the village. Land for swidden cultivation, gardens and resident land are considered private property. Forests for exploitation are distributed by the village. The village patriarch is responsible for distributing land and forests to clans and the clan-heads on their turn distribute it directly to households. These distributions are based on negotiations among the clans within a village, among clan branches within a clan and among households within a clan branch. The exchange, inheritance and transfer of land and forests usually take place within a clan (Tuan, 2009, p.171).

Households can own as many plots as possible, but these plots should belong to their village and should not be used by other villagers. Non timber forest products (NTFPs) sites can be claimed by the ones who found it. Other people cannot make use of it, once it is marked by the new owner. Conflicts within villages or between villages are resolved by village patriarch(s)

through negotiations and punishments. Besides village patriarchs, village elderly and diplomats are also engaged in resolving conflicts (Tuan, 2009, p.180-181).

According to Tuan (2009, p.181), “definition of ownerships is the foundation through which the community has effectively managed natural resources [and] [t]herefore, land and forest tenure conflict within a village and between villages seldom occurred”. Every villager is expected to abide the rules and obligations of natural resources utilization and management. These rules are effective both within and between villages (Tuan, 2009, p.171).

§2.4 *Forests and forest management in Vietnam*

In terms of biodiversity, Vietnam is one of the richest countries in Southeast Asia and the 16th most biologically diverse country in the world. In 2006, the forest coverage of the country accounted for 38%. This has not always been the case – in 1943 the forest coverage was 43%, 30% in 1985, and in 1990 it was 27.8%. Vietnam has suffered and is still suffering from deforestation and forest deterioration. The Vietnamese government has recognized this problem and focuses on the development of forest resources since the 1990s (Binh, 2009). What are the main characteristics of forest management in Vietnam and how does it affect the livelihoods of forest-dependent ethnic minorities?

2.4.1 *Forests and deforestation in Vietnam*

Nearly three-quarter of Vietnam’s surface consists of hills and mountains. Because of Vietnam’s physical geography, only 15% of its surface is farm land. Vietnam has a tropical monsoon climate with an annual rainfall of 1300-3200 mm and an average temperature of 21 °C in the north and 27 °C in the south. Because of Vietnam’s topography and climate, there is a great diversity of natural forests - such as mangrove forests, Melaleuca forests, muddy forests, monsoon forests, evergreen broad-leaved forests, semi-deciduous forests and mixed evergreen coniferous forests. In 2004, Vietnam had a forest area of 12.3 million hectares (ha) of which 81.3% was classified as natural forests and 28.7% as plantation forests (de Jong et al., 2006, p11).

In Vietnam, forests are classified into three types (de Jong et al., 2006, p12):

- *Special use forests* – these forests are used for nature conservation, protection of historical and cultural relics, tourism and environmental protection. Special use forests are divided into national parks, natural reserves, scientific and experiment forests, and landscape-protected areas. In 2004, 15.4% of total forest coverage in Vietnam belonged to this type of forest.
- *Protection forests* – these forests are used to protect water streams, prevent soil erosion and mitigate natural disasters (48.1%).
- *Production forests* – these forests are used for timber and non-timber exploitation (36.5%).

According to Sunderlin and Ba (2005, p.3), “in the period of 1976-1990, Vietnam’s natural forest cover decreased on average of 185,000 hectares per year”. Deforestation is a serious problem in Vietnam. It causes soil erosion, severe floods, severe droughts, storms, salt water intrusion and biodiversity loss. Therefore, it affects the livelihoods of many forest-dependent communities. What are the main causes of deforestation in Vietnam? Authors point at different causes which are sometimes even contradictory. Main causes of deforestation are (i) the Vietnam

War - the US military deliberately destroyed many forests using herbicides and napalm, (ii) demographic and economic growth, (iii) mismanagement of State Forestry Enterprises and other governments and enterprises, (iii) agricultural expansion, (iv) legal and illegal logging, (v) swidden cultivation, although many authors believe that ethnic minorities have been wrongly accused of having a lead role in deforestation and (vi) government resettlement programmes, internal migration and colonization (various authors in Sunderlin and Ba, 2005, p.3).

2.4.2 Forest management in Vietnam

Until the 1990s, all forest resources in Vietnam were managed by the state. The Ministry of Forestry was in charge of forest management on national level, and departments were established on provincial, district and sometimes even communal levels. Forest exploitation was the State's major focus and natural forests were allocated to State Forest Enterprises (SFEs) for exploitation and plantation. These SFEs were also supposed to nurture and replant forest land. In 1989, 413 SFEs were managing 6.3 million ha of forest land. Local people continued to use the forests as they always did (e.g. traditional forest management) and there was a "free-for-all" attitude on the forests. Because of a lack of State budget, a rising unemployment among SFEs and mismanagement of forests which led to heavy deforestation, the SFE system needed to be restructured (McElwee, 2009; Nguyen, 2009).

The Vietnamese government recognized the problems that came with deforestation and focused on the development of forest resources since the 1990s. In 1991, the Law on Forest Protection and Development stipulated that forest resources could be allocated to organizations and individuals for management, protection and commercial purposes. It also established a legal basis for setting up management boards for forest protection and special uses forests. In 1992, National Programme 327 enabled individual households to be entitled to annual contracts for forest protection, restoration and regeneration. Households could also receive cultivable land for agro-forestry or agricultural purposes. This programme was coupled with the re-greening of bare lands and denuded hills (Nguyen, 2009).

As a consequence of the *Doi Moi* reforms, the Land Law of 1993 gave farmers the right (the so called Red Books) to inherit, mortgage, transfer, exchange and lease land. In 1993, Decree 02/CP enabled the State to allocate forest land to organizations, households and individuals for long-term (50 years) use in accordance with the uses stipulated. In 1998, Forest Land Allocation (FLA), which is a subcomponent of the Land Law of 1993, was used to meet the objectives of the Five Million ha Reforestation programme (661 programme). The main aim of this programme was to restore the forest cover to 43% by 2010 (Hardcastle, 2002; Nguyen, 2009). The main goal of the FLA programme was to encourage the protection and restoration of forest cover and the rationale was that devolution was the most effective way in order to manage this. If villagers had formal rights to forest land, they would be more interested in forest protection and management. Villagers who received forest land were paid for protecting the forests and they were given subsidies for tree planting (Sunderlin & Ba, 2005, p.17). Furthermore, the legislation on benefit sharing related to forests (Decision No. 178, November 12, 2001) allowed individuals and households to get two-thirds or more of the total value of harvested products and one third of the share will go to the commune or other government entities. According to Sunderlin and Ba (2005, p.47), this is a dramatic improvement, because before this law the economic benefits to individuals and households were very low or even non-existent.

According to Dr. Pham Xuan Phuong (2008, p.9), vice director of the Legislation Department of MARD, the legal documents of FLA impacted “positively on forest protection management, income generation, job creation and livelihood improvement for people in the midland and mountainous areas”.

The land law of 2003 stipulates that land belongs to all people, while the state should be the representative to manage it. The state is the most powerful agency which: i) can make land related decisions; ii) performs the mandate to regulate the benefits from land; and iii) gives the land use rights to the people – such as FLA. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD -2004), the State is allowed to

“a) to decide on forest use purposes by approving and deciding on forest protection and development planning and plans; b) to stipulate forest assignment quotas and forest use terms; c) to decide forest assignment, lease and recovery and to permit the change of forest use purposes; d) to value forests.”

Even though, different people can receive forest land, it is still the State and other government entities which decide how forest land is used. Therefore, essentially, forest management in Vietnam is far from being ‘truly’ decentralized (Sikor and Nguyen, 2007, p.2014).

In 2002, 61% of the 10.8 million ha forest land in Vietnam has been allocated. Two third of the total allocated land has been given to SFEs, which are supposed to reallocate this land to households or communities. 10% of the forest land has been allocated to 334,446 households. Therefore, on average, each household received 3.2 ha of land. Furthermore, 500,000 ha have been allocated to 1,677 collectives (such as groups of households - Sunderlin and Ba, 2005).

2.4.3 Community based forest management in Vietnam

The forest protection and development law in 2004 promulgated that natural forests and plantations established by state budget belonged to the state (Pham, 2008, p.11). The state is responsible to allocate forest use rights to different target groups through FLA. Since 2004, one of these target groups is local communities⁸. Local communities are able to receive forestry land for permanent use (protection forests) or 50-years (productions forests) and have the same rights as households, but they are not allowed to share the land among members of the community, and transfer, offer, mortgage, lease or make joint business activities based upon the forest use rights (Pham, 2008, p.12-13). Communities can only receive forest land which is identified by the commune forest allocation scenarios and approved by the District People’s Committee (DPC) and it should be located within the commune’s area. FLA to local communities should be based upon the approved forest protection and management plan and should be in line with the forest availability (Pham, 2008, p.13).

Ethnic minority groups who are managing the forest traditionally and/or have sacred or watershed forests, which can only be collectively managed, are among the priority target groups

⁸Definition: “Residential communities including communities of Vietnamese residing in the same village, hamlet or similar residence with the same tradition, customs or in the same extended family, to which land is allocated or who are using land and have been acknowledged by the State with regard to their land use rights” (SRV, 2007 in Sunderlin and Ba, 2005, p. 47). Communities should not be confused with groups of households, who can also be entitled to FLA.

of FLA. Therefore, the Vietnamese government is gradually acknowledging the importance of indigenous knowledge and forest management systems. However, community forestry involves two types of models: traditional and introduced models. Traditional community forestry (or traditional ethnocologies) has been long practiced by local communities without the encouragement from outside agents (such as NGO's, forestry agencies and so on) and has, therefore, been relatively unaffected by outside forces. Introduced community forestry is promoted and introduced by outside agents as a solution to socio-economic and/or environmental problems (Sunderlin and Ba, 2005). In the case of Vietnam, it is most likely that community forestry is a combination of both types of models (Sunderlin and Ba, 2005). Even though the Vietnamese government is acknowledging the importance of traditional forest management, it still stipulates the way people should manage the forest. Furthermore, it provides training programmes to local communities on how to manage the forest 'properly' and it raises awareness on the FLA programme and forest protection (Nguyen, 2008).

The DPC is in charge of FLA to individuals and communities. If households or communities want forests to be allocated to them, they should prepare and submit the registration form to the Commune People's Committee. The CPC revises, approves and sends the papers to the relevant authorities of DPC. The CPC should also include the ideas of the households or communities in those papers. The relevant authorities of the DPC undertake a field research and make a report. Based on the field findings, the DPC decides whether they allocate the forest land to the households or communities (Nguyen, 2008).

According to the Forest Department, 10,006 local communities (mainly ethnic communities) were managing and using 2,792,946.3 ha of forests (68.6%) and bare land (31.4%) in 2007 (see table 2.1). The forested land accounted for 96% of natural forests and the remaining 4% were plantations. Furthermore, 71% of the forests were classified as protection or special-use forests and 29% were productions forests. Community forestry land accounted for 17.2% of total land area planned for forest development purposes (16.24 million ha in total) and 15% of the total forest area in Vietnam (12.9 million ha). In 2007, forest land was managed in three forms:

- Through FLA (58.8%).
- Local communities were managing the forest and forest land traditionally, but did not have legal recognition yet (8.9%).
- Communities were allocated forest for protection purposes by state agencies or enterprises (contract-based – 32.3%) (Pham, 2008, p.19).

The statistics for Central Vietnam (where the research site of this study is located) on FLA to communities are also included in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Community forest area in Vietnam

Location	Total forestry land area managed by community		Status of forestry land area managed by community					
			Allocated		Not yet allocated		Contract based allocation	
	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%
Vietnam	2,792,946.3	100	1,643,254.1	100	247,029.5	100	902,662.7	100
Central region	1,893,300.9	67.8	1,263,675.6	66.7	45,248.4	2.4	584,376.9	30.9

Source: Forest Department in: Pham, 2008

The forest protection and development law of 2004 provides good opportunities to link traditional forest management to the FLA programme. However, there are some threats to community based forest management. Because of social and cultural changes, many communities are decollectivized and have lost many of their customary laws and practices on forest management. Furthermore, there has been a mass migration of Kinh people to many regions, so various land management traditions should be taken into account in establishing community forestry (Sunderlin and Ba, 2005, p.47).

2.4.4 Strengths and limitations of the FLA programme

Sunderlin and Ba (2005) distinguish five categories which are related to the weaknesses of the FLA programme:

- 1) *Incompatibility with local livelihood practices* – forest allocation has little value for many swidden cultivators, because their traditional farming methods are not suitable for relatively small parcels of land. There has been cultural resistance by ethnic minority groups, who want to stick to their traditional modes of production. Therefore, some ethnic minority groups prefer community based forest management over FLA to individual households.
- 2) *Relationship of the programme to SFEs* – most allocated land went to SFEs even though MARD states that three-quarters of the available forest land has been allocated. SFEs should reallocate forest land to households or communities, but they have often failed to do so because they do not want to give up their management power over forest areas. SFEs continue to have a lead role in forest management.
- 3) *Equity* – allocation of land is often inequitable. Mass organizations, employees of SFEs and well-off households are receiving much more and of better quality forest land than poorer households and ethnic minorities. Kinh migrants and other influential ethnic groups tend to benefit more from FLA than ethnic minorities living in more remote areas, since the Kinh have more political power and better access to social networks. According to Sunderlin and Ba (2005, p.23), “poor farmers often end up being given low quality or distant land”.
- 4) *Geographic and logistical issues* – there are a variety of geographic and logistical related problems, such as unclear boundaries, difficult terrain for FLA, few up-to-date maps, a gap between the law and customary land use practices, allocated land to households is often infertile and, therefore, not suitable for sustainable forestry, and much land, which is available for allocation, is too distant from people’s hamlets and villages.
- 5) *Policy errors* – just 20-30 % of the allocated land areas have been developed in accordance with the government’s land use plan. Sometimes, allocated forest land has been cleared by farmers for short-term profits. Inadequate public education undermines the FLA programme. Sometimes people were given barren land, without instructions on how to plant trees on that site. The land use certificates (Red Books) are also used by better-off people as a mean to get access to bank credit and, therefore, they are taking quick advantage of the FLA programme (Sunderlin and Ba, 2005).

According to Dr. Vuong Xuan Tinh (2008), there has been little research done on the human aspect of FLA. Therefore, he evaluated the socio-economic impact of FLA on the ethnic minorities in Vietnam. Some main conclusions of his paper are:

Positive impact:

- FLA enabled the new small and medium farm owners among ethnic minorities in Vietnam to implement various new agricultural production systems. Not many people are involved in forest establishment, because the economic profits in the forestry sector are not high.
- The FLA programme left no chance for conducting swidden agriculture. Vuong (2008, p.47) considers this to be a positive impact of FLA, which is, according to him, a “revolution in the agricultural field of upland Vietnam”.
- Before FLA, just a few ethnic minority households established plantations. They mainly protected sacred and/or watershed forests and other forests were meant for exploitation. After FLA, ethnic minorities started to plant or rehabilitate the forests. According to Vuong (2008, p. 47), this is ‘another’ revolution for the local people.
- Within the framework of the FLA programme, the integration of ethnic minorities in mainstream Kinh society has been further promoted. Many ethnic minorities are now joining the market oriented economy, which forces people to conduct business with each other. This broadens the social networks of many indigenous communities and people have, therefore, more access to other resources.
- FLA promoted more gender equity among the ethnic minorities, since the Red Books are both assigned to the male and female in a household.

Negative impact:

- The implementation of FLA caused many land conflicts between households and cooperatives, and within households and cooperatives. There are some examples of indigenous communities who were re-claiming their ancestral lands from the former owners, such as State organizations or enterprises. This resulted in many uprisings and even hundreds of killings. Therefore, FLA causes a discrepancy between traditional land ownership and the new ownership arrangements.
- The “practice-based allocation” principle in FLA stipulates that, whoever managed the land area, the land would belong to those people (Vuong, 2008, p.50). Therefore, many households who had a large labor force were able to own more land than poor households with limited labor force. This created more inequality among the people. FLA did also not keep pace with the natural population growth of communities. This resulted in the process where new households were not able to acquire land.
- FLA caused regional inequality, since people living near national highways and valleys mostly benefit from the access to the new market economy. On the contrary, for people living in upland and remote areas nothing has really changed.
- FLA has limited access to natural resources, especially for poor households. For example, since land is now better managed, it is more difficult for people to collect NTFPs.
- FLA was the main reason for the loss of traditional cultural practices of indigenous communities. Vuong (2008, p.51) mentions cultural ceremonies, festivals and burial activities of indigenous communities, and the role of the forest in these practices. Due to FLA, many of these activities are disappearing or are more difficult to conduct.

While Vuong’s (2008) analysis fairly overlaps this research, there are some fundamental questions which are not answered yet. First of all, even though Vuong (2008) sees the changing

livelihoods as a positive aspect of FLA in general, he does not mention the cultural implications of these changes. In what way did FLA affect the indigenous knowledge and forest management systems? In what way did FLA alter the traditional community structures? Why are sedentary forms of agriculture superior to swidden forms of agriculture? In what way did FLA alter the indigenous forest classification systems? While this thesis will not answer every question, it tries to shed more light on the socio-cultural impact of FLA.

2.4.5 Special use forests, national parks and conservation in Vietnam

The first National park in Vietnam, Cuc Phuong National Park, was established in 1962 by President Ho Chi Minh, who was an advocate of natural resources conservation. A famous phrase of Ho Chi Minh is “Forests are gold. If we know how to conserve and use them well, they will be very precious”. Since the establishment of the first National park, an additional of 27 parks, 39 landscape-protected areas and 60 nature reserves (totally accounting for 1.84 million ha) have been created (Nguyen, 2009, p.368). As stated before, these areas are classified as Special-use forests. The ‘Special-use forest’ system and its corresponding biodiversity and environmental plans are, according to McElwee (2001, p.7) greatly biased towards forested, mountainous ecosystems, even though, most of these classified areas are also inhabited by ethnic minority groups. According to McElwee (2001, p.7), policy makers fail to recognize the forest use rights of these minorities who are generally dependent on the forest for subsistence needs. Most management plans for parks advocate “strict protection for core ‘biodiversity’ zones of parks, where human use is not allowed” (McElwee, 2001, p.7). General park guidelines state that it is prohibited to log, exploit, hunt animals, collect specimens under any means and forms, and, therefore, local people are restricted to make use of the forest if it is considered environmentally harmful (McElwee, 2001, p.7).

In 1986, Vietnam developed the National Conservation Strategy which was followed by the National Plan for Sustainable Development in 1991, the Law on Environmental Protection in 1993, the National Environment Action Plan and the Biodiversity Action Plan of 1995. The last programme was developed with support of United Nations Development Programme, World Wide Fund for Nature and World Conservation Union. The programme was implemented by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment in collaboration with Ministry of Planning and Investment and other agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Zingerli, 2005, p.737). Since conservation plans are heavily supported by many Western agencies and NGOs, Vietnam uses a very environmentalist and Western concept of ‘biodiversity’. Management plans for many parks have been created by foreign consultants and international conservation NGOs. There was a very ‘biological’ focus and they often paid scant attention to the socioeconomic conditions of local people living in the area. However, the conservation of Vietnam’s ‘biodiversity’ attracts a lot of international agencies, which pour a lot of money into their preferred conservation initiatives. Therefore, Vietnam has a big incentive to adopt the environmentalist western paradigm on park management (McElwee, 2001). According to Zingerli (2005, p.744):

“In the interest of commercial and non-direct uses of biodiversity resources, international conservationists and national counterparts formed a new status group that shares a specific intrinsic as well as market-driven conservation interest.”

She also states that it is necessary that conservationists start to show more respect for forest-dependent people or that political and institutional structures start to work in the interest of the local people (Zingerli, 2005 p.744). McElwee (2001, p.19) shares the same conclusions and states that local people must be included in conservation plans, because they form an essential part of the landscape. Some local parks have already acknowledged this and changed some of their policies in favor of the local people (McElwee, 2001).

The Forest Protection Department within MARD has the responsibility for the overall management of the Special-use Forests, but only eight national parks are directly managed by MARD. The other Special-use forests, including National Parks, are managed by the provinces. The agencies responsible for the management of these areas are: Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Departments of Science, Technology and Environment, the Forest Protection Departments, the Fisheries Departments and the Departments of Culture and Information (MARD et al, 2003). The major stakeholders who are involved in forest activities are: SFEs, management boards for protection forests (MBPFs), management boards for special-use forest (MBSFs); joint venture enterprises; individual households; collectives, such as groups of households and communities; army units; and people's committees (PCs), mostly at the commune level (CPCs). The MBPFs and MBSFs are responsible for protecting, managing and conserving special-use/protection forests (Nguyen, 2009).

Special-use forest areas are surrounded by a buffer zone. The MBSFs have the authority within the park or reserve, but in the buffer zones, management decision are made by district and commune People's Committees, SFEs, provincial departments of MARD and the Department of Land Administration. According to MARD et al (2003, p. 25):

“[...] the purpose of buffer zones is to support the conservation, management and protection of Special-use Forests. [...] Although buffer zones are not included in protected areas, buffer zone investment projects should be approved along with those of the Special-use Forests; and that investors in buffer zones must co-ordinate activity planning with the management board of the Special-use Forest.”

The forest management system in Vietnam is complicated, and it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to describe it in detail. However, much has been written about it (e.g. Luxbacher, 2009; Zuilhof, 2008 – Master theses of IDS students).

§2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive analysis of the geographical and social setting (in its broadest sense) in which the research takes place. Some important topics have been touched, such as ethnic minorities in Vietnam, the livelihoods of Co Tu people, the Forest Allocation Programme and forest management. A general conclusion is that - judging from the literature review - ethnic minorities, such as the Co Tu people, are being marginalized in the forest management process, because their traditional systems are being perceived as 'backward' or environmentally harmful and they are constrained by socio-economic and structural factors.

Chapter 3: Methodology and operationalization

The main aim of this chapter is to describe how the conceptual model is ‘empirically tested’– the methodology and operationalization of the study. The main strengths and limitations of the methodology and operationalization will be discussed as well.

After the literature review (academic articles, reports of NGO’s, governments, international organizations and so on, juridical reports, news articles and internet sources) and preliminary research, the sub-questions and hypotheses were formulated and the final conceptual model was made. Once the basis of the study was established, the variables of the conceptual model were operationalized. After the operationalization, the proper research methods were selected, and the topic lists and questionnaire were created.

§3.1 Hypotheses

Since this study has a predominantly qualitative nature, it would be impossible to create hypotheses, which could be either accepted or rejected. Therefore, the hypotheses in this thesis should be seen as parts of the sub-questions. They are being used in order to create structure in processing the empirical results, and are based on the theories (chapter 1) and the socio-geographical context (chapter 2). The following hypotheses were formulated:

Sub-question 1): What are the main social and cultural characteristics of village no. 8 (Aprang) and village no.5 (Tawac)?

- a) Most Co Tu people use the forests for subsistence purposes and are generally poor.
- b) Alcohol abuse is, like for many other indigenous communities, a major problem for Co Tu people.

The main assumptions of these hypotheses are based on the fact that many Co Tu people in Vietnam are poor and engaged in agriculture for subsistence purposes. While alcohol problems are not directly relevant for the research, it is included as well, since it can form a basis for further research on this subject.

Sub-question 2): What is the socio-cultural impact of the forest land allocation (FLA) on the communities living in Aprang and Tawac?

- a) The ongoing sedentarization programmes of the Vietnamese government have already significantly changed the cultural and social lives of Co Tu people.
- b) FLA did not affect the usage of Co Tu language and the celebration of Co Tu festivals in both villages, because the villages remained purely Co Tu.
- c) The forests still play an important role in the spiritual lives of both communities, although it has been changed since FLA.
- d) FLA altered Co Tu people’s traditional forest classifications.
- e) The village headman has taken over many responsibilities of the village patriarch.
- f) The village patriarch and elderly merely have a traditional role in the villages, since they have no saying in FLA and forest usage anymore.
- g) In general, Co Tu people have a low esteem about their own customs and culture.
- h) Co Tu people and their slash-and-burn practices are being seen as backward by the local authorities.

This sub-question and hypotheses deal with three issues – sedentarization and socio-cultural changes, cultural and spiritual meanings of forests for Co Tu people and the changes since FLA, and the clashes between traditional and formal institutions in the village (e.g. the role of the village patriarch and elderly, decision making power, and so on). Hypothesis 2g and 2h should be seen as mutually re-enforcing. These hypotheses were formulated after the preliminary research in which local government officials talked about the “laziness” of poor people and backwardness of slash-and-burn farming.

Sub-question 3): How did FLA affect the environmental interactions and indigenous knowledge and forest management systems of the Co Tu people?

- a) Both communities are not nomadic anymore nor do they practice slash-and-burn cultivation, because of the ongoing sedentarization programmes of the Vietnamese government and FLA.
- b) Because of FLA and corresponding programmes, many indigenous knowledge and forest management systems are disappearing in both villages.
- c) Since FLA happens in a top-down way, there are less communal meetings in both villages.
- d) The re-bordering of Bach Ma national park in 2008, will significantly affect the ecological relations of the Co Tu people in the future.

Sub-question 3 focuses on the utilitarian dimension of Co Tu forest management and knowledge systems, and the outside agents and forces trying to change it. Hypothesis 3d is important, because it was the initial central question of this study. However, since the rebordering of the park happened in 2008 (see chapter 4), no significant changes are expected yet. Therefore, the central question now deals with the impact of FLA on the socio-cultural lives of the Co Tu people.

Sub-question 4): How does community based forest management mitigate the socio-cultural impact of FLA?

- a) The village patriarch and elderly play a more important role in Tawac than in Aprang, because they are able to make more decisions in the forest management.
- b) There are more communal meetings in Tawac than in Aprang, since villagers in Tawac have more responsibilities in forest management.
- c) There is more social cohesion in Tawac than in Aprang, because the people of Tawac manage the forest as a community.
- d) The people in Tawac are more likely to identify ghosts and spirit forests than the people in Aprang, because they are able to manage the forest as a community.
- e) People in Tawac consider forest protection to be more important than the people in Aprang.
- f) Villagers in Tawac are less likely to engage in illegal timber cutting than villages in Aprang.

This sub-question and corresponding hypotheses deal with all the previous sub-questions and hypotheses and the differences and similarities between both villages in terms of forest use, perceptions of the forest, forest classifications, communal structures and traditional institutions. How can these differences be explained?

§3.2 Methodology

Since this thesis is trying to cooperate different disciplines (anthropology, geography, sociology, forestry, and so on), studies on this subject, which are included in this thesis, use

different methodologies. The (ecological) anthropologists (Kottak, 1999; Aisher, 2007; Dwyer 1996; Salemink; 2003 and so on) mainly use qualitative research methods such as ethnography and unstructured interviews. Some reports of NGO's, international organizations and governments base their findings on quantitative data and policy papers (MARD, 2003; Sunderlin and Ba, 2005; WCED, 1987). Scholars on natural management, sustainable development and forestry base their findings both on qualitative and quantitative results (Dang and Schuyt, 2005; McElwee, 2001 & 2009; Tuan, 2006; and so on). It was, therefore, a challenging task to establish the proper methodology, since each methodology has its strengths and weaknesses (see Hulme, 2007).

In order to give this thesis a multi-disciplinary character, Hulme's (2007) Q-Squared methods were used. The best way to describe this methodology is: "integrating qualitative, participatory and quantitative research methods". The qualitative, participatory and observational methods were not only used to collect data, but it also formed the basis for the questionnaire, which was conducted among 60 households in both villages. The following methods have been applied in order to collect the data:

- Preliminary research in Thuong Lo commune (interview with the CPC and two interviews in Doi Village with the village headman and a poor household).
- Qualitative (semi-structured) interviews with households (poor, non-poor, men, and women), village headmen, village patriarchs, forest protection unit, experts and government officials – see Appendix A for the topic lists.
- Ethnography – observing the way in which Co Tu people use the communal longhouse and organize their village.
- Focus group interviews with groups of villagers and officials (Venn-diagram, participatory mapping, and so on).
- Questionnaires among 60 households in two villages, which were conducted by local students of Hue university of Foreign Languages and Agriculture (a-select chosen and approximately 50% of each village) – see Appendix B.



Figure 3.1: Participatory methods in the communal longhouse of village no.8

A more detailed time schedule of this study is presented in Appendix C. Many interviews, questionnaires and focus group interviews have been carried out together with Tom Bakker - another student who is analyzing the impact of FLA on institutions. Therefore, some questions asked in the questionnaire, are not directly relevant for this study.

The following sub-paragraphs deal with the main limitations and strengths of the research and thesis.

3.2.1 The main limitations of the research

- 1) All the interviews were conducted with an interpreter. Therefore, much information has been lost. The information given in this report is not only my personal interpretation, but my interpretation of my interpreter's interpretation of the respondent's answer.
- 2) The same goes for the focus group interviews, which were even more difficult to direct and understand.
- 3) Some Co Tu people were not able to speak Vietnamese (especially the older generation) and could not participate in the research. Therefore, the information given in this thesis is biased.
- 4) We were only able to interview the people during the day. People who were working during the day did not have an equal chance of being selected for an interview.
- 5) The villages have been visited by several NGO's, government agencies and universities. It remains a question whether the people gave us socially acceptable answers or not.
- 6) It is impossible to truly understand Co Tu society in three months time.

3.2.2 The main strengths of the research

- 1) Both men and women, old and young, and the poor and non-poor were interviewed.
- 2) The results of the quantitative research can be regarded as representative, because 50% of the people in the villages have been randomly selected and interviewed.
- 3) Many people were already experienced in participatory appraisal techniques (probably because they have been interviewed by many other agencies and organizations).
- 4) We had access to every household in the village, and government officials cooperated with the research. Therefore, many stakeholders have been interviewed.
- 5) We were able to apply many different approaches (qualitative, quantitative and participatory) for the research; therefore we have been able to limit the weaknesses of all the individual approaches.

§3.3 Operationalization

How are the variables of the conceptual model operationalized? Based on the theory and context, several indicators were used to answers the central and sub-questions:

Social impact		Cultural impact	
<u>Variable</u>	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
<u>Changing community structure.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing livelihoods. • Role of the village patriarch, elderly and headman. • Attendance and importance of village meetings (in communal longhouse?) 	<u>Cultural and religious "degradation".</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do people still have a strong Co Tu identity and did/will it change since FLA? • Usage Co Tu language. • Celebration of Co Tu festivals. • Forest classifications and changes.

<u>Less social cohesion</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General problems in the village. • Do villagers generally support each other, e.g. harvesting the rice together, and did it change since FLA? • Conflicts. 	<u>Loss of indigenous knowledge.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge from the parents? • Knowledge to the children? • Knowledge from the headman? • Knowledge from the village patriarch? • Attendance of trainings and workshops by authorities and NGO's.
<u>Alcohol abuse</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do people consider alcohol abuse in the villages to be a problem? • Changes in the last 10-20 years? 	<u>Loss of indigenous forest management and customary laws.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing livelihoods. • Changes in forest usage and visits. • Opinion about 'slash-and-burn' farming.
<u>"Criminalization"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do government officials perceive Co Tu people and the way they use the forest? 	<u>Changing world views and perception of "nature".</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest classifications and changes. • Importance of forest preservation in daily life, culture and beliefs.

§3.4 Conclusion

A multi-disciplinary thesis needs an integrated methodology and, therefore, the Q-squared methods were used. The hypotheses, which are based on the thematic outline and social-geographical context, were used to process the research results in a structured way. The operationalization of the variables in the conceptual model is also based on the theories and context and the indicators were used to create the topic lists and questionnaire (see Appendix A, B and C).

Chapter 4: Research context

Two villages in Central Vietnam have been chosen for the research. The chosen villages have fulfilled the following requirements for the research:

- The ethnic composition in the villages had to be at least 95% Co Tu – otherwise different socio-cultural “impacts” needed to be analyzed within a village.
- Both villages needed to be located within the same commune and district – therefore, both villages have been affected by the same government policies.
- One village needs to have CFM, and one village needs to have households owning forest land separately.

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the research context. The main dynamics of the research site are discussed, including the stake holders in the FLA process, Bach Ma National Park, which expanded its borders in 2008 and the Green Corridor Project.

§4.1 Research sites at a glance

Nam Dong district (see appendix D) is situated 65 km from Hue City and consists of ten communes and one town (Khe Tre) – including the mountainous commune Thuong Long. Nam Dong district consists of 21,438 people of which 40% are Co Tu people. Compared to other mountainous districts, Nam Dong has a good infrastructure and transport system. Most people in Nam Dong live on agriculture, with rice and cassava as the main products. The average GDP per capita is 2,389,000 VND a year (Van et al, 2008).

Thuong Long commune (see appendix D) is located in a mountain range on a height of 500 meter and covers an area of 5,155 km². It is inhabited by 2,142 people in 384 households of which more than 90% are Co Tu people (2,058 people in 366 households). The Co Tu people in Thuong Long originate from A Vuong Commune (Tay Giang District, Quang Nam province), but were resettled in the 1970s to the present area (Tran, 2004).

Two Co Tu villages have been selected for the study. General characteristics of these villages are presented in table 4.1 (see also paragraph 5.1).

Table 4.1: General characteristics of the research villages

<u>Village no. 8, Aprang, Thuong Long Commune, Nam Dong district, Thua Thien-Hue Province</u>	<u>Village no. 5, Tawac, Thuong Long Commune, Nam Dong district, Thua Thien-Hue Province</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 75 households, 362 people, of which 22 households were poor (below 200.000 dong a month) in 2010. ▶ Purely Co Tu. ▶ Village is located in the buffer zone of Bach Ma national park. ▶ No community based forest management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 43 households, 201 people, 8 poor households in 2010. ▶ Purely Co Tu. ▶ Village is located outside the buffer zone of Bach Ma National Park ▶ Community based forest management.

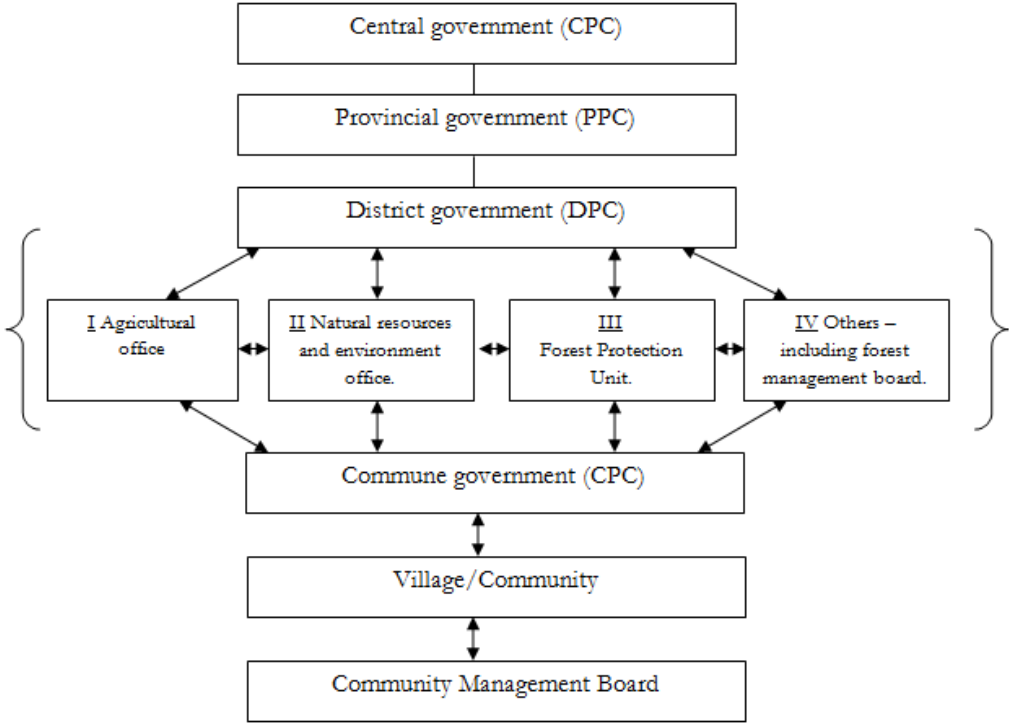
Own Source, 2010

In 2008, Bach Ma National Park expanded its borders and, therefore, village no.8 is currently residing in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National Park. However, the park did not have a long term strategy for its buffer zone yet. Therefore, nothing has really changed for the villagers in the new buffer zone. Even though village no.5 is not located within the borders of the park, the villagers have attended a training course of Bach Ma National Park, while the villagers of no.8 did not attend this training. In 2007, the community of village no.5 (“village” and “community” are usually the same, but there is no clear distinction between the two terms) received a Red Book for its forest. They are actively engaged in protecting their forest, even though they do not get a fee for protecting it.

§4.2 Stakeholders in FLA and forest management

It is important to see who the main stakeholders and decision makers are in the FLA process to households and communities. Figure 4.1 displays the process of Forest Land Allocation to households and local communities. At the top of the figure is the State, which makes the guidelines and policies. The DPC is responsible for allocating forest land to households and communities, of which the agricultural and natural resources and environment office are the most important agencies in the process (I till IV represent the level of importance). The role of the local authorities in forestry and livelihoods is trying to explain at commune level what the benefits are of FLA to local people. The CPC forms the bridge between the local communities and the higher authorities in implementing the FLA programme.

Figure 4.1: Decision makers in FLA



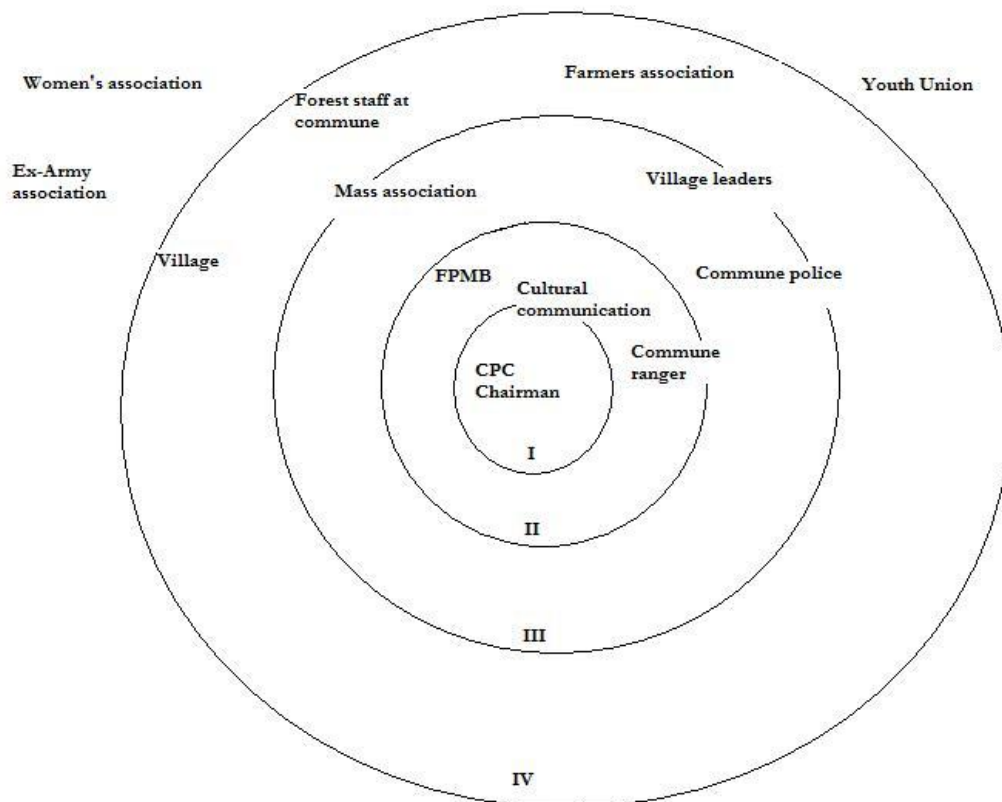
Source: Participatory methods with Vice Director Bach Ma; Staff agricultural office; Forest protection Unit, 2010

The DPC has three main responsibilities: i) implementation of FLA policies through the relevant agencies; ii) guiding its offices and the CPC; and iii) evaluation of FLA. The

responsibilities of the CPC are: i) raising awareness on FLA and motivate local people to organize and take part in the programme; ii) management of the local people; and iii) answering the needs of the local people. At village level, the community is responsible to organize the necessary activities for implementation and to build up the policies and principles for benefit sharing. The double arrows in the model represent the two-way processes in which the higher and lower agencies interact with each other. Local people are, therefore, able to express their needs to the higher authorities. In doing so, it helps them to influence the process.

Figure 4.2 represents the main stakeholders of the FLA process and forest management at commune level. Again, number “I” stands for most important in the process and “IV” stands for least important.

Figure 4.2: Venn diagram: stakeholders at commune level of the management and protection of the forest



Source: *Participatory methods with all the mentioned stakeholders in the diagram, 2010*

This Venn diagram is made by a staff member of the Agriculture and Forestry office of the CPC. The leader of the farming association changed the roles of the youth association (further away from its original place at III) and moved ‘village leaders’ closer to the centre of the diagram (from IV to III). The village headmen were complaining about their marginal role in the diagram, but in the end they have to implement the policies of the CPC.

The commune rangers are working for the Forest Protection Unit (FPU - see figure 4.1). When they receive information about illegal forest exploitation, they send commune rangers to the place where it happened and they work together with the Agriculture and Forestry staff (in figure 4.2 mentioned as ‘Forest staff at commune’) in order to identify the type and severity of the violation. They report this to the FPU and the FPU decides what kind of legal actions should be undertaken. The commune rangers only report and deal with the procedure. They do not have

any influence on policies on forest protection and management. Another task of the commune rangers is to mobilize local people towards preserving and protecting the forests. They organize monthly meetings for local people in which they identify the current status of illegal forest exploitation in the commune and to change local people's perception of the forests and its management (source: interview with the commune ranger, 2010). The commune rangers work together with the Forest Protection Management Board (FPMB) and they share the same functions and tasks, however they operate in different areas (see paragraph 4.3)

The women's association does not have much to do with the forests, except that mainly women collect head leaves. The cultural-communication office is important, because they have to transmit the policy guidelines to the other stakeholders. Furthermore, they have to promote the policies to the stakeholders and media.

The FLA process in Vietnam is still top-down in essence. In the ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1971), the FLA process in Vietnam can be classified as type three (informing) or type four (consultation). Even though local people are able to somewhat influence the process, it is the DPC which decides whether people are entitled to receive forest land and how that land is going to be managed (in the Venn Diagram, the 'village' is considered to be level IV – not important). The CPC is responsible for forest management on commune level, but they are not able to allocate forest land to households or communities. Neither the village patriarchs nor elderly are mentioned as stakeholders in the forest management process.

§4.3 Bach Ma National Park

Bach Ma National Park is located in Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam province and covers an area of 37,487 ha in the districts of Phu Loc, Nam Dong and Dong Giang (see appendix D). It was set up in 1991 and it was extended in 2008 - according to the Bach Ma National Park (BMNP) Office (2009), "to protect the centre of the last corridor of forest stretching from the South China Sea to the Annamite mountain range at the border with the Lao PDR".

The core area of the park is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the buffer zone area is managed by Thua Thien-Hue province. BMNP is divided into four zones:

- A zone of full protection of ecosystems, habitats, fauna and flora, which is managed by MARD through park's administration – the Forest Protection Management Board.
- A zone for reforestation and protection of ecosystems, habitats, fauna and flora with a view to its natural generation, which is also managed by MARD.
- Administration zone managed jointly by MARD and People's committee of Thua Thien Hue province.
- A buffer zone which can be further divided into land managed by timber companies (in the periphery of the park), land managed by the Forest Protection Department (which is called the Forest Protection Unit at district level), farming land, special use land and the lagoon (BMNP, 2001).

The BMNP Office has three departments – ecotourism, science and forest protection. The park’s forest guards regularly patrol the forest and are based in ten stations around the park (BMNP, 2009).

In the park there are tropical lowland forests (below 900 meters) and subtropical submontane forests (between 900 and 1450 meters). There are 2,147 different flora species in Bach Ma, which represent one-fifth of the entire flora in Vietnam. The fauna in Bach Ma constitutes of 1,493 species, including 132 species of mammals (representing half of all known mammals in Vietnam), 358 bird species, 31 reptile species, 57 fish species and 894 insect species (BMNP, 2009).

Approximately, 70.000 people (12.000 households) live in the park and 40% of the local households are classified as poor. The ethnic composition of the people is Kinh, Co Tu and Van Kieu. Local communities largely cultivate wet rice and people are highly dependent upon agriculture. Because of natural disasters, it is difficult to achieve high agricultural output in the area. The establishment of the National Park has undermined the legal exploitation of natural resources of the local people. However, because of the lack of alternative livelihood strategies, many people continue to exploit the natural resources for timber and NTPFs (Le et al, 2002). However, those who invade and clear forest or collect NTPFs, risk punishments such as confiscation of tools and the collected material. People who exploit timber of high-value plants or poach endangered animals, face heavy fines or imprisonment (Nguyen, 2009, p.377). According to a study of Le et al (2002), local people in BMNP appear to be positive towards conservation. This is because of natural disasters in the area, which could be mitigated by protection forests, and the fact that most people are mainly engaged in subsistence farming in which water and soil are “both crucial and precious resources whose abundance and quality determine the survival of the farming economy”(Le et al, 2002, p. 8).

According to BMNP (2009), “one of the park’s tasks is to find a balance between conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources”. To achieve this goal, BMNP has launched several projects in cooperation with NGOs, aiming to provide alternative sources of income for the local people “without damaging the environment” (BMNP, 2009).

§4.4 *The Green Corridor Project*

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Vietnam and the Forest Protection Department of Thua Thien province, which were supported and co-funded by the World Bank – Global Environmental Facility, Dutch Development Organization SNV, the People’s Committee of Thua Hien Hue Province and the WWF, have established the four-year Green Corridor Project in 2004. The aim of this project was to “strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders and to conserve the landscape of the Green Corridor area” (huegreencorridor.org, 2010). In order to protect and maintain the Green Corridor, the project focused on strengthening management and capacity building, and applied a landscape-level approach, which means that areas where it is important to conserve the biodiversity and forests were identified. The Green Corridor project worked in partnership with the 661 programme or the Five Million ha Reforestation programme.

The project had four main areas:

- *Strengthening conservation and illegal activity prevention* – this included the identification of biodiversity hotspots and wildlife corridors, strengthening of regulations on logging,

hunting and wild life trade, and support for long-term sustainable development practices and land-use planning.

- *Forest landscape restoration and supporting local communities* – this included offering incentive schemes to improve livelihood and sustainability and the support for local communities to obtain land certificates.
- *Capacity building and awareness raising* – this included training courses on forest management and conservation, achieving behavior change by raising awareness⁹ and educating local, national regional and international interest groups and policy-makers about the project.

The project saw local communities as “key to responsible and long-term forest management” (huegreencorridor.org, 2010) and many activities were undertaken to ensure that livelihoods, forests and biodiversity were managed sustainably - such as creating “environmentally-oriented income generation opportunities”, environmental awareness raising, the establishment of community agreements and regulations to improve forest governance, the empowerment of communities to “protect their forests” and local community training.

- *Forest landscape monitoring and evaluation* – this included research, the establishment of an adaptive landscape management system and a system to monitor the impact of the Ho Chi Minh highway.

§4.5 Conclusion

The provincial and local authorities, the international agencies and (Western) NGO’s as well as the Bach Ma National Park, acknowledge the importance of offering alternative livelihoods to forest-dependent communities (such as the Co Tu people) in Thua Thien-Hue province, but they continue to uphold a very ‘biological’ focus and operate in a top-down way. Much attention has been paid to educating the local communities as well as trying to change their ‘environmentally harmful’ behavior and, therefore, the outside agents placed themselves within the paternalistic paradigm.

⁹ It is interesting to note that a photo of village no.5 of Thuong Long, one of the target communities, is displayed on their website: www.huegreencorridor.org.

Chapter 5: The socio-cultural impact of FLA on Co Tu people

What is the general attitude of the selected Co Tu communities on Forest Land Allocation? How do people perceive FLA and what are the perceived benefits of FLA? 40.7% of the 59 respondents who have participated in the questionnaires think very positive about FLA, 45.8% think positive about FLA, 10.2% think neutral and 3.4% of the people did not answer this question. Table 5.0 displays the benefits which people attach to FLA. The majority of the people mention more security in making a living (72.4%). This can be best explained by the fact that before FLA, forest land in Nam Dong District was owned by Khe Tre State Forest Enterprise. This caused a lot of conflicts on forest use and ownership between the local people and the enterprise. However, only 34.5% of the people claim that there are fewer conflicts because of FLA.

What is the socio-cultural impact of FLA on the selected Co Tu communities in Nam Dong district? Did it benefit their culture and social life, and are people, therefore, positive about FLA? Or are people happy about the fact that their culture and social lives have changed because of FLA? Are people unaware of FLA's impact or did they just give socially acceptable answers?

Table 5.0: Benefits of Forest Land Allocation

	Yes		No	
	%	abs	%	abs
Secure land ownership	72.4	42	27.6	16
Receiving financial benefits	27.6	16	71.4	42
Increased knowledge	34.5	20	65.5	38
Less conflict	34.5	20	65.5	38
Equality	17.2	10	82.8	48
Other	19.0	11	81.0	47

Source: Bayrak, 2010

In total, 16 qualitative interviews, 4 focus group discussions and 59 questionnaires have been carried out in March and April, 2010. The interviewed people are households in the villages, the commune ranger, the CPC and various other stakeholders and experts of forest management (see also Appendix C). This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the results in order to answer the central- and sub-questions of this thesis. Each paragraph will answer one of the four sub-questions, while the final chapter of this thesis will answer the central question.

§5.1 Main social and cultural characteristics of the research villages

This paragraph describes the main social and cultural characteristics of village no. 8 (Aprang) and village no.5 (Tawac). The main problems will also be discussed and explained from the local people's perspectives. The main hypothesis of this paragraph assumes that the local Co Tu people use the forests for subsistence purposes and that they are generally poor.

5.1.1 Village no. 8, Aprang, Thuong Long Commune, Nam Dong district

Village no.8 or Aprang consists of 362 people in 75 households. In 2009, 28 of these households were classified as poor (official classification is: earning below 200.000 VND - 8 euro

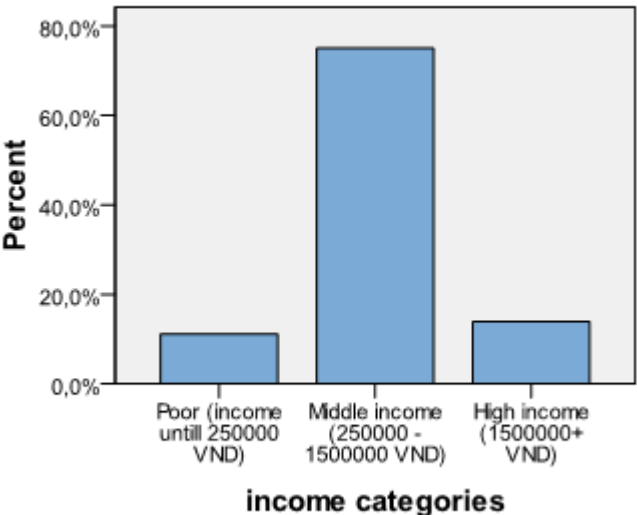
- a month) and in 2010 this amount dropped to 22 poor households. The village stayed upland in 1973, but it was, within the framework of the resettlement programme, moved to the present (lower) area. The size of the rubber area which belongs to the village is 65.4 ha, the acacia area is 41.3 ha (since 2002 and decided by the government), and the natural forests occupy 64 ha (see Appendix F for a map of the village).

Village no.8 is located in the buffer zone of Bach Ma national park, but the villagers do not exactly know where the boundaries are. They received no information from Bach Ma national park, but they did not attend its training on forest use for local communities as well. The villagers do not have a community Red Book for the natural forest yet, but they were paid to protect the forest in the period of 2002-2006. Within the framework of the 661 programme and the Green Corridor project, they received 100.000 VND (4 euro) a year per hectare of the natural forests they protected. The money was used for social-cultural activities in the village. Forests are now being managed by individual households, after it has been transferred from the former State Forest Enterprise in 2003, but there are no benefits for forest protection anymore. Within the village, the village headman is responsible for controlling the forests.

The ethnic composition of village no.8 is 100% Co Tu. The communal longhouse is centered in the village and people use a bell to call the villagers. The village has both a village patriarch and village headman. The Co Tu language is most commonly used in the village, since it is the native language of the villagers. Some of these villagers are not even able to speak Vietnamese. In general, the people also identify themselves as Co Tu. Furthermore, the people in the village still celebrate special Co Tu festivals such as the buffalo stabbing festival and some women in the village choose to dress the traditional Co Tu clothes (see paragraph 5.2).

The results of the quantitative research are as follows: 48% of the households in the village have been interviewed (36 households) - 69.4% of the interviewed people are male and 30.6% are female. The average age of the respondents is 38.3 years – with 38.9% of the respondents being younger than 30, 41.7% being between 30 and 50 years, and 19.4% of the people being older than 50. The average household size is five. 66.7% of the interviewed people classify themselves as head of the household. All the interviewed people have the Co Tu ethnicity. Furthermore, 69.4% of the respondents have been born in the village. The people who are not born in the village lived on average for 24.6 years in the village. Besides the ‘normal’ villagers (86.1%), the village headmen, a village elderly, the secretary of the farmer’s association, the communal leader of the Vietnamese Fatherland Front, and a commune policeman have participated in the quantitative research.

Figure 5.1: Financial wealth in village no. 8



Source: Bayrak, 2010

The average income of the people in the village is 780.555 VND (31 euro) a month – with 100.000 VND (4 euro) being the lowest and 3 million VND (120 euro) being the highest

amount (see figure 5.1). In total, four poor households have participated in the quantitative research. Everyone in the village, but one person, base their livelihoods or parts of their livelihoods on farming (see table 5.1). Even though 35 respondents (see table 5.2) claim that they make use of the natural forests, only 50% of the respondents state that they base their livelihoods on the natural forest. People who own plantation forests generally plant rubber trees and/or acacia on their land.

Table 5.1: Livelihoods of Co Tu people in village no.8

	Yes		No	
	%	abs	%	abs
Farming	97.2	35	2.8	1
Natural forest	50.0	18	50.0	18
Plantation forest	63.9	23	36.1	13
Animal husbandry	72.2	26	27.8	10
Other	11.1	4	88.9	32

Source: Bayrak, 2010

Table 5.2: Natural forest use in village no.8

	Yes		No	
	%	abs	%	abs
Do you collect non-timber forest products?	94.4	34	5.6	2
Do you use trees from the natural forest?	97.2	35	2.8	1
If yes, how?				
For building	97.1	34	2.9	1
For selling	54.3	19	45.7	16
Firewood	68.6	24	31.4	11
Other	5.7	2	94.3	33

Source: Bayrak, 2010

When people are making use of trees from the natural forest, it does not necessarily mean that they are involved in (illegal) logging. They can also collect dead wood for cooking. People are also allowed to use wood for housing or coffins. However, when they want to do that, they need to apply for a permit. Usually the people who are involved in illegal logging are being used as middle men by outside Kinh traders. Those Kinh traders are actually making the ‘real’ money, while the illegal loggers only get a small share of the money. Paragraph 5.3 will further deal with this topic.

Nowadays, farming and plantation forests seem to be more important for the people’s livelihoods than natural forest use.

5.1.2 Village no. 5, Tawac, Thuong Long Commune, Nam Dong district

Village no.5 or Tawac consists of 201 people living in 43 households of which 8 are classified as poor in 2010. The people of Tawac were first re-settled from the uplands in the 1970s, but in 1985 they were moved again to the present area. The village has 63 ha of rubber

trees, 18 ha acacia forests, 3.8 ha rice paddy fields, 6.3 ha crops, corn, cassava and some vegetables, and 62 ha of natural forest.

The village borders Quang Nam province and is located outside the buffer zone of Bach Ma national park. However, the villagers did attend the park’s training on forest management and preservation. The former State Forest Enterprise (now Forest Protection Management Board) handed over the natural forests to the villagers to protect in 2005. In 2006, the village received the natural forests through FLA. In 2007, they received the community Red Book. The village forest protection team was established in 2006 and together with the district staff, commune ranger, members of the Green Corridor project and staff of the agriculture and forestry office, the borders of the natural forests were identified. The people of village no.5 do not get a financial compensation for forest protection.

Figure 5.2: Communal Longhouse in village no.5



Source: Bayrak, 2010

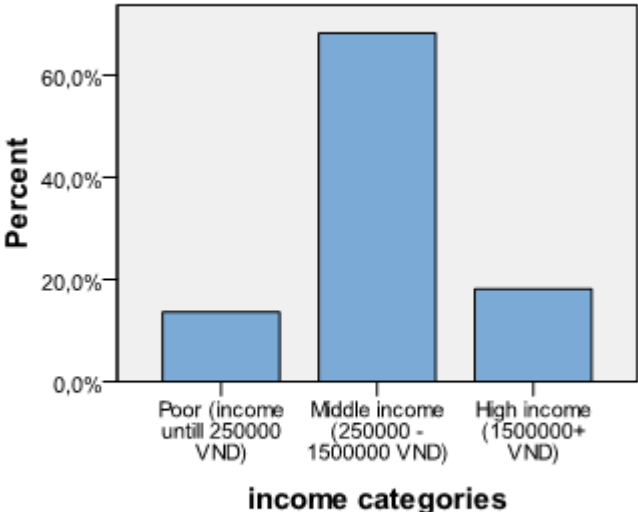
The ethnic composition of village no.5 is also purely Co Tu. The village has a communal longhouse as well (see figure 5.2) and both the village patriarch and village headman are present in the village. The main language in the village is also Katuic and people generally identify themselves as Co Tu. The buffalo stabbing festivals and other Co Tu festivals are still celebrated in the village. Therefore, on ethnic and cultural level, village no.8 and village no.5 have a lot in common, which should not come as a surprise.

Twenty-three households participated in the quantitative research – 53.5% of all the households in the village. 15 males participated in the research (65.2%) and 8 females (34.8%). The average age of the respondents is 40.6 years – with 30.4% of the respondents being younger than 30, 47.8% being between 30 and 50 years, and 21.7% of the people being older than 50. The average household size of the people of village no.5 is 5.7 and 65.2% identify themselves as head of household. 60.9% of the interviewed people are born in the village, and the people who are

not born in the village live, on average, for 30 years in the village. Two village elders, the village headman, the village secretary, the chief of the women’s association, a member of the farmer’s association, and the commune leader of the Vietnamese Fatherland Front have been interviewed as well.

The people of village no.5 are doing better financially than the people of village no.8 – the average monthly income in the village is 1.172.727 VND (47 euro) - in the range of 200.000 VND (4 euro) to 5 million VND (200 euro – see figure 5.3). Three

Figure 5.3: Financial wealth of village no.5



Source: Bayrak, 2010

poor households have been interviewed. Farming and plantation forests are major sources of living for the people (see table 5.3). However, not many people base their livelihoods or parts of their livelihoods on the natural forest (21.7%). However, respectively 87% and 82.6% of the people claim that they collect NTFPs and trees from the natural forest (see table 5.4). Everyone who uses trees from the natural forests uses the wood to build, which they are entitled to. The majority of those people also sell the wood (52.6%) to others.

Table 5.3: Livelihoods of Co Tu people in village no.5

	Yes		No	
	%	abs	%	abs
Farming	95.7	22	4.3	1
Natural forest	21.7	5	78.3	18
Plantation forest	91.3	21	8.7	2
Animal husbandry	60.9	14	39.1	9
Other	21.7	5	78.3	18

Source: Bayrak, 2010

Table 5.4: Natural forest use in village no.8

	Yes		No	
	%	abs	%	abs
Do you collect non-timber forest products?	87.0	20	13.0	3
Do you use trees from the natural forest?	82.6	19	17.4	4
If yes, how?				
For building	100.0	19	0.0	0
For selling	52.6	10	47.4	9
Firewood	47.4	9	52.6	10
Other	0.0	0	100.0	19

Source: Bayrak, 2010

5.1.3 General problems in the villages:

What do the local people consider problematic in their villages? They were asked to mention some problems in the village, and the following problems are generally identified and explained by the local people.

Poverty

Many people in both villages mention poverty as a major problem of the village. Some general characteristics of the poor people are: i) people with too many children; ii) new households, since it is difficult to acquire a Red Book; iii) people who have a lack of knowledge and/or capital on animal husbandry, manufacturing and production; iv) people who have a lack of cultivation or farm land; and v) the ill, widows and elderly. Furthermore, some state that their village suffers from a high unemployment rate and a lack of proper education among the people.

Four out of the seven poor households who have participated in the questionnaire belong to the young age class (until the age of 30). The poor households have 5 Red Books for rice fields (average size: 0.16 ha), one Red Book for the natural forest, five Red Books for the gardens

(average size: 0.56 ha), one Red Book for barren/degraded land and 5 Red Books for plantation forests (average size: 1.14 ha). However, all of them claim that their land is of bad quality. Two poor households claim that they base their livelihoods on the natural forest.

Climate related problems

Many people in both villages also mention climate related problems. A big storm in 2009 destroyed large parts of forest land and houses in both villages. Floods and draughts in the summer are also perceived as problems. Therefore, many villagers acknowledge the importance of forest preservation in tackling climate related problems (see paragraph 5.3).

Land related conflicts

Very often the boundaries of allocated lands and protected areas are not clear. Therefore, land related conflicts can arise between villages, within villages, and between villagers and government offices or enterprises. Furthermore, if there is a lack of control in the natural forests of a village, neighboring villagers enter those forests for (illegal) logging or collecting NTFPs, which can cause conflicts over the resources.

Alcohol

Many people indicate that alcohol abuse is a big problem of the village (78.9%). The patriarch of village no.5 states that, primarily, people in the age group of 30 till 40 drink too much alcohol. This results in conflicts between villagers, conflicts between villagers and higher authorities (such as the patriarch or elderly), and domestic violence. Some villagers claim that people drink alcohol like water; others state that even children drink alcohol. The younger generation drink as well, but they do not drink in front of the elderly. They usually go to the local market to drink with friends. Villagers say that they drank less alcohol in the 'old days' than they do now. They also drank alcohol in a different way (see figure 5.4 for an example), which made drinking a more social activity.

Figure 5.4: Traditional rice



Source: caudulich.com, 2010

It was sometimes difficult to interview people, as they were already drunk during the day. Many people in the qualitative interviews were concerned about the alcohol abuse in the village. One man states that he was worried about the possible impact on the children if they would see their father beating up their mother after he drank too much alcohol.

Many indigenous communities in the world face alcohol problems. It remains a question why many of them resort to the liquor bottle. Is it because their traditional livelihoods have disappeared and people, therefore, feel alienated in society? Or does alcohol abuse have more to do with a socio-economic lower position in society? These issues need further research.

5.1.4 Conclusion

The people in both villages are generally poor, and base their livelihoods primarily on farming, plantation forests and animal husbandry. Even though the majority of the people use trees from the natural forests and collect NTFPs, not many people claim that they base their livelihoods on the natural forests. Those who are involved in using trees from the natural forests use the wood to build their houses and some of them choose to sell it. Generally, the Co Tu people have preserved many aspects of their culture and social life - such as celebrating Co Tu festivals, using Co Tu language, having a village patriarch, and using the communal longhouse.

Alcohol abuse is seen as one of the main problems of the village, besides poverty, climate related problems, and land related conflicts.

§5.2 The socio-cultural impact of FLA on the communities in the research villages

Culture, social structures, indigenous forest and knowledge systems and indigenous forest classifications are intertwined in many different ways and influence and change each other continuously. Therefore, it would not make sense to make a strict distinction between the cultural or spiritual dimension of forest management and knowledge systems, and the utilitarian dimension. Even though this paragraph will primarily deal with the former dimension and paragraph 5.3 will deal with the latter, both dimensions should not be seen separately but as mutually reinforcing.

What is the socio-cultural impact of the forest land allocation (FLA) on the communities living in Aprang and Tawac? How did it affect their traditional forest classifications, world views, community structures, religious beliefs and identity? How did it affect their lifestyle in general? Even though this thesis does not use the livelihood approach in order to assess the impact of FLA, changing livelihoods have definitely changed some aspects of their culture and social life.

Appendix E displays some general information about the land ownership of the people in both villages. All households own land, and most of them have a Red Book for it. Rice fields are owned by most households (96.6%, an average size of 0.1 ha and 76.3% of the people own the Red Book), second comes gardens (94.9%, 0.3 ha and 83.1% respectively), and third comes plantation forests (84.7%, 2.3 ha and 96.1% respectively). As has been mentioned before, village no.5 owns its Red Book for the natural forest communally. In village no.8, one household owns natural forest land. The other parts of the natural forest have yet to be allocated to the households. According to the villagers of village no.8, these parts are now owned by the district and province.

5.2.1 Sedentary lifestyle

The people from both villages state that their community has changed its lifestyle in the last decades - from being semi-nomadic and practicing swidden cultivation to living settled in a village and practicing sedentary forms of agriculture such as planting rice. As mentioned before, both villages were resettled in the 1970s and people were not allowed to practice swidden cultivation anymore. Before FLA, it was easier for people to continue their 'slash-and-burn' practices, but nowadays it is disappearing. The patriarch of village no.5 states that due to government policies, people have changed their attitude towards swidden cultivation. Generally people consider this changed lifestyle as a positive development – people are now more 'developed' or modern. One woman stated during an in-depth interview: "Settle down is better, because when we moved around people could not eat and did not know where to sell our wild animals. There were no roads, no water, no well and we were poor". However, people were complaining that they did not have free access to the forests anymore.

Many people pretend that they did not care much about the forest before FLA. The people of village no.8 explain that they had protection rules in the past, but that some people continued to clear the forests for farming. Many people claim that 'thanks' to government policies, people start to acknowledge the importance of forest preservation and protection. Why

do people state this? It is most likely that they are giving a socially acceptable answer. Another explanation is the low self-esteem people have because they consider their previous life-style as 'backward' or less 'modern'. However, in terms of infrastructure, poverty, means of transport, technology, and so on, the communities have experienced a lot of improvement in the last decades. Therefore, people make a legitimate point if they state that some aspects of their lives have been improved since FLA.

93.2% of the people state that their ways of life are the same as 10-20 years ago – 83.3% of the older generation (50+) claim the same. This finding contradicts with the findings of the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. However, the term 'way of life' is rather vague. There is a good chance that people interpreted this term in a different way as the author of this thesis did. The open answers in the questionnaire to the question how their ways of life have been changed since FLA support this assumption – see table 5.5. Many people state that they are living settled now. Some people state that they are 'less superstitious' now. Other people state that the people are not wearing traditional clothes anymore or that people are now listening to Kinh music (summarized as changed popular culture). Paragraph 5.2.2 will deal with Co Tu festivals and its changes.

Table 5.5: Changed lives of Co Tu people in Aprang and Tawac compared to 10-20 years ago

	%	abs
Sedentary lifestyle	15.5	9
More development	27.6	16
Changed traditions/customs and beliefs	20.7	12
Changed festivals	13.6	8
Changed popular culture – such as fashion and music	15.5	9
Other *	20.7	12

*This include answers like: more contact with Kinh people, I buy my food in the market, improved knowledge, training by outsiders, many of these topics will be dealt with in the next paragraphs.
 **N=58, only one person did not answer this question, all the other people thought one or several aspects in their lives have changed since FLA

Source: Bayrak, 2010

The ongoing sedentarization programmes of the State have already significantly changed the socio-cultural lives of Co Tu people. FLA made it much more difficult for people to continue swidden cultivation, but people have already been living 'settled' since the 1970s.

5.2.2 Co Tu language and festivals

The first reason why it is important to study the usage of Co Tu language and the celebration of Co Tu festivals is because both are two tangible aspects of Co Tu culture. Furthermore, by asking in-depth questions about their festivals, the role of forests in their culture, beliefs or world views can be better understood.

Katuic is used as the first language in both villages and some people (especially the elderly) are unable to speak Vietnamese. During focus group discussions or household interviews,

people would consult each other in Katuic first before they would reply in Vietnamese. 91.5% of the people claim that they have better knowledge of Katuic than of Vietnamese, as opposed to 8.5% who claim that they have equal knowledge of both languages. The people also consider it to be important that their children know how to speak Katuic – 63.2% consider it to be very important and 35.1% of the people consider it to be important.

One woman from village no.5 and one woman from village no.8 explain that Co Tu people have three big festivals, which are the following:

- *Buffalo stabbing festival/ Đâm Trâu* – happens on the 2nd of September. The village patriarch is the first one to kill the buffalo. People worship the God of the Forest and their ancestors. They pray for good crops, health and so on.
- *Crop festival* – once the crops can be harvested, people in the village organize a big meal for everyone to join. In the ‘old days’ people would share the food with all villagers and they would give food to the patriarch and elderly, but nowadays, many families just cook a meal for themselves. In this festival people pray to the God of the rice fields (did this God exist before the re-settlement or FLA?) and they pray for better crops in the coming years.
- *Ghost festival* – happens one time in the 2-3 years and people worship the ghosts of the forest and ghosts under their beds, which are their ancestors and Ho Chi Minh. It is interesting to note that the respondent, who was talking about this festival, denied the existence of ghosts’ forests in the same interview.

Besides the festivals, weddings are also important events for the people in the villages, which should not come as a surprise. A Co Tu wedding consists of three processes:

- 1) Meeting between the two families before the wedding. The boy’s family will have to kill a pig and offer food to the girl’s family.
- 2) The actual wedding, where people kill a buffalo. The girl will go to the boy’s house to stay there.
- 3) Another meeting again, but this time the girl has to bring an animal to her husband’s family.

All the villagers celebrate Co Tu festivals (100%), but 35.6% of the respondents claim that the way they celebrate their festivals has changed in the last decades – 50% of the elderly claim the same. When people were asked how their lives have been changed since FLA – 13.6% of the people state that their festivals have changed (see table 5.5).As has been mentioned before, in the ‘old days’ people were more eager to share their first crops with others. Other people state that in the past people would kill a buffalo for every festival. Furthermore, many people in both villages state that some traditional Co Tu festivals are not even being celebrated anymore.

The village patriarch is responsible for telling people how they should celebrate the festivals. He holds information on traditional customs concerning weddings, funerals and festivals.

5.2.3 Role of the forests in Co Tu culture and beliefs

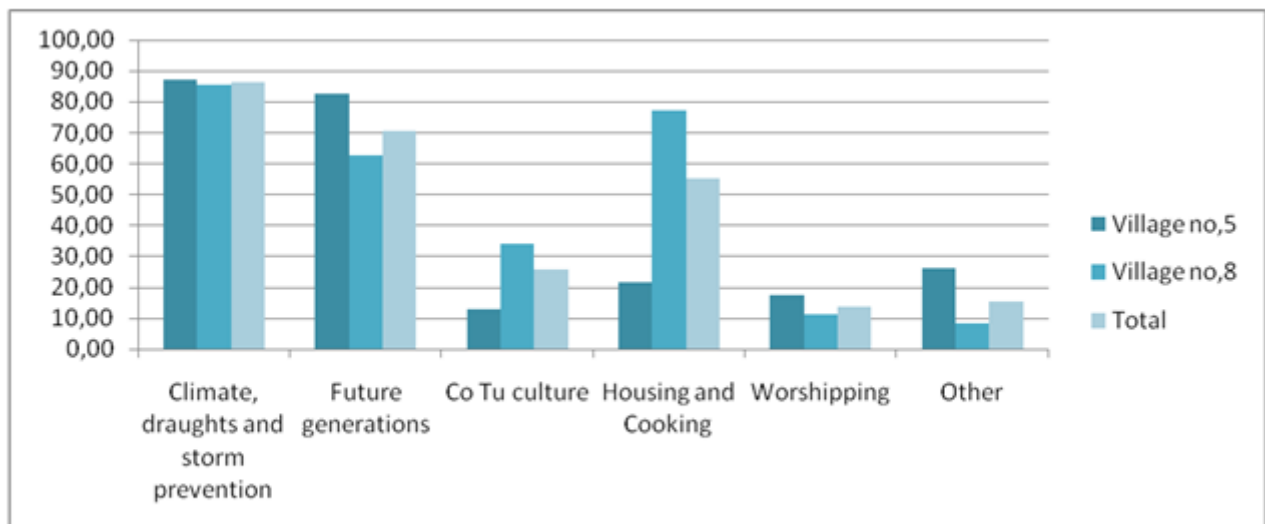
Every time when people were asked to tell something about their religion during the in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, they would state that neither they nor their parents followed a religion. It is either a sensitive subject or the people had different perceptions on what

religion constitutes. Therefore, this subject remains something to be studied, which is very important since the spiritual dimension of indigenous forest management and knowledge systems has often been ignored in many studies.

However, the following observations about the role of the forests in Co Tu culture and beliefs can be made:

- Co Tu people still believe in Gods and ghosts of the forest, but they also believe in the ghost of Ho Chi Minh and the God of the rice fields. However, only 25.9% and 13.8% of the people in both villages respectively state that forest conservation is important for Co Tu culture and beliefs (see figure 5.5).
- Gods and ghosts of the forest are being worshipped during Co Tu festivals.
- Many Co Tu people still classify some forests as ghost/spirit forests (see paragraph 5.2.4).
- “The forest is important for our culture”, one woman states, “because we need the wood to build our communal longhouse, which represents our culture to the outside world”.

Figure 5.5: Reasons why the forest should be preserved



Source: Bayrak, 2010

5.2.4 Co Tu forest classifications

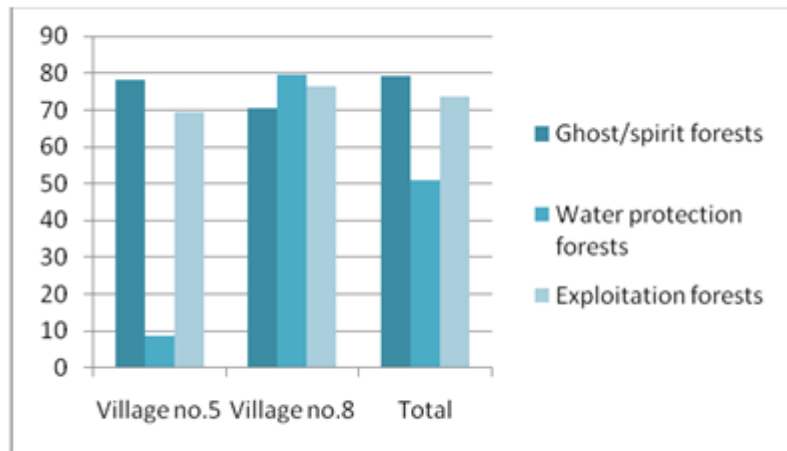
The Co Tu forest classifications, which were mentioned in chapter 2, represent Co Tu people’s world views and perceptions of nature. Therefore, people in both villages were asked whether they still had those classifications and, if yes, to describe their different types of forests and its meanings. The findings of the qualitative research and quantitative research contradict each other on this subject. In the quantitative research, 79.3% of the people identify a ghost/spirit forest¹⁰, 50.9% identify a water protection forest, and 73.7% of the people recognize an exploitation forest (see figure 5.6). 78.0% of the people claim that they also had those forest classifications before FLA and 76.3% of the people know the location of the ghost/spirit forest.

¹⁰ There is no clear distinction between ghost and spirit forests. At least, during the in-depth interviews, people did not make this distinction. However, this subject needs further research, preferably by someone who is a native Vietnamese speaker.

However, during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, people claimed other things about these classifications. Even though they state that their customary laws prohibit them to cut valuable wood,

many people state that ghost/spirit forests do not exist anymore (source: focus group discussion with village no.8) or have never existed (source: focus group discussion with village no.5). In the five in-depth interviews, which have been conducted in village no.5, only one man states that he believes in ghost forests. During the focus group discussion with village no.5, one woman stated: “We

Figure 5.6: Co Tu forest classifications



Source: Bayrak, 2010

do not believe in ghosts, and we have never believed in ghosts, that is something for the villagers of Aprang”. Most likely the people were less eager to talk about their traditional forest classifications with foreign researchers, or the people, who do not recognize ghost/spirit forests, were overrepresented in the qualitative research.

What are ghost/spirit forests? First of all, it is prohibited to cut valuable wood or kill animals in ghost/spirit forests, since this will bring bad-luck to you and the people of your village. Furthermore, if people enter a ghost/spirit forest, they are not able to find their way back home and ghosts can enter their body. One villager explains that when four people enter a ghost/spirit forest, two people can change into tigers in the eyes of the other two people. Out of fear, those people will then try to kill the ‘tigers’. One villager states that it is also prohibited to take forest products from ghost/spirit forests. What other remarks concerning ghost/spirit forests did the villagers make?

- They are old natural forests.
- Some villagers state that the ghost/spirit forest is located in Quang Nam province. Another villager gave a name of the place: “Khe pho rao “– which is west of village no.8. 73.4% of the people in village no.5, who believe in ghost/spirit forests, claim that the ghost/spirit forest is located within 1-5 km from their village. The people of village no.8 drew the location of the ghost forest on a map. This map is presented in Appendix F.
- One villager (a poacher who stayed most of his time in the forest) states that the ghost forest is marked by a big stone. He chooses not to visit this forest, since he is afraid of getting lost or being possessed by a ghost/spirit.
- The people of village no.8 state that the ghost forest has disappeared, due to ‘development’- there are now people living on the location of the ghost forest. Therefore, the FLA programme might have affected the existence of ghost forests.
- The nephew of the sub-headman of village no.8 claims that the younger generation does not believe in ghost/spirit forests anymore – 38.5% of the young people in village no.8

do not believe in ghost/spirit forests, as opposed to 0% in village no.5. The village secretary of village no.8 states that the existence of ghost forests depends on people's own perception.

- Judging from the results of the quantitative research, there seems to be no relationship between natural forest visits and believing in ghost/spirit forests.

5.2.5 Co Tu social life

This paragraph deals with two issues concerning the community structures of both villages: the role of the village patriarch and traditional institutions and social cohesion in the villages.

Traditional institutions and the role of the village patriarch

There are many different institutions within a village – such as different associations (a farming association, women association, and so on), formal and traditional leaders, and outside agents, which make decisions for the village. However, in general, three important leaders within a Co Tu village can be recognized – the village headman, the village patriarch and the village sub-headman. Table 5.6 displays their functions in the village. Besides those leaders, the village secretary plays an important role for the villagers. However, it will be beyond the scope of this thesis to describe the local institutions in detail and Bakker (2010) will deal further with this topic.

Table 5.6: Functions of the patriarch, headman and sub-headman

Village patriarch	Village headman	Village sub-headman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chosen by the villagers, but usually the oldest person in the village. • Traditional leader. • Gives people information about cultural customs, traditions, religion, forest use and management, farming, funerals, weddings, and festivals. • Recovering people or animals from diseases. • Resolving conflicts among villagers. • Resolving conflicts between villages. • Organizes village meetings together with the village headman. • Generally more respected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chosen by the villagers, Commune People's Committee (CPC) and other organizations (military, youth-union, and so on). • Village headman is responsible for implementing state policies. • Bridge between CPC and the local people. • Responsible for practical issues in the village such as the local economy. • Village headmen are brought to Hue to learn the Vietnamese language, policies, state ideology and so on. • Neither he nor the village patriarch can punish illegal loggers or poachers. They can only report him/her to the local authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected by the CPC. • Arranges meetings in the village. • Representative of the party - he helps the headman, to widen the knowledge of the local people on state policies and party ideology.

Source: Bayrak, 2010, from the qualitative research

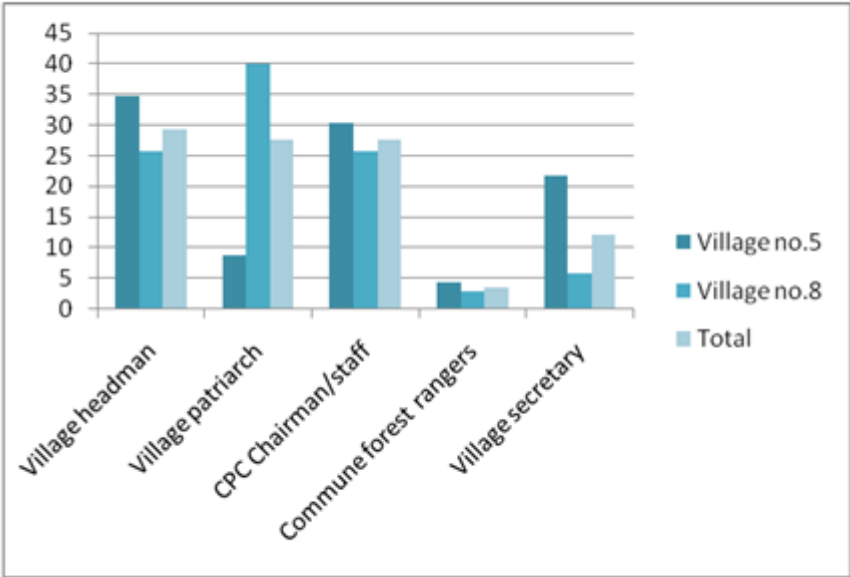
To what extent did FLA change the role of the patriarch? According to Dr. Nguyen Xuan Hung, lecturer at the Hue University of Science and specialized in ethnic minorities studies in Vietnam, 1975 was the turning point in which the patriarch had to share his power with a local representative from the government. Two systems co-existed next to each other – the traditional system and ‘formal’ or ‘legal’ system which functioned under state law. Due to FLA, people changed their thinking and lifestyle. It was also not the village patriarch who shared land among clans anymore, but the local government became responsible for it. Therefore, FLA reduced the role of the village patriarch considerably. The village patriarch has an advisory role now¹¹. He can only give people advice on forest use or farming. However, his role for the village should not be underestimated as box 5.1 will point out.

Box 5.1: Role of the Village patriarch in resolving conflicts: a case study

The patriarch of village no.5, Mr. Pham Van Teu, states that if the people of village no.7 do not control their forests, people from village no.5 will come and cut their trees and vice versa. Mr. Pham punished village no.7 with a fine of 1 million VND, because people of village no.7 stole wood from their forest. However, the patriarch of village no.7 was only willing to pay 200.000 VND and he bought beer for the villagers and the patriarch to drink together. However, Mr. Pham refused because he was not satisfied with the fine.

The commune rangers secretly selected some villagers who are helping the forest protection unit to identify illegal loggers and other violators. The commune rangers are therefore undermining the traditional structures of fining and punishment in the villages. The CPC of Thuong Lo states that the village patriarch does not have any power anymore and also in the Venn diagram of paragraph 4.2 the village patriarch is not mentioned as one of the main stakeholders in the FLA process. Therefore, the formal agencies do not really cooperate with the village patriarchs. Nevertheless, the patriarch of village no.5 states that he has more responsibilities now due to FLA to the community (see paragraph 5.4).

Figure 5.7: Most important person in the village (%)

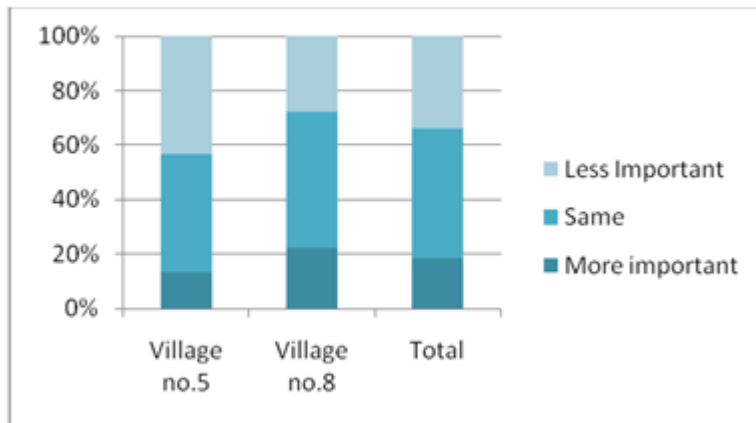


Source: Bayrak, 2010

Figure 5.7 displays the most important people for the village according to the villagers. Figure 5.8 displays the importance of the village patriarch compared to 10-20 years ago (before FLA).

¹¹ It is remarkable to note that both village patriarchs denied the existence of ghost/spirit forests. Probably they denied it, because they did not want to sound ‘backward’ or ‘superstitious’.

Figure 5.8: Importance village patriarch compared to 10 years ago



Source: Bayrak, 2010

third most important person in their village¹². In both villages the village sub-headman is often being mentioned as third or fourth most important person in the village (13.8% and 32.8% respectively). The elderly have not been mentioned as being important at all. 33.9% of all the people think that the village patriarch is less important than he was 10-20 years ago, 47.5% think it remained the same and 18.6% think that he is more important now.

Social cohesion

The patriarch of village no.5 states that social cohesion is important in order to reach sustainable forest management. Some villagers state that in the ‘old days’ people would collect NTFPs together or they would go to the river to fish together. This does not happen often anymore. According to Dr. Nguyen, Co Tu people have the typical characteristics of a community and there is a lot of social cohesion among the members. However, there are no clear indications that FLA caused less social cohesion in the villages. Also the results of the quantitative research do not show any clear indications – 91.5% of the people claim that villagers generally support each other. 56.9% of the people state that people are more supporting than 10-20 years ago and 27.6% state that it remained the same.

5.2.6 External views

Since some Co Tu people might still practice swidden agriculture or make use of the forest ‘illegally’, an assumption of this thesis is that it will lead to “criminalization” of those people. This is not the case. However, other external views on Co Tu people are maybe even more striking. According to the commune ranger, the Co Tu people have a wrong perception of the forests, because they used the forests freely in the past. They also have low knowledge on how to make use of the forests. However, because of government policies and regulations, and trainings and workshops offered by outside agents such as international conservation organizations and government offices, they are starting to realize the importance of forest protection and preservation. The commune ranger stressed many times that one of his tasks was to change the perception of Co Tu people on the forests. Therefore, he implicitly states that he

¹² People were asked to mention the most important, second, third and fourth most important person for the village. Only the results for ‘most important person’ are displayed in figure 5.7.

wants to change the world views of Co Tu people. However, he also states that Co Tu people are very cooperative, and that the real drivers behind deforestation are outside Kinh traders who use Co Tu people as middle men.

5.2.7 Conclusion

The ongoing sedentarization programmes of the Vietnamese government have already significantly changed the cultural and social lives of Co Tu people, since they have been living settled since the 1970s. However, FLA made it even more difficult for people to practice swidden cultivation and forced the Co Tu people to practice sedentary forms of agriculture. The usage of Co Tu language has not been affected by FLA in both villages, but many people state that the way they celebrate their traditional festivals have been changed in the last decade. However, it is unlikely that this is caused by FLA. Most likely, other forces (such as globalization, the migration of Kinh people, and so on) have changed the way the people celebrate their festivals. Forests still play an important role in the spiritual and cultural lives of the people, since the people in the village still have their traditional beliefs and forest classifications. However, FLA did affect the existence of these forest classifications – e.g. the ghost/spirit forests of village no.8 are being occupied by resettled villagers and during the qualitative research many people from village no.5 denied the existence of ghost/spirit forests. However, Co Tu ethnoecologies continue to offer resistance to outside forces. FLA has also affected the role of the village patriarch. He had to transfer many responsibilities to the formal institutions (the village headman, CPC, commune rangers, secretary, and village sub-headman), and he has merely a traditional role for the village now. However, he continues to play an active role for the village, since he is generally more respected. Both local authorities and people in the village state that before FLA people had a wrong perception and low knowledge of the forest. This is caused by the low self-esteem of the Co Tu people and the outside agents continue to perceive traditional forest management practices of Co Tu people as backward.

§5.3 Impact of FLA on environmental interactions and indigenous knowledge and forest management systems

It has already been argued in paragraph 5.2 that FLA forced the Co Tu people in Central Vietnam to abandon swidden agriculture. The main argument of this thesis is that indigenous knowledge and forest management systems play an integral part in indigenous people's culture and social life. In order to assess the impact of FLA on the socio-cultural lives of Co Tu people, the impact of FLA on their knowledge and forest management systems should, therefore, be analyzed as well.

64.2% of the people in the village state that their lands are of bad quality – the soil is infertile, their farm-land is situated on a steep slope, too many rocks on the land, low-productive land, and so on. Paragraph 5.2 already showed that most people base their livelihoods on farming and animal husbandry. Most of them plant rice, cassava, fruits and vegetables and keep cows, ducks and chickens. The people, who have plantation forests, usually plant rubber, acacia or areca trees. This paragraph will move a step further and takes a closer look at knowledge dissemination among the Co Tu people and their traditional forest management.

5.3.1 Swidden agriculture, forest exploitation, and forest management

According to Dr. Nguyen Xuan Hung, Co Tu people have a forest culture since they depended on the forest in the past. They have a lot of experience in forest management. They will not exploit forests on the summit of a mountain in order to protect the water sources. When they are practicing swidden agriculture, they use different pieces of forest land. They will exploit one piece, and when that piece is exhausted, they will choose another piece of land. When that piece of land is exhausted they will choose another piece of land, and so on. Once the first piece of land is naturally regenerated, they start the same process again. The village patriarch divided the forest land to other clans, and the clan leaders divided it among their households. How did they divide the land? They looked at the characteristics of the main trees and they looked at the shape of the trees and on basis of these characteristics they could decide what type of forest land it was - such as: old forest land, recycle forest, and so on. Besides forest exploitation, they also had a lot of experience and knowledge in hunting and fishing. However, nowadays, primarily the village elderly and patriarchs hold and maintain this knowledge and experience.

A majority of the people (72.9%) state that they used the forests differently before FLA. 19% of the people in the villages visit the natural forest several days a week, 37.9% visit it for a few times a month, 29.3% a few times a year and 10.3% state that he or she never visits the natural forests. As mentioned before, people generally claim that they are not practicing swidden agriculture anymore - 75.4% of the interviewed people think that swidden agriculture is worse than sedentary agriculture. However, there are cases where it still happens, but generally the people have changed to other livelihood strategies (see table 5.1 to 5.4). How do the research communities exploit the forests differently? Table 5.7 shows these changes.

Table 5.7: Changes in forest exploitation and farming.

Before FLA	After FLA
Swidden agriculture	Planting rice, cassava and other crops.
Cutting wood (100.000 VND/m ³)	Planting rubber and acacia.
Collecting firewood	Collecting wood (70.000 VND/person).
Bamboo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For housing, cooking, etc.
Honey	Rattan (25.000 VND/day)
Head leaves	Honey
Rattan	Head leaves (500 liter -> 40.000 VND/person)
Trapped animals	‘Illegal’ activities: cutting (valuable) wood (selling to Kinh traders), hunting/poaching and swidden agriculture.
Collecting medicine	Collecting medicine
Fishing	Fishing
Animal husbandry	Animal husbandry
	63.8% of the people state that they cannot use some parts of the forest anymore due to FLA.

Source: village meetings, individual interviews, 2010

11.9% of the respondents state that they log for timber in protected forest areas. Because of ‘illegal’ forest exploitation, there are less valuable wood nowadays. Many people said during both the in-depth and quantitative interviews that people, both within and outside the village, continue to log timber illegally even though it is not allowed. Why do people still cut wood illegally? The patriarch of village no.5 gives the following reasons:

- Unemployment.
- The strong and young people are able to cut a lot of trees and they are using a saw.
- Rich families get income from acacia and rubber, but poor families have to cut trees.
- An improved infrastructure makes it easier for people to cut and transport trees.
- Higher demands on valuable wood.

91.5% of the people state that they collect NTFPs. Most of them collect firewood (71.4%), rattan (58.9%), leaves (31.7%), animals (32.1%) and medicine (28.6%). 94.8% of the people state that collecting NTFPs was different in the past – 60% of the people state that they used to hunt for animals. Also rattan (78.2%) and bamboo (43.6%, as opposed to 32.1%) were more often collected. The main reasons why this has changed are: a lack of availability of these products (33.3%) and a change in needs (39.2%). Only 3.9% of the people state that it is because of government regulations. Respectively 22% and 13.6% of the people collect NTFPs and hunt for animals in protected areas.

5.3.2 Indigenous knowledge and communal meetings

It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze the knowledge systems of Co Tu people, because that could be a thesis on its own. The main focus of this paragraph is how knowledge is being disseminated within the village and what kind of knowledge is being disseminated.

Village meetings

96.6% of all the villagers attend the village meetings, which are held approximately four times a month in the communal longhouse (*Gourll*). The village headman is in charge of the village meetings (96.6% of the villagers appoint him to be in charge of the village meetings). He is supported by the village secretary and sub-headman (20.7%). Even though the village patriarchs themselves say that they are in charge of the village meetings, only two respondents mention the village patriarch or elderly as being in charge of these meetings. Table 5.8 displays the topics of the village meetings. The topics which are categorized under the label “Other” include security, population issues, health and disease prevention and information about legislations.

Table 5.8: Topics during village meetings %

	%	abs
Development issues	50.9	28
Forest use issues	69.1	38
Farming issues	89.1	49
Problems and difficulties	38.2	21
Other	38.2	21

Source: Bayrak, 2010

Did the village meetings change since FLA? 75.9% of the people say yes. How did those meetings change?

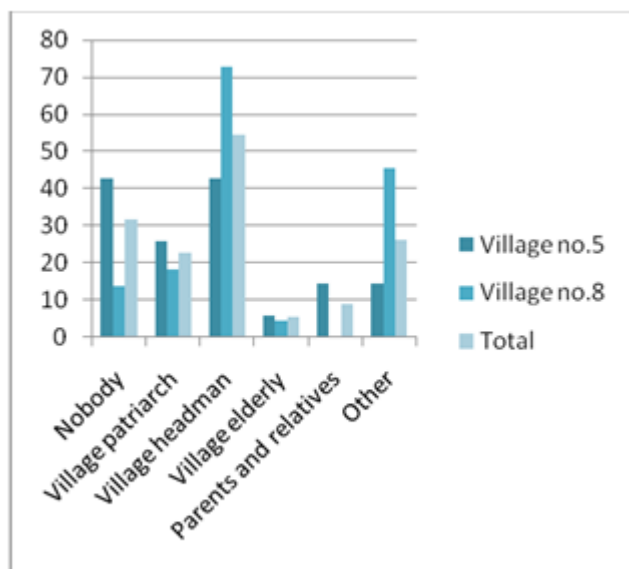
- Change in organization – various other organizations, such as international conservation organizations and district offices, are occasionally involved in those village meetings as well
- The village patriarch has become less important in the village meetings.
- There are more village meetings now.
- The villagers became more involved in the village meetings. Especially the people of village no.5 mentioned this change.
- In village no.5 there is more diffusion of knowledge and information than 10-20 years ago.

Knowledge dissemination

Who taught the people how to make use of the forests? Those people are their parents and/or relatives (51.7%), the village headman (60.3%), the CPC (48.3%), the forest management board (46.6%), the village patriarch (34.5%) and other people (41.4%), which include the forest rangers, members of the Green Corridor Project, the Agricultural office of the district, and so on (see paragraph 5.3.3). 77.2% of the respondents state that it is important to teach the children how to make use of the forests, since forests still play an important in their lives. The people who did not want to teach their children about forest use explain that their children will learn about it at school or that livelihoods based on forests are not important anymore. Since 28.6% of all the

villagers collect medicines in the natural forests, indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants still exists, and has apparently not been affected by FLA.

Figure 5.9: Who do you ask for advice about forest use? %



Source: Bayrak, 2010

forest use and only 22.8% of the people state that they consult the village patriarch. The reason why 31.6% of the people state that they do not seek advice with anyone has more to do with the fact that many people do not base their livelihoods on the natural forests anymore. Therefore, they do not need any advice on forest use.

The village patriarchs state that they often consult people on social and cultural practices and how to make use of the forests or farm land (based both on their customary laws and present legislations). Everyone who participated in the in-depth interviews state that they seek advice on farming and forest use with the village patriarch (he is most often mentioned), village elderly, and village headman. However, figure 5.9 contradicts this finding. In both villages, 54.4% of the people consult the village headman for advice on

Most people in the villages share the opinion that the people had more knowledge about forest management and forests (89.7%) 10-20 years ago. Many respondents (both the local people and officials) state that young people have limited knowledge about the forest. This is worrying many villagers, since the illegal loggers are usually young men. However, when people were asked to mention the changes in the forest management system of the village compared to 10-20 years ago, 43.1% of the people state that they have an 'improved or better' perception of the forest, 20.7% state that they have improved knowledge and 29.3% claim that they participate more in the forest management process. Those answers have much to do with social preferability because outside agents are claiming exactly the same, but also with the people's low self-esteem.

5.3.3 Outside agents

We were not the first foreign visitors in both villages. The people have been visited by many (international) NGO's, members of the Green Corridor project, universities and government agencies before. Under the label of 'awareness raising on FLA/forest management', local people have been trained and 're-educated'. The commune rangers, forest management board, local governments, members of the Green Corridor project (see: www.huegreencorridor.org), and so on, all place re-education of local people high on their agendas. This happens indirectly through the village headman and patriarch, but also directly by providing local people training and workshops. Many answers of local people on why forest protection and preservation is important (future generations, weather and so on – see figure 5.5), seem to be directly taken from the given trainings and workshops. Many people also talk about their lack of knowledge or having the wrong perception on forest preservation before they were visited by these outside agents. One man in village no.5 states: "Before FLA, we used the forests freely and did not care much about preservation. Now we have Red Books and we have been taught that we need to preserve the forests for our children".

The Green Corridor Project ended in 2008. Within the framework of the project, the villagers received economic benefits for the natural forests they protected (see paragraph 5.1) in 2002 until 2008. The villagers established forest protection teams, and they were actively engaged in protecting their natural forests. However, after the termination of the project, there were no economic benefits for forest protection anymore, and many forest protection teams in the villages dissolved. However, some villages, including village no.5, continue to protect their natural forests, without getting economic benefits for it.

86.2% of the people attended training on forest management. They have been trained by members of the Green Corridor Project (26.5%), the village headman (28.6%), the district Agricultural office (18.4%), the commune rangers (26.5%), the forest protection management board (FPMB) (6.1%) and universities and other (6.1%). Only the village headman is no outside agent. Some people state that the impact of the Green Corridor project has been positive on the village, since people have changed their perception now.

Bach Ma National Park expanded its borders in 2008 and currently village no.8 is residing within its borders. However, the vice-director of Bach Ma National Park states that the park does not have a long-term strategy for its buffer zone yet and the area is currently being managed by the district. However, rules have become stricter for the villagers, since they are residing within the buffer zone of the park. The reason why Bach Ma National Park has expanded its border probably explains why they do not have a long-term strategy for their buffer-zone yet. In

2007, the Vietnamese government placed national parks under the jurisdiction of the People's Province Committee if the park was only located in the respective province. Before 2008, Bach Ma National Park was only located in Thua Thien-Hue province. By expanding its borders, Bach Ma National Park is now also located in Quang Nam province and, therefore, the park is still being governed by the central government. Being governed by the central government allows the park to have better access to financial resources. Therefore, expanding its borders had more to do with financial resources than preservation issues. However, it yet has to be seen how the rebordering of the national park will change the lives of the included communities.

5.3.4 Conclusion

Since FLA, swidden agriculture is hardly being practiced in both villages. Furthermore, many people perceive swidden agriculture as something harmful for their environment. The ongoing sedentarization programmes of the Vietnamese government, which also includes FLA, have changed the semi-nomadic lifestyle and slash-and-burn practices of the Co Tu people. Because fewer people base their livelihoods on the natural forests, indigenous knowledge and forest management systems are disappearing in both villages. Furthermore, people consult the village patriarch less often and he is playing an increasingly less significant role in the village. He is now primarily an 'adviser' and 'traditional' leader of the village. Even though he is being respected, he lacks the power he once had in telling the people how they should use the forests. There are more communal meetings in both villages because of FLA. Many outside agents have become interested in re-educating the people, and they often attend the village meetings or mobilize the village headman to train his people. The members of the Green Corridor project have had an important role in raising awareness and re-educating people on forest conservation and management issues. There are no indications yet how the rebordering of Bach Ma National Park will affect the lives of the included communities.

§5.4 FLA and community based forest management

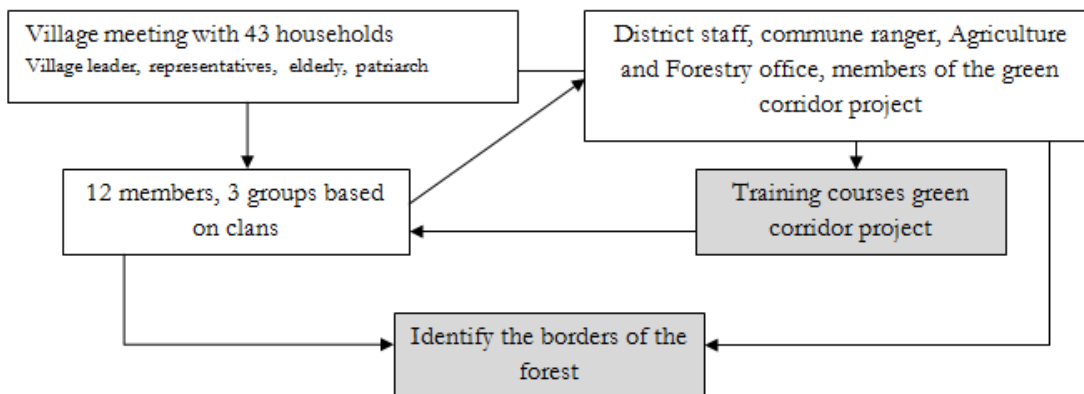
The main question of this paragraph is: How does community based forest management (CFM) mitigate the socio-cultural impact of FLA? As mentioned before, in village no.5 the villagers own and are managing the natural forest as a community. Before both villages will be compared, this paragraph takes a closer look at the FLA process, of which CFM is a part of, in village no.5.

5.4.1 Community Based Forest Management (CFM) in Village no.5

Village no.5 is managing 62 ha of natural forest (which is bordering Quang Nam province) for protection purposes. In 2005, the former State Forest enterprise allocated the forest for the villagers to manage and protect. In 2006, they received the forest collectively and in 2007 they received the Red Book. The village forest protection team consists of 12 members. These members are further divided in three groups and each group protects 20 ha of natural forest. Each group has a leader and vice leader. The village headman is the leader of the forest protection team and controls the general forest management process of the village. He organizes meetings for the groups and controls the forest once in three months. The leader of the sub-group is responsible for managing and controlling the part of his group's forest.

How were the groups selected and what were the criteria? Figure 5.10 answers this question.

Figure 5.10: Creation of CFM



Source: Meeting with village no.5

In a village meeting the members and groups were selected for the village forest protection teams. The villagers chose three groups based on the three clans in the village. All the villagers are now represented in one of the three forest protection teams and clans are competing on best forest management. The usage of traditional structures in the villages has, therefore, benefited CFM. The list of members was then presented to the district staff, commune ranger, agriculture and forestry office of the commune, and to the members of the Green Corridor project (now defined as outside agents). The new members and the outside agents identified the borders of the forest and the members received training courses. CFM was initiated by the members of the Green Corridor project and the village agreed on joining the project.

The forest protection team members are responsible to control the forest every month. They report to the village headman if trees are cut illegally. After 8 years, the people in the village have the right to cut new grown trees. However, they will need permission from the CPC to do this. Villagers can also use wood for housing, but, again, they will first need to get permission from the CPC. The villagers are also able to collect NTFPs such as head leaves or honey. The whole village will go out to collect NTFPs. However until now, the villagers received no benefits from the forest. They do not receive any fees for protecting the forest anymore (before they received fees within the framework of the Green Corridor project) and the forest is in a too poor condition to exploit.

Why did only two villages (village no.5 and no.7) in Thuong Long receive a community Red Book? The CPC gives two reasons: i) these villages were willing to receive forest land; and ii) these villages are used for 'lessons-learned'. During a workshop with various stakeholders in the forest management of the province, everyone (including the director of the Forest Protection Department, the vice-director of Bach Ma National Park, the Agriculture and Forestry staff and so on) seemed to agree that FLA to communities is solution to effective forest preservation and protection. Therefore, it remains a matter of time before other villages will own community Red Books.

5.4.2 Mitigation of CFM on the socio-cultural impact of FLA

FLA has most likely changed the lives of Co Tu people on four important domains: the role of the village patriarch, the communal meetings and knowledge dissemination, the Co Tu

forest classifications, and Co Tu forest exploitation and management. Therefore, both villages will be compared on the basis of these dimensions. Social cohesion is being left out, since there are no clear links between social cohesion in the villages and FLA.

Role of the village patriarch

After FLA to the community in 2007, the patriarch of village no.5 finds that he has more responsibilities than before. He is actively involved in the FLA process and he is advising people not to cut the trees illegally. He also tells people about ways how to collect NTFPs. However, he is not able to tell people how they should use the forest, but together with the village elderly he can organize a meeting to give people advice on how to make use of the forest. He recognizes the importance of FLA and forest protection. According to him, due to government regulations, people generally do not practice slash-and-burn farming anymore and they are ‘acknowledging’ the importance of forest preservation and protection.

The patriarch of village no.8 is not very fluent in the Vietnamese language and, therefore, he needed assistance from the village headman. The patriarch of village no.8 has the same functions as the patriarch of village no.5. He also acknowledges the importance of forest preservation, but he is also only able to give people advice on forest usage. However, within the village only the village headman controls the protected area and writes reports to the Forest Protection Management Board and CPC in exchange for a fee.

Table 5.9: The importance of the Patriarch in both research villages

	The Leader	The Adviser	The Teacher	Importance in forest management
Village no.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most important person of the village: 8.7% - Second most important person: 13.0% - Third most important person: 34.8% - Fourth most important person: 21.7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18.2% of the people ask the village patriarch for advice. - Everyone who was interviewed during the in-depth interviews asked the village patriarch for advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village patriarch was for 26.1 % of the people also a teacher about forest use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The marks for the village patriarch are: 4.09 in the past and 3.65 in the present.* - 43.5 % of the people claim that the village patriarch is less important than 10-20 years ago.
Village no.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most important person of the village: 38.9% - Second most important person: 30.6% - Third most important person: 27.8% - Fourth most important person: 0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25.0% of the people ask the village patriarch for advice. - Everyone who was interviewed during the in-depth interviews asked the village patriarch for advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village patriarch was for 38.9% of the people also a teacher about forest use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The marks for the village patriarch are: 3.97 in the past and 4.08 in the present.* - 27.8 % of the people claim that the village patriarch is less important than 10-20 years ago.

*Not important at all [1 -----5] Very important

The people from both villages state that the village headman has become more important in the forest management of the village compared to pre-FLA times. On a scale from 1 till 5, respectively not important at all to very important in the forest management of the village, the people of village no.5 give the village headman a mark of 3.57 in the past and 4.13 in the present and the people of village no.8 respectively give 3.22 and 4.42. Table 5.9 displays some statistics about the importance of the village patriarch now and in the past (see also figure 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9).

Judging from table 5.9, the patriarch of village no.8 seems to have a more important role for his people, than the patriarch of village no.5. Many people in village no.8 ask their village patriarch for advice, and he is the most important person in their village. Most people in village no.5 consider their patriarch to be the third most important person in the village. CFM, initiated by the outside agents, gave the headman of village no.5 more responsibilities, and, therefore, he has more power in decision making and implementation of the policies within the village. The difference between the villages can be explained by the process in which the formal institutions gained more power at the cost of the traditional institutions in village no.5 *because* of FLA to the community. This explains the reason why many formal institutions and outside agents are in favor of CFM and FLA to the community: it strengthens their role in the villages.

The general conclusion is that FLA has affected the role of the village patriarch. He is now a traditional leader, but in the 'formal' process he is merely an advisor. However, in the mindsets of the people the patriarch is still very important for the village. CFM gave the village headman more responsibilities (and therefore he is considered to be the most important man in the village), but it also gave the village patriarch the feeling that he has more responsibilities now. Therefore, CFM gave the patriarch of village no.5 a renewed role, but he is not as important as the patriarch of village no.8 in the forest management of the village.

Participation and importance of village meetings and knowledge dissemination

As mentioned before, young people in the village seem to have limited knowledge on forest use and have, according to many interviewed people, a wrong perception of the forests. How did CFM benefit the importance of village meetings and the dissemination of knowledge on forest use?

Village meetings happen in both villages on similar topics and many villagers attend these meetings. However, CFM provided the people of village no.5 the possibility to share and transfer knowledge on farming and forest use since they currently own the forest collectively. However, the people of village no.5 claim that before FLA they did not have sufficient knowledge on forest use. According to the people in the village meeting, the training and workshops provided them more knowledge and awareness on forest protection. However, similar claims are made by the people of village no.8. CFM caused improved knowledge dissemination among the villagers, however it remains unclear whether indigenous knowledge is disseminated as well, or whether people are merely repeating the same information, which was given to them during the training or workshops.

It was striking to find out how many people state that, due to FLA and corresponding programmes, they have a better or improved perception of the forests and forest conservation (36.4% of the people in village no.5 and 47.2% of the people in village no.8). This view resembles the external views which are mentioned in paragraph 5.2.6. 27.3% of the people in village no.5 claim that they have improved knowledge due to FLA and programmes, and 16.2% of the people

in village no.8 claim the same. Therefore, CFM has most likely promoted the dissemination of knowledge provided by the outside agents.

Traditional forest classifications

The only difference between village no.5 and village no.8 on the traditional forest classifications is that the former hardly recognizes water protection forests (8.7% opposed to 79.4% - see also figure 5.6). Even though the people of village no.5 claim that their village occasionally gets flooded during raining season, they do not distinguish a water protection forest from other forest types (ghost, spirit and exploitation forests). On the other hand, 87.0% of the people in village no.5 claim that it is important to preserve forests in order to prevent climate related problems.

Furthermore, there is no clear link between the recognition of water protection forests and CFM. CFM has not revised Co Tu forest classifications, nor do outside agents make use of it. When the villagers were asked during in-depth interviews or focus group discussions whether they had ghost/spirit forests, all of them, but one, denied the existence of these forests. Therefore, when outside agents came to offer the training and workshops, people in village no.5 probably did not mention anything about their ghost/spirit forests. Whether that would be relevant is another question – the people received forests of poor quality. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that traditional forest classifications would have been beneficial in this case.

Forest exploitation

Together with the people of village no.5, a table is made which represents their forest use before and after FLA to the community. Table 5.10 is the result:

Table 5.10: Impact FLA on forest exploitation on village no.5

Before FLA to community	After FLA to community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People used the forest individually. - No regulations to protect the forest. - Trying to avoid the control of the state forest enterprise and FPU. - Forest products: wood, honey, head leaves, rattan and trapped animals. - According to the villagers: they had no knowledge. - Usage of forest based on personal needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They do not illegally cut the trees of their forest anymore, or at least there is more control. - They know how to measure the forest area. - They do not want the forest to be reduced. - Forest products: honey, head leaves, rattan. - Getting permission first to use the forest.

Source: village meeting with headman, secretary, 2 poor HH, 2 non-poor HH, 2010

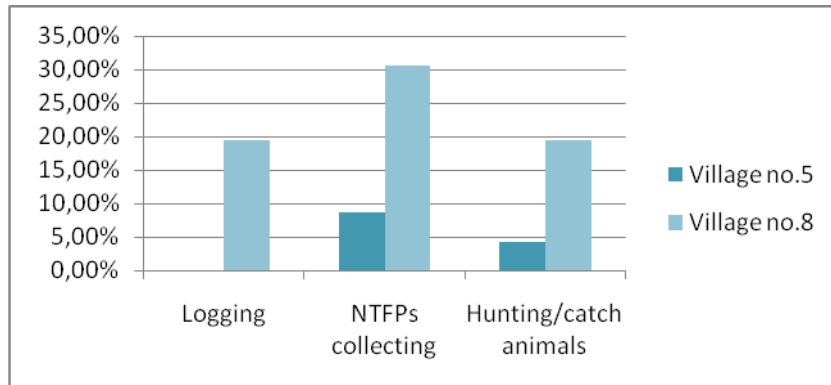
Even though the villagers do not illegally cut wood from their own forests anymore, some of the villagers still go to the other forests to collect wood. However, it is remarkable to notice that even though the people of village no.5 do not get fees for protecting the forest, they are actively engaged in forest protection.

The people from both villages consider forest protection to be important because of previous mentioned reasons. However, the people of village no.8 experience more difficulties in forest management (44.4%). They would rather own their surrounding natural forests through Red Books, but when they were asked whether they wanted a community Red Book, 93.4% of the people answered “no”. However, people complain that they have less power in the forest management process, and they would rather use the natural forests for exploitation purposes

(source: village meeting). The people of village no.5 are generally satisfied with their role in CFM, since many of them are actively engaged.

Figure 5.11 shows the differences between both villages on ‘illegal’ forests exploitation in protected areas.

Figure 5.11: Forest exploitation in protected areas %



Source: Bayrak, 2010

Considerably more people in village no.8 are involved in ‘illegal’ forest exploitation. However, during the in-depth interviews, people from both villages complained about illegal forest exploitation by outsiders, but also by people within the village. However, the people of village no.5 would rather exploit the forests of other villages than their own. However, why do considerably less people in village no.5 state that they are involved in illegal forest exploitation? Perhaps, CFM has changed their ‘environmentally harmful’ behavior, or maybe people have more knowledge about unwanted practices and are, therefore, more tempted to give socially acceptable answers. Another explanation is that village no.5 is being used as a ‘test-case’ for CFM. Therefore, all eyes are on village no.5, which makes it difficult for people to continue their ‘illegal’ exploitation practices.

5.4.3 Conclusion

CFM has been beneficial for some aspects of Co Tu culture and social life. First of all, the protection teams are based on the clan structures within the village. Clans are competing on best forest management and every villager is represented in the forest protection teams. Therefore, CFM is strengthening the clan structures within the village. Even though the patriarch of village no.5 claims that he has new responsibilities now, the village headman gained more say within the village. The formal institutions in the village (village headman, village sub-headman and village secretary) cooperate with the outside agents who have implemented CFM in the village. The traditional institutions (village patriarch and elderly) are usually left out of the process. However, it is hard to say that CFM made the role of the village patriarch less important, if he claims that he is actually more important now. Communal meetings seem to be important for both villages but CFM caused more knowledge dissemination in village no.5. However, since many villagers claim that they have a different perception of the forests now, it remains a question whether the improved knowledge dissemination is beneficial for indigenous knowledge. CFM did not mitigate the loss of traditional forest classifications of the Co Tu people. There are also no links found between social cohesion within the village and FLA. CFM has been beneficial for forest protection. The people of village no.5 are less engaged in ‘illegal’ forest exploitation, and they are

actively engaged in protecting their forests. However, some villagers continue to enter the forests of other villages. However, this is most likely caused by a lack of control in the other forests, and the limited knowledge of forests of the young people, who are usually engaged in ‘illegal’ forest exploitation.

§5.5 Conclusion

The Forest Land Allocation programme has changed many aspects of Co Tu culture and social life. However, FLA should be seen within the broader sedentarization programmes of the Vietnamese government. For decades, the Vietnamese government has been trying to change the lives of its indigenous people – from living semi nomadic to living settled and from swidden agriculture to sedentary agriculture. FLA is the final stage, in which people are forced to live settled and are no longer able to practice swidden agriculture. The socio-cultural impact of FLA on the Co Tu people in the villages is significant – their lifestyle has been changed, the village patriarchs play a less important role in the villages, their cultural lives have been changed and there is a loss of indigenous knowledge and forest management practices. There has been a paradigm change among the Co Tu people on ‘nature’ and their place within ‘nature’. This has been deliberately done by outside agents who are trying to change the perceptions of Co Tu people on the forests and ‘nature’.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

“The biggest thing for me was when I went outside, and I suddenly saw the jungle in a way I have never seen it before and it did look more alive [...]. I can totally imagine that that jungle is a sort of place where they would see spirits live in.”

- *BBC's Tribe, 2005 - a documentary programme in which Bruce visits tribes around the world in order to live and learn from them.*

“Our customs and culture have also changed with the changing conditions” one Co Tu villager said during the questionnaire and he summarized the main conclusion of this thesis: changing the environment of people will change their social structures and cultures. Furthermore, the term culture is derived from the Latin word *colere*, which means cultivating crops. People cultivate nature in order to have culture, and, therefore, many people tend to see nature as the opposite of culture (Grootte et al, 2005). Many international conservation NGO's tend to make this same distinction and indirectly push this perception to indigenous communities, which have a totally different perception of nature and culture. By changing people's livelihood practices (which is 'culture' in its truest sense), they are changing people's worldviews, cultures, beliefs and social relations as well. However, local ethnoecologies are able to offer resistance to outside forces and, therefore, there is no linear relationship between outside forces and changing ethnoecologies. How did this all translate to Co Tu people in Vietnam and the Forest land Allocation (FLA) programme?

The central question of this thesis was: *What is the socio-cultural impact of forest land allocation in Vietnam on the Co Tu people in Nam Dong district and in what way can community based forest management contribute to preserve Co Tu culture?* In 1993, Vietnam introduced the FLA programme. The State allocated forest land to households (through so called Red Books – formal ownership rights) and instructed people on how to manage their land. The Highlanders in Vietnam, who were traditionally swidden agriculturalists, were forced to settle down and practice sedentary forms of agriculture. Having recognized the importance of traditional forest management systems, Vietnam introduced community based forest management in 2004. This enabled communities to receive and manage forest land and entitled them to community Red Books. By taking the indigenous Co Tu people in Nam Dong district, Central Vietnam as a case study, this thesis has shed more light on the socio-cultural impact of FLA on indigenous communities and whether or not CFM has mitigated this impact. Two villages in Nam Dong district have been chosen for this research – one village with CFM (received in 2007) and one village without CFM, respectively village no.5 and village no.8 in Thuong Long Commune. Two types of analyses have been made for this study – one in time (pre-FLA and present times) and one between villages (how did CFM benefit village no.5 compared to the village no.8?).

Traditionally, Co Tu people were semi-nomadic swidden agriculturalists and hunter-gatherers. However, both communities were already forced to settle down in the 1970s. They were moved from the uplands to the present area where their villages are located. FLA is the final stage of the sedentarization programmes of the Vietnamese government, in which people are forced to lead settled lives and are no longer able to practice swidden agriculture. FLA has, therefore, effectively abolished swidden agriculture of many indigenous communities in Vietnam. According to many scholars, swidden or shifting horticulture is the only type of farming which is proven to be the most sustainable in tropical forest areas. However, outsiders tend to label all

types of swidden agriculture as environmentally harmful and one of the main causes of deforestation. Within the framework of the FLA programme, many Co Tu people are practicing sedentary forms of agriculture, such as planting paddy rice or plantation forests. Therefore, FLA was one of the main contributors to the changed lifestyle of the research communities. Most people in the villages stated that they view this development as positive. They have better access to basic services and an improved infrastructure, and in general their quality of life has been improved. However, when people claimed that they did not care much about the forest before FLA, they either gave a socially acceptable statement or they had a low self-esteem of their traditional practices and perceptions of the forest.

Different paradigms on human-environment relations have been discussed in this thesis – namely: Orientalism, paternalism and communalism. Orientalism and paternalism place the (western) scientist in charge of the nature management process. Both paradigms assume that scientific knowledge is superior to other types of knowledge, but the former is mainly interested in controlling and exploiting nature, while the latter deals with forest preservation and protection. Paternalistic environmentalists label indigenous people as ‘children of the forest’ or ‘stewards of nature’ who are taking care of ‘nature’ since they form a part of it – the so called ecologically Nobel savage. The communalist paradigm rejects the separation of nature and society, and argues that people have a close interlinked relationship with their environment.

In this research context, the (former) State Forest Enterprises and other logging enterprises have the Orientalist paradigm, the international conservation organizations (such as the WWF) and the Vietnamese government and its relevant offices have the paternalistic paradigm, and the Co Tu people have the communalist paradigm. Co Tu people have a close relationship with the forests – traditionally, they have based their livelihoods on the forests, their spiritual beliefs are related to forests (such as God of the Forest and ghosts of the Forest), they have sacred forests where exploitation is not permitted, and the forests play an important role in their festivals and other elements of their culture. However, among Co Tu people, the paradigms are changing. Many Co Tu people claimed that, due to FLA and its corresponding programmes, they have a different perception of the forest. People stated that, unlike the past, they now care about forest protection and preservation in order to meet the needs of future generations, to tackle climate related problems and to preserve biodiversity – the paternalistic paradigm. Nowadays, outside agents are ‘raising awareness’ on forest protection and are offering the Co Tu people training and workshops on this subject in order to re-educate them. The commune ranger explicitly stated that his department is trying to change to perception of Co Tu people on the forests.

Co Tu people have four types of forest classifications: i) ghosts forest, ii) spirit forest, iii) water protection forest; and iv) exploitation forest. In the four types of indigenous world-views, which are mentioned by Van Leeuwen (1998), forest type I and II can be placed within the *prohibiting environment* – natural areas where exploitation is prohibited because of spiritual/cultural reasons; forest type III can be placed within the *reciprocating environment* – nature needs continuous investment in order to get something back; and type IV can be placed within the *giving environment* - ‘nature’ is seen as continuously and unconditionally providing people’s subsistence needs. Many people in the research communities still recognized ghost/spirit forests. However, it remains a question whether this will also happen in the future. The people of village no.8 stated that their ghost forest has disappeared because people have been resettled to its place. Other villagers

stated that the young generation does not believe in ghost/spirit forests anymore. In the future, less people in both villages will base their livelihoods on the natural forest, and, therefore, for many people these classifications will become less important. Furthermore, Co Tu people have to abide to the imposed rules on forest management of outside agents, such as the District People's Committee, the Forest Protection Department, and so on. The traditional forest classifications will, therefore, lose its utilitarian value. However, Co Tu ethnoecologies have been able to offer resistance to the outside forces, which are (deliberately) trying to change Co Tu people's relationship with the forest.

Indigenous knowledge and forest management systems do not only have a utilitarian value, but also deal with social, cultural, spiritual, institutional and disseminatory dimensions. Therefore, by reducing indigenous knowledge to a set of 'utilities', is doing injustice to the underlying logics, which deal with many aspects of the community. Most Co Tu people gave contradictory answers on the question whether or not their community had more knowledge about forests and forest management in the past. The majority of the people stated that they had more knowledge in the past, but also a majority of the people stated that they have more knowledge about forest management due to FLA. As mentioned before, most people have received training from outside agents on forest management. Therefore, when they talked about having more knowledge because of FLA, they probably referred to the knowledge they received from outside agents. However, when they referred to the knowledge they had in the past, they probably meant indigenous knowledge. Even though the village patriarch and elderly have a lot of knowledge about forest and forest management, most Co Tu people would rather ask the village headman for advice. Furthermore, many villagers stated that young people have limited knowledge about forests. This poses a problem, since, nowadays, young men are usually the main contributors to illegal wood exploitation within the village. Most Co Tu people had a negative view on their past practices – swidden cultivation. While this thesis did not take a stance in whether or not swidden cultivation is a better option for the forests of Central Vietnam, it can be concluded that FLA and its corresponding programmes caused a loss of indigenous knowledge and forest management practices among the research communities.

The village patriarch is the traditional and, by the people, elected leader in a Co Tu village. He has a lot of knowledge on cultivation, cultural and social practices, and worshipping. Furthermore, he is known for curing sick people and animals, and in the past he was in charge of the social and natural resource management of the village and resolving related conflicts. He also divided land among the clans, which, in turn, re-distributed it to clan branches and households. Both research Co Tu villages have a village patriarch. Even though he is widely respected within the village, he has lost a lot of power to the formal institutions because of FLA. Within the village he has to share his power with the village headman, while the District People's Committee is responsible for distributing land to households or communities. In the past, the village patriarch was able to divide the forest land among his people, but this privilege has disappeared together with the slash-and-burn practices and semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Co Tu people. It was no longer necessary to divide suitable lands for swidden cultivation, since this is no longer practiced in the villages because of FLA and other sedentarization programmes. Furthermore, within the FLA process (both to individual households and communities), outside agents and formal institutions did not see the village patriarch and/or elderly as main stakeholders in the process. Outside agents (such as the members of the Green Corridor Project and relevant government

agencies) would rather use the village headman to transmit knowledge to the villagers. The village patriarch is now primarily an ‘adviser’ and ‘traditional’ leader of the village - he lacks the power he once had in telling the people how they should use the forests. However, in village no.8 people continued to see the village patriarch as the most important person in the village.

Village no.5, being a test-case in the commune, received a community Red Book in 2007. This allowed them to manage their natural forest as a community – referred to as community based forest management (CFM). However, they still had to follow the rules on forest use, which are stipulated by government agencies. Furthermore, they have received training and workshops by outside agents on forest management. It remains a question, whether CFM in village no.5 is truly community based. In the ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1971), the FLA to communities process in Vietnam can be classified as type three (informing) or type four (consultation). How did CFM mitigate the socio-cultural impact of FLA to individual households and corresponding programmes?

Village no.5 consists of three clans and each clan has its forest protection team. The three forest protection teams each have a sub-leader, and the leader of the three teams is the village headman. The three clans are competing on best forest management. Therefore, CFM has strengthened the clan structures within the village. Furthermore, the villagers claimed that, because they are collectively managing the natural forest, knowledge dissemination within the village has been improved. Nowadays, there are more village meetings, which are held in the traditional communal longhouse, and people seemed to be genuinely concerned with their *own* forest - even without getting a fee for protecting it. Unlike village no.8, the people in village no.5 were less engaged in illegal forest exploitation and, therefore, CFM has benefited forest protection and preservation.

However, because CFM is imposed by members of the Green Corridor Project and government agencies, it has strengthened the role of formal institutions in the village. Even though the patriarch stated that he has more responsibilities now, most villagers relied on the formal institutions both within (the village headman, sub-headman and secretary) and outside the village for advice and education about forest use and management. Therefore, the knowledge, which is disseminated within the village, is probably the result of ‘awareness raising’ and re-education by outside agents. Therefore, it remains a question whether CFM has caused improved indigenous knowledge dissemination within the village. The general conclusion is that CFM did not improve the traditional forest management and knowledge systems of the Co Tu people in village no.5 nor did it renew the importance of traditional forest classifications. Therefore, it has hardly mitigated the socio-cultural impact of FLA. However, it should be noted that the Vietnamese government is at least acknowledging the importance of CFM and indigenous forest management systems.

Policy and scientific recommendations

Based on the research findings the following recommendations are formulated:

- ✓ More research needs to be conducted on the non-utilitarian dimensions of indigenous forest management and knowledge. Especially, the spiritual dimension needs to be better understood.
- ✓ Other possible research topics are: the link between social cohesion and/or alcohol abuse and FLA.

- ✓ Organize a village meeting between the villagers and outside agents, in which the villagers (under supervision of the village patriarch, village headman and elderly) present ways how to manage the forest.
- ✓ If a village/community still has traditional forest classifications, outside agents should take these into account when establishing CFM.
- ✓ When establishing CFM, make use of traditional structures (such as clans) in a village. In village no.5 this has already happened.
- ✓ Give villagers more incentives to protect and preserve the natural forests. After 2006, the villagers do not receive any financial benefits anymore from forest protection.
- ✓ Cultural appropriateness should be the key word in policies on forest use and management.

Final thoughts

Co Tu people live like most people in an era of globalization. Therefore, many changes within the villages are caused by various outside forces. When visiting the villages, we have noticed that many households owned a television, internet access was just a few kilometers away, and probably many Co Tu communities will be affected by eco-tourism in the future (just to name a few). However when one re-organizes the space Co Tu people inhabit in a top-down way, the socio-cultural consequences can be severe (Harvey in: Hoogevelt, 2001). Indigenous forest management systems need to adapt to a changing environment. Some of these changes are inevitable – such as population growth, climate change, and so on. Other changes can be prevented – such as dealing with (international) logging companies. However, whatever adaptation of indigenous forest management is required, it is important that it should be culturally appropriate. New policies on forest use and management should be made with the people, and it should fit into the existing worldviews, cultures, beliefs, perceptions of nature, and social structures of the people – now referred to as cultural appropriateness.

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Appendix A: Topics list

Hello my name is Mucahid Bayrak; I am conducting a research on Ka Tu culture, your way of life and forest use. Please excuse me if some questions are inappropriate, please tell me and I will move on to the next question.

Village households: 1-2 poor household, 1-2 average household

<General information>

- What is your name?
- Where are you from?
- How many people are living in your household?
- Are you Ka Tu people or Kinh?
- Do you still talk in your own language?
- How much land do you own and how do you use it? Do you have a red book, if not, why not?
- What are the main sources of your income? How much is it a month?

Now I want to ask you some questions about the forest.

<Indigenous knowledge/forest management/relationship with the forest>

- How is the forest being used now, and do you think that is a good thing?
- Who taught you how to make use of the forest? And will you teach your children how to make use of the forest?
- Do Ka Tu people have special ways of managing the forest? If so, are you still doing it this way. If not, why?
- Did you manage the forest 20 years before in a different way? Or did your parents do it in a different way? If so, why did it change?
- Do you think that villagers should be able to cut the woods for their own purposes?
- Do you collect NTFPs, and how is this managed? Does anyone have open access to them?

Now I want to ask you some questions about your village.

<Community structure/social cohesion/alcohol abuse>

- Who is the leader of your village? Was it different 20 years ago? Or during the times of your parents?
- What role does the village patriarch play? And the elderly?
- How is the relationship with other villagers? Do you support each other?
- What changes occurred in your village the last 10-20 years? Can you give one example? Are there any problems in the village you wish to address to us?
- I have heard that the people here drink a lot of alcohol. Do you think people drink too much alcohol, if yes, why do you think so?

<Cultural degradation, worldviews, perception of the forest>

- What kind of forests do Ka Tu people have? Did these classifications change during the last 20 years, if so why? (Maybe let them draw on a piece of paper, if they are interested).
- Do the following classifications of the forest still exist? *Spirit, ghost, exploitation and water used to protect water sources*? If yes, is it still the same as 20 years ago or did it change? If no, did it ever exist, and if so, why did it disappear?
- How important is the forest for you? How important is the forest to the Ka Tu people? Why?
- Is the forest important for Ka Tu culture? Why?
- Do you think forest preservation is important? Why?
- Do you think the way you traditionally managed the forest, would be beneficial for the forest preservation? Or, are the national park rules and restrictions more suitable? Please, be honest, I really want to know.

Now I want to ask you some final questions.

- What is your religion? What do you believe in? Can you tell me little bit about it? I really want to know, because I know very little about it.
- Is it the same religion as your parents? Do people pray differently now than 20 years ago?
- Do you celebrate ka tu festivals? Do people celebrate it differently now than 20 years ago?

- Do you think your village will continue to exist, or do you think that people will move to the city? Why?
- Is there anything in this interview you want to share with me? What would you like to add?

Village headmen/patriarch

Hello my name is Mucahid Bayrak; I am conducting a research on Ka Tu culture, your way of life and forest use. Please excuse me if some questions are inappropriate, please tell me and I will move on to the next question.

<General information>

What is your name?

How long are you the village headman? How did you become one? What are your daily activities? What are your responsibilities and duties? Who do you have to consult for village affairs?

Can you tell me something about the history of your village?

- Changes in forest use and geography.
- Changes in community structure.
- Changes in culture and religion.

What problems does your village encounter? How and who solves it? What about alcohol abuse?

<Cultural degradation, worldviews, perception of the forest>

- What kind of forests do Ka Tu people have? Did these classifications change during the last 20 years, if so why? (Maybe let them draw on a piece of paper, if they are interested).
- Do the following classifications of the forest still exist? *Spirit, ghost, exploitation and water used to protect water sources*? If yes, is it still the same as 20 years ago or did it change? If no, did it ever exist, and if so, why did it disappear?
- How important is the forest for you? How important is the forest to the Ka Tu people? Why?
- Do you think the way you traditionally managed the forest, would be beneficial for the forest preservation? Or, are the national park rules and restrictions more suitable?
- In what way are you responsible for forest management in your village? How about the collection of NTFPs?

What is the impact of the national park on the villages? What changed in your village because of the national park? Are the changes positive or negative?

Commune/district level

Hello my name is Mucahid Bayrak; I am conducting a research on Ka Tu culture and forest use. Please excuse me if some questions are inappropriate, please tell me and I will move on to the next question.

Can you give some general information about your commune? Demographics? Ethnic distribution? Economic activities? Political organization?

What are the main reasons of poverty in the villages? And what should be done to solve it?

How important are forests for the local people? And who manages it on local level?

What are the main issues and problems the commune wants to resolve? And why?

<criminalization>

What are the main reasons for illegal logging in the area? How can you explain this?

Do Ka Tu people have different way of lives, if so what is different?

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Date of interview (day, month, year): _____ **Village no:** _____ **Interview number:** _____

Questionnaire: Thuong Long Commune in Co Tu Villages

<Dear interviewer, thank you for conducting our interview. I have some comments for you to remember: some questions say, for example, IF, YES->, this means that you have to look at the previous given answer to decide whether you should ask the question or not. Sometimes I also left a comment behind the question, which is marked with "<....>", please pay attention to that as well. Please write down short answers and just use the given lines on the form. Please read out all the options, unless stated different. Please also try to get as much information as possible. You should not be satisfied with one short reply. If you have any questions during the interview, please call me (my name is Mr. Mucahid and my telephone number is 0126-8463-297 or call Mr. Tom and his telephone number is 0128-9418-616). **Thank you very much for helping me>**

Dear Sir, Madam,

My name is [_____]. I am conducting a research about Co Tu/Ka Tu people, their culture and how they use the forest. I am conducting this research for researchers from the Netherlands, a forestry organization called Tropenbos and Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry. I would like to ask you some questions. Is that possible? All the information you will give, will be used in a good way and if there are questions you do not want to answers, you are free to do so. Can I have 20-30 minutes of your time?

1 <General information>

First we want to know some information about you and your family.

1.1 Name: _____

1.2 Sex:

Male Female

1.3 Age: _____

1.4 Income per month: _____

1.5 What is your ethnicity? Co Tu, Kinh, Others _____

1.6 Household size <including the respondent>: _____

1.7 Who is the head of your household?

Me

My husband /wife

My father

My son

Other, namely _____

1.8 Have you been living for all your life in this village? yes no

1.9 **IF no**, how long have you been living in this village? _____ years

1.10 Is your father from this village? yes no

1.11 Is your mother from this village? yes no

What is your function in the village?

Village headman

Village patriarch

Village sub-headman

Village elder

Normal villager

Other: _____

2 <Identity>

Now I want to know some information about your language, festivals and culture.

2.1 Can you speak Co Tu language?

- yes no

2.2 IF Co Tu -> Can you speak Co Tu language better or worse than Kinh language?

- Better Same Worse

2.3 IF Co Tu -> How important is it that your children will also know Co Tu language?

- Very important Important Not Important Not important at all.

2.4 IF Co Tu -> Do you celebrate special Co Tu festivals?

- Yes No

2.5 Which festivals do you celebrate? <Just names>

3 <Cultural and religious degradation>

3.1 Do you celebrate the festivals in the same way as 10-20 years ago?

- Yes No

3.2 Did Co Tu people have a different way of life 10-20 years ago?

- Yes No

3.3 IF yes -> Can you explain the differences?

7 <Livelihoods>

We are now interested in how you earn your living.

4.1 Main source of living? <Multiple answers are possible>

- Farming
 Natural forest use
 Plantation forest
 Animal husbandry
 Other, namely: _____

4.2 IF farming or animal husbandry-> What do you harvest or what kind of animals do you keep?

4.3 IF plantation forest -> What kind of trees do you plant?

- Planting rubber trees.
 Planting acacia.
 Planting areca.
 Others

5 <Entitlements>

We are now interested in how much land you own and if you have a red book or not. The following questions will deal with that.

5.1 What kind of land do you have and do you own an official Red Book? <Ask for all of them separately> <Note that people can own land without having a Red Book, if someone does not own that type of land, write down 0 hectare in the table.>

Type of land	Size? (in hectare)	Red book?	Kind of ownership	Ownership of red book since: (year, for example 2004)
<input type="checkbox"/> Barren and degraded land		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups of households <input type="checkbox"/> Community/village	
<input type="checkbox"/> Plantation (acacia/rubber)		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups of households <input type="checkbox"/> Community/village	
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural forest		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups of households <input type="checkbox"/> Community/village	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rice field		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups of households <input type="checkbox"/> Community/village	
<input type="checkbox"/> Garden		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups of households <input type="checkbox"/> Community/village	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other land namely: _____ _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Groups of households <input type="checkbox"/> Community/village	

5.2 **IF they own a Red Book** – How much land did you own before you had the Red Book? <Write down in table.>

5.3 **IF they own a Red Book** – How do you feel about the rights of your land compared to before you owned a Red Book? <Write down in table.>

Type of land	Size before Red Book (in hectare)	Feel more secure? <only IF they owned that type of land>
<input type="checkbox"/> Barren and degraded land		<input type="checkbox"/> More secure <input type="checkbox"/> Equal <input type="checkbox"/> Less secure
<input type="checkbox"/> Plantation (acacia/rubber)		<input type="checkbox"/> More secure <input type="checkbox"/> Equal <input type="checkbox"/> Less secure
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural forest		<input type="checkbox"/> More secure <input type="checkbox"/> Equal <input type="checkbox"/> Less secure
<input type="checkbox"/> Rice field		<input type="checkbox"/> More secure <input type="checkbox"/> Equal <input type="checkbox"/> Less secure
<input type="checkbox"/> Garden		<input type="checkbox"/> More secure <input type="checkbox"/> Equal <input type="checkbox"/> Less secure

<input type="checkbox"/> Other land namely: _____ _____		<input type="checkbox"/> More secure <input type="checkbox"/> Equal <input type="checkbox"/> Less secure
------------------------------------------------------------	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

5.4 Would you like to have (another) type of Red Book? yes no

5.5 **IF yes**, what kind of Red Book would you like to have? <don't ask for all of them separately>

- Barren and degraded land
- Plantation (acacia/rubber)
- Natural forest
- Rice field
- Garden
- Other land namely: _____

5.6 Would you like to have a Red Book for the community?

Yes No

5.7 **IF yes**, for which type of land?

- Barren and degraded land
- Plantation (acacia/rubber)
- Natural forest
- Rice field
- Garden
- Other land namely: _____

5.8 Do you think that the land you own has good quality? yes no

5.9 Can you explain why you think that?

<Possible answers: soil fertility, location, good trees, right slope, etc.>

6 <Natural forest use>

The following questions will deal with importance of the natural forest in your daily life.

6.1 How often do you go to the natural forest?

- Every day
- Several days a week
- Once a week
- a few times a month
- a few times a year
- Never

6.2 Do you use trees from the natural forest? yes no

6.3 IF yes, What do you use it for?

- To build
- To sell
- As firewood
- other _____

6.4 What part of the forest do you use?

- Natural Forest (old forest/ protection forest)
- Plantation Forest

- Land allocated to me
- Land allocated to others
- other _____

6.5 Do you collect products from the forest? yes no

6.6 **IF yes**, what do you collect? Please check off all that apply:

- rattan bamboo
- nuts fruits
- firewood honey
- animals leaves
- herbs/medicine Other _____

6.7 Did you collect different forest products in the past? yes no

6.8 **IF yes**, what did you collect in the past? Please check all that apply:

- rattan bamboo
- nuts fruits
- firewood honey
- animals leaves
- herbs/medicine Other _____

did not collect forest products in the past

6.9 **IF yes**, why did it change?

- Availability
- Quality
- Government regulation
- Change in needs.
- Advise by village patriarch
- Advise by village header
- Other: _____

6.10 Do you know where the borders of the protected areas exactly are?

- yes no

7 <Forest Land Allocation>

Now we want your opinion about the forest land allocation.

7.1 Since forest land allocation began in this area, are there parts of the forest that you are now not allowed to use anymore? yes no

7.2. **IF yes**, how have you been affected? → <Ask for all of them separately>

- I now use other parts of the forest
- Loss of income
- Food shortages
- I have found new employment
- I have not been affected

Other _____

7.3 Do you ever enter these parts of the forest? yes no

7.4 **IF yes**, for what purpose?

- For logging timber
- To collect Non Timber Forest Products
- To hunt
- I did not enter these parts of the forest
- Other _____

7.5 What do you think that the benefit for you is of Forest Land Allocation?

- Secure land ownership
- Receiving money for management
- Increasing knowledge about forest management
- Less conflicts about land
- More equal rights for everybody
- other _____

7.6 How do you think about Forest Land Allocation?

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

8 < Changing community structure >

We are going to talk now about the most important people in your village and the way your village is managing the forest.

8.1 Please name the most important people for the village:

- 1) _____ 3) _____
2) _____ 4) _____

Possible answers:

- (a) Village headman (c) Village vice-headman (e) Forest rangers.
(b) Village patriarch (d) CPC chairman and/or staff

8.2 Do you attend village meetings?

Yes No

8.3 How often do village meetings take place? ____ Per month

8.4 Who is in charge of the village meetings? <Multiple answers are possible>

- Village headman
- Village patriarch
- Village elderly
- Other villagers: _____

8.5 IF visiting village meetings -> What do you discuss during the village meetings? <Multiple answers are possible>

- Village development issues
- Forest use issues
- Farming issues
- Problems and difficulties
- Other: _____

8.6 Were village meetings different 10-20 years ago?

- Yes No

8.7 IF yes -> Can you explain what was different?

8.8 Was the village patriarch more or less important than 10-20 years ago?

- More important
- Same
- Less important.

8.9 IF, more or less important -> Can you explain why?

9 <Institutional arrangements>

9.1 Do you think that your village still has enough influence on decisions about forest management?
 yes no

9.2 Can you explain why?

9.3 How do you perceive the influence of the government in forest management?

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very Negative

9.4 Who do you perceive as the most important person/organization in forest management **in the past and now?**

Please give mark from 1 to 5 <1 means: not important at all, 5 means very important:

	Forest management in the past	Forest management now
Individuals		
Group of households		
Entire village		
Village Patriarch		
Village Leader		
Commune People's Committee		

District People's Committee		
Forest management board		
Women's Organization		
Youth Union		
Former-Soldiers Organization		
Farmers Organization		
Other, namely _____		

9.5 If you compare the two rows in the last question: do you think there are big changes?

yes no

9.6 **If yes**, what is the main reason for these changes?

9.7 Are you happy with these changes? yes no

9.8 Do you perceive certain villagers as more important in forest management now, compared to before?

yes no

9.9 Why?

10 <Loss of Indigenous Knowledge and forest management>

Now I want to know some things about the knowledge of the village about the forest.

10.1 Did you or your parents use the forest in a different way 10-20 years ago?

Yes No

10.2 **IF yes** -> How did you or your parents use it differently?

10.3 Do you think slash-and-burn farming is better for the forest or worse?

Better Same Worse No opinion

10.4 **IF forest usage** -> Who do you ask for advice about forest use? <Multiple answers are possible>

Nobody

Village patriarch

Village headman

Village elderly

Parents or other relatives

Other: _____

10.5 Will you teach your children or are you teaching your children how to make use of the forest?

Yes No

10.6 Can you explain why?

10.7 How do you think that the knowledge about forest management in the village developed? Please compare between the knowledge twenty years ago with now:

- People have more knowledge now
- Equal
- People have less knowledge now

10.8 Who told you how to make use of the forest? <Multiple answers are possible>

- Village patriarch
- Village headman
- Parents or other relatives
- CPC
- Forest management board
- Nobody
- Other: _____

10.9 Did you attend training on forest use?

- Yes No

10.10 **IF Yes**, who gave you this training? _____

11 <Social problems and cohesion>

11.1 What problems do villagers experience?

11.2 IF they did **not** mention alcohol problems -> Do you think alcohol usage is a problem in your village?

- Yes No Don't know

11.3 Do villagers generally support each other?

- Yes No Don't know

11.4 Can you explain why?

11.5 Did villagers support each other more or less 10-20 years ago?

- More supporting
- Same
- Less supporting

12 <Changing world views>

The final questions will deal with the importance of forests.

12.1 Does this village still have the following forests? <Multiple answers are possible>

- Ghost/Spirit forest
- Forest to protect water sources
- Forest for exploitation

12.2 Did your community have ghost/spirit forests 10-20 years ago?

- Yes No

12.3 IF they have ghost/spirit forests -> Do you know where they are located?

- Yes No

12.4 IF yes -> can you tell me where?

13 <Forest protection>

13.1 Do you think forest protection and preservation is important?

Yes No

13.2 IF yes -> Why is forest preservation important? <Do not tell the answers immediately, first let them answer spontaneously if no read out the questions & multiple answers are possible>

- Climate, draughts and storm prevention.
- Future generations
- Co Tu culture
- Housing and cooking
- Worshipping
- Other: _____

13.3 How do you regard the importance of the forest in your daily life compared to the past?

- More important
- Equal
- Less important

Dear Sir, Madam, this is the end of my interview. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Have a nice day!

Appendix C: Time schedule

Date:	Event:
December - January	Completion of the research proposal.
February	Arrival in Hue. Meetings with local supervisor Mr. Tu and Tropenbos International. Redefining of research methodology.
2 March	Interview with Thuong Lo Commune Visit Doi village: -Interview with village headman -Interview with household
8 March	Presentation of research proposal
10 March	Interview with Thuong Long commune Visit village no.8 (Aprang): - Focus group discussion with village headman, village secretary and households. Visit village no.5 (Tawac). - Focus group discussion with village headman and households.
11 March	Commune meeting with CPC, heads of villages, commune rangers, and other associations. - Focus group discussion and PA methods. Interview with village patriarch no.5 Interview with village patriarch and village headman no.8
18 March	Interviews with 3 households in Aprang (1 female, 2 males)
19 March	Interviews with 3 households in Tawac (2 females, 1 male)
31 March	Interview with village headman no.5 Interview with nephew of village vice-headman no.8
1 April	Interview commune ranger
2-9 April	Making the questionnaire, first draft.
9 April	Test questionnaires 2 households, village no 8.
15 April	Workshop with various stakeholders in forest management.
16-29 April	Completion of questionnaire Instruction to local students for conducting the questionnaire.
30 April – 2 May	Local students conducting the questionnaire among 60 households
7 May	Final presentation
11 May	Interview with Dr. Nguyen Xuan Hung
27 May	Completion of interim report

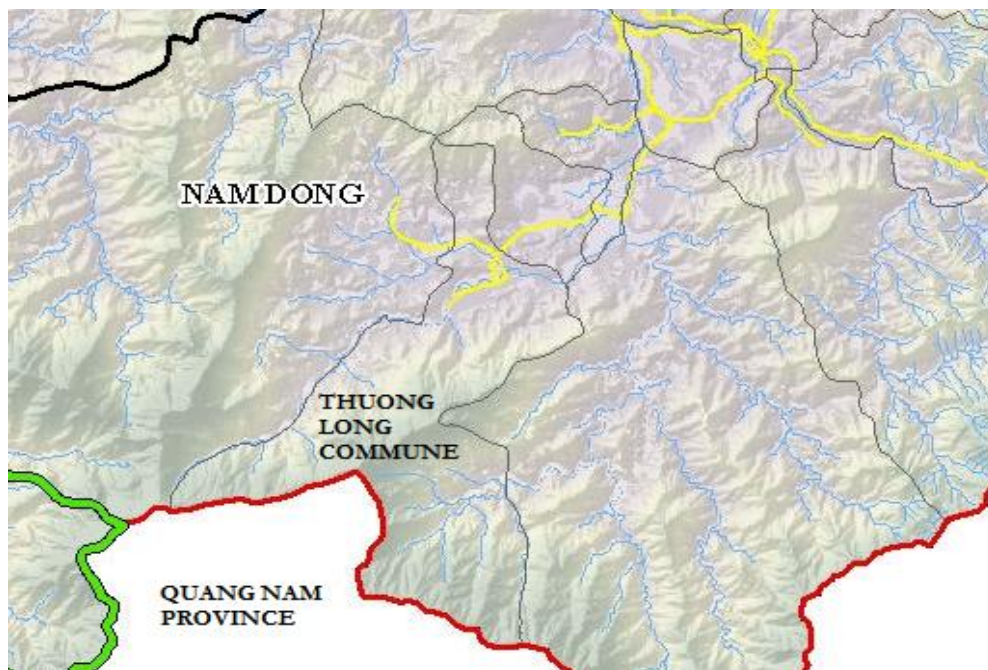
Appendix D: Location of the research site

Location of Nam Dong District



Source: Google Maps, 2010

Location of Thuong Long Commune



Source: Huegreencorridor.org, 2010

Appendix E: Land ownership of Co Tu people in village no.5 and village no.5, Thuong Long Commune

Type of land		Average size	Red book?	Kind of ownership:			Average length of ownership
%	abs	ha	%	Individual	Groups of households	Community	years
		2.2 ha	100%	100%	0%	0%	6.5
8.5%	5						
		2.4 ha	96.1%	96.3%	3.7%	0%	7.3
84.7%	50						
		10.8 ha	100%	33%	0%	66.7%	4.3
6.8%	4						
		0.1 ha	76.3%	98.0%	2.0%	0%	9.0
96.6%	57						
		0.3 ha	83.1%	100%	0%	0%	8.2
94.9%	56						
		0.04 ha	50%	100%	0%	0%	5.0
3.4%	2						

Appendix F: Participatory mapping with the people of village no.8



